

Assam's Kaju wins IDPA award



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“It’s a proud moment. It’s the outcome of my hard work. Tremendous feelings I can not make you understand,” Shahidul Majjid exclaimed who is popularly known as Kaju.

Kaju, a noted film editor from Assam has been conferred the silver award in sound designing for his non-feature film “.....and the Friends of Kaziranga” by Indian Documentary Producers Association (IDPA) for the year 2009.

IDPA is a non-profit organisation that came into being in 1956. It is registered as a public trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950. Today IDPA is India's single largest association of producers of documentaries, animation films, advertisement films and TV programmes. Noted filmmaker Jahnu Barua is the President of IDPA at present.

The film, directed by Kaju himself, portrays the struggle of the forest officials and their commitments to the conservation and protection of the wildlife.



Shahidul Majjid (Kaju)

"I always wanted to do something for them within my limitations. They are the real heroes. You can not imagine the way how the forest guards dedicate their lives for the protection of the forest. During the rainy days it's really tough. So it's for them," said Kaju.

"They (forest employees) toil hard and unsung with minimum bare facilities to protect the endangered rhino along with other animals and it is their conservation efforts that have brought fame and glory to Assam's Kaziranga National Park," he added.

“These forest guards, who stay away from their families in anti-poaching camps located deep inside the forests of the Park, face many hazards. Till a few years ago they had to deal with these situations with outdated equipment and little monetary benefits,” Kaju further said.

The film, produced by Biswajit Borkakoti, begins with beautiful shots highlighting the exotic flora and fauna of the Park and it soon launches into the basic theme of the trials and tribulations of the forest guard.

The filmmaker poignantly captures the scenes where the animals suffer during floods and the untiring efforts of the guards in protecting them from both inundation and poachers.

“My film was screened at Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) in Mumbai early this year. I was humbled at the gestures of the jury members. The jury members hugged me and congratulated me after the screening of my film,” said the filmmaker proudly.

Kaju who is the second son of Abdul Majid, a prominent filmmaker of the state, has been involved with filmmaking for more than two decades. He said these achievements have encouraged him to go ahead with his job. Though he laments at the lack of knowledge of the technical side of the filmmaking in the region but he is hopeful that the scenario would be changed.

Remembering the days of making the film “....and the Friends of Kaziranga”, he said, “I used to wade through waist-deep water in the fields taking camera and other equipments in hand along with the forest guards who accompanied me. It was tough but I’m feeling great now.”

The background narration by popular Assamese actor Kapil Bora also adds to the quality of the film with vital information about the guards and the Park as the story unfolds.

“This is great news and I’m extremely happy. He (Kaju) has done a tremendous job especially in the sound department. To deal with such a topic and winning an award in sound design is terrific. I have done several narrations for films but this has been so satisfactory,” said Kapil Bora.

“Nero’s Guests” by Deepa Bhatia about government apathy to farmers’ suicides has won the best non-fiction award for films about thirty minutes, ‘Vitthal’ by Vinoo Cholibarambil and ‘The Spell’ by Umesh Kulkarni share the best short fiction film award in the IDPA Film Awards of Excellence for 2009.

Gold, Silver, Certificates of Merit and Special Mention awards have been announced in as many as 46 categories for which juries met in Mumbai and Delhi.

Another film, 'The Wild Meat Trail' by Assam girl Rita Banerji and Shilpi Sharma has been named for four awards (best film on environment, non-fiction sound design, editing and cinematography).

Abdul Gani

BY ABDUL GANI

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