

Handagama: Rear Admiral Weerasekera wants me punished

by Shamindra Ferdinando
 Film maker Asoka Handagama brought Rear Admiral Sarath Weerasekera's critical review of *Me Mage Sandai* to President Chandrika Kumaratunga's notice at the Presidential Film Awards ceremony at President's House Friday night.

After receiving the coveted Best Film and Best Director awards for his controversial movie *Me Mage Sandai* (2001). It secured 11 awards. Handagama obtained Kumaratunga's permission to address the gathering.

He emphasized the need to wipe out racism while applauding what he termed as Kumaratunga's pioneering role in the peace process. He praised Kumaratunga for promoting peace instead of war while taking a

swipe at Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Sarath Weerasekera for being critical of the movie. Weerasekera wanted me punished, Handagama said, referring to an article carried by *Irida Divaina* on its September 4 issue.

The Island dealt with Handagama's *Me Mage Sandai* in an article headlined *Sudu Kalu Saha Alu*: attacking the foot soldier (page 11-September 7).

Weerasekera, in his widely-read article accused Handagama and three other film makers Vimukthi Jayasundara (*Sulanga Enu Pinisa*), Sudath Mahaa-divulwewa (*Sudu kalu saha alu*) and Prasanna Vithanage's (*Ira Mediyama*) for an outright attack on the Sinhalese in general, and Buddhists in particular.



Best actors and best actresses with their Friday night... Sanath Gunatilleke (Sakman Maluwa), Anoma Janadari (Thani Thatuwen Piyabanna), Kamal Addararachchi (Agni Dahaya), Vasanthi Chathurani (Sudu Sevanali), Jackson Anthony (Aswesuma) and Dilhani Ekanayake (Me Mage Sandai).

Vimukthi Jayasundara's award winning film (Camera d'Or, Cannes 2005) screened to a group of invitees including the press at the Savoy cinema, left the vast majority of viewers shaken. We commented on Jayasundara's work in an article headlined *Sulanga Enu Pinisa: Terrorism, Black cinema and the soldier* (page 11-September 10).

Handagama's *Thani Thatuwen Piyabanna* (2003) also bagged the Best Film and Best Director awards. Awards were given for films released in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Me Mage Sandai also received a nomination for best actor (Saumya Liyanage) who plays a key role in *Sulanga Enu Pinisa*.

Altogether 66 awards were presented during the brief ceremony. In her brief speech, Kumaratunga acknowledged that successive governments failed to look after the interests of the movie industry. She said that a one good movie is better than 1000 political speeches. Kumaratunga said that she would not be present at next year's awards ceremony but would continue to do her utmost to help the industry.



Internationally acclaimed film maker Asoka Handagama receives the Best Director's award for his controversial movie *Me Mage Sandai* (2001)



President Chandrika Kumaratunga presents *Divaina* staffer Jayantha Chandrasiri with the Best Director's award for his *Box Office smash, Agni Dahaya* in 2002.



Former Presidential media advisor Sanath Gunatilleke receives the Best Actor's award for his role in *Sakman Maluwa* (2003) Pix by Kamal Wanniarachchi

WA ESALA PERAHERA SEPTEMBER 2005

Lunawa Esala Perahera Sunday 11th September Temple premises Sri Lunawa and will parade wa, carrying the Sacred Chariots carrying the rd Kataragama & Silver niyan. The Perahera it of several elephants, w Country Traditional and Hewisi Drummers.

NIBM Awards



Business Management had its Diploma Awards Ceremony in Main Hall of the BMICH.

on. Minister of Skills Development, Vocational & Technical Guest and Dr. Hans Wijesuriya, Chief Executive Officer of the Guest of Honour.

awards the Diploma Certificate to Ms. Janeeshaatha Dodankotuwa, Chairman of the NIBM, Ms. C. S. General of the NIBM, Mr. D. P. Nanayakkara, Director are also in the picture.