

Shabana and politics are still best friends

The activist side of Bollywood's one of the most versatile actress Shabana Azmi remains as strong today as it was earlier.

'I was passionately involved in the BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) elections. I supported the independent candidate Adolf d'Souza,' Shabana told IANS.

'Only Rs.100,000 was spent. I personally canvassed for him, visited slums and upper middleclass colonies. It's not my victory. It just shows what active participation by citizens can achieve.'

Shabana got full on support from the film fraternity.

'The support Javed (Akhtar) and I got from the film industry was so amazing. All it took was one phone call to Anil Kapoor, Kirron Kher and Diya Mirza and they were on board. It was wonderful to see these people as residents of Juhu, who genuinely cared for the city. I was very proud of the industry.

'I feel as passionately for the smaller issues as the larger ones. I get very heartened by even smaller changes. I see the empowerment of the slum dwellers happening. And I'm overjoyed.'

She's also heartened by Canada based Indian filmmaker Deepa Mehta's 'Water' going to the Oscars. She was originally to do the film before saffron activists pushed the project out of India and Shabana out of the project.

Sighs Shabana: 'The Oscar nomination is truly a validation of Deepa's work. And my God, how wonderful it would be if she really gets the Oscar! It would be a slap on the face for all those who didn't want 'Water' to be made.'

She recalls with a laugh her shaved head for 'Water', which now stars Seema Biswas, Lisa Ray and John Abraham.

'If my husband had his way I'd gone around with a shaved head for the rest of my life. He fancied me without hair. I remember at Farhan's wedding I was completely bald with my head filled with sindoor. Rekha and Dimple (Kapadia) looked at me and exclaimed, 'Babe you got guts.'

Saddened by the death of her erstwhile colleague Vijay Arora, Shabana remembers, 'Rajesh Khanna used to say Vijay would be the next Rajesh Khanna. Vijay was a gold medallist from the Pune Film Institute. He was a gentle soul. I wasn't able to establish any rapport with him during our only film together 'Kadamabri' aeons ago.'

She was clueless about his last days and asks, 'What was he doing during his final years?'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)