

Those were the days...

In conversation with Syed Abdul Hadi

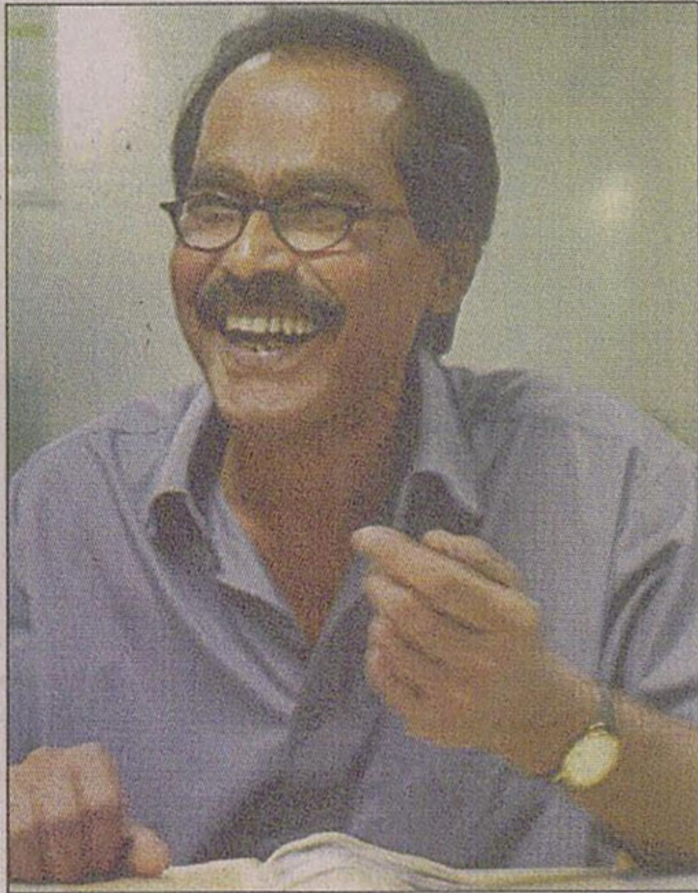
SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

At the Dhaka University, friends would often refer to Syed Abdul Hadi as "Bhomora" -- meaning a bumblebee. As a student, Hadi would often sing Shyamal Mitra's popular song *Bhomora phooler bon-e* at the cultural programmes. It doesn't leave much to the imagination how he picked up his nickname! "It was music composer Karim Shahabuddin who heard me at a function and introduced me to the film industry in 1960. My debut as a playback singer was in the film titled *Yeh Bhi Ek Kahani*."

"From then on there was no looking back," says Ekushey Padak 2000 winner Hadi.

A household name and a musical talent in our country for about half a century, Hadi is distressed at the current music scene. "The entertainment industry is in disarray. It is more of a show business," he says. "I view music similar to a flowing river. As the river flows, there is no human hand that can change its course; similarly, music takes its own course. It is rarely still-and like sparkling crystal clear water, it also reflects the society where the music originates."

"Take for instance, Kolkata in the '30s when it was the centre of performing arts for the Bengalis. The cultural field was vibrant. After the establishment of HMV, the Calcutta Radio Station in 1928 and the talkies in place of silent movies brought about a transformation;



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from then on music industry grew to greater heights in West Bengal. This was a booming period when artistes of immense talents, including singers, composers and lyricists came together to create the golden era of Bengali music.

"The sweet romantic notes of the '30s-'60s were hummed by one and all."

"After Partition, music as an industry developed with the introduction of radio, cinema and other media. During 1965, HMV was established in erstwhile East Pakistan. However, as a component of film songs, recordings were still carried out in Lahore, West Pakistan. You can see the reason why music as an industry hardly attained full potential in this part of the region. Even the market was stagnant," continues Hadi.

Hadi goes on to add, "During the '70s, audio industries began to take shape, although very few in number. However, during the '70s, the genre of *adhumik* songs of our country reached its zenith and we surpassed the popularity of the songs of West Bengal," says the singer.

By the '80s music industry in our country, had gained momentum. I agree there are two sides to a coin, but I fully disagree with the all out 'commercial approach' in the music industry. In recent times due to commercialisation, music has turned into a 'commodity'. It has debased the quality and as a listener I feel cheated."

In a lighter moment, the singer says, "Remaining at peace with

oneself is a prerequisite for any performer. Musicians need to concentrate, so as to strike a chord in the audience. That is exactly what 'angling' is for me. While fishing, I am deeply focused as I soak in the tranquility of the all-pervasive nature. There are instances when I would have recording sessions but be totally oblivious of the time. I would sit on a *macha* (bamboo platform) and wait for that tug on my fishing line! Since there were no cell phones at that time, people would come frantically looking for me at my favourite hangout spots near the lakeside and rush me to the recording studios!

"The recording sessions would often continue the entire night, but we would not be fatigued. Such was the passion amongst the recording team of artistes and technicians that it seemed to hang like a heavy cloth over us."

Discussing the recent talent hunt programmes he says, "I strongly believe that the programmes should be thoroughly scrutinised so that only the best come forward. It should not only be a commercial venture. The best talents of the country have always come through a range of experiences and training. Emerging artistes should be warned against the evils of cheap popularity - they can easily lead you to believe you're on top of the world when you're actually little more than a momentary 'craze'."

Celebrity quotes on World Cup '06

Ferdausi Rahman

Celebrating her birthday on June 28, veteran artiste Ferdausi Rahman said, "I'm not a football expert and not a die hard fan of any certain team either. My husband and sons watch the games with much fervour and I enjoy the fun filled hoopla. I do recall one incident from a previous FIFA World Cup. Yes, I'm referring to the 'Hand of God' goal scored by Diego Maradona in the quarter-final match of the 1986 FIFA World Cup between England and Argentina."

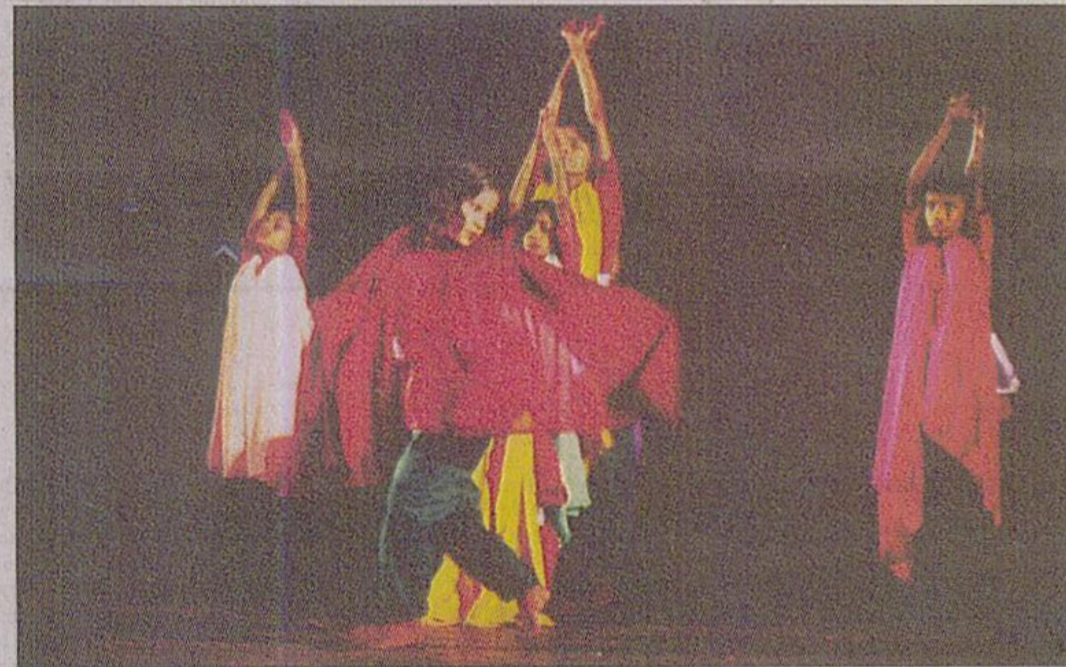
"I guess you can say I'm leaning towards the Argentina team."



Aruna Biswas

Aruna Biswas will be busy shooting for an upcoming television serial in a village throughout the World Cup fever. However, if she does get hold of a television she will be supporting Brazil. Her eight-year-old son is an avid fan of Brazil and has already adorned their house with flags of Brazil all around. Asked to predict which team could win the World Cup this season, the actress-cum-director says, "My guess is as good as anybody else's. It is premature to make such predictions until the matches get into full swing."

Curtains go down on Seventh Children's Theatre Festival



One of the plays staged during the festival

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The Seventh Children's Theatre Festival came to an end on June 28. The festival, which kicked off on June 12, featured 80 children's theatre groups from all around Bangladesh. The festival was organised by the People's Theatre Association (PTA). The closing ceremony was held at the Shishu Academy auditorium. Two plays *Poritran* and *Rashtar Chhele* were held on the final day. The main

attraction of the event was a dance performed by small children.

About 85 participants received Manjya Kuri Padak at the ceremony. Also four theatre personalities, Dipankar Das Ratan (Tirjak, Jessore), Polash Khandorkar (Uchcharon Academy, Bogra), Shamim Azad (Shonali Natyogoshi, Shetabganj), Ronuzzaman Khan AKA Dada Bhai (posthumous) received Shishu Natyogoshi Padak for great contribution to children's drama. Kids

Cultural Institute Chittagong also received an award.

The chief guest of the ceremony was eminent actor Ramendu Majumdar. Special guests were Syed Manzoorul Islam advisor PTA; Ataur Rahman, general secretary of PTA Bangladesh; Golam Quddus, general secretary of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, All Imam, eminent writer and others. The closing ceremony was presided over by Liaquat Ali Lucky, secretary general PTA.

Theatre Festival, Chittagong

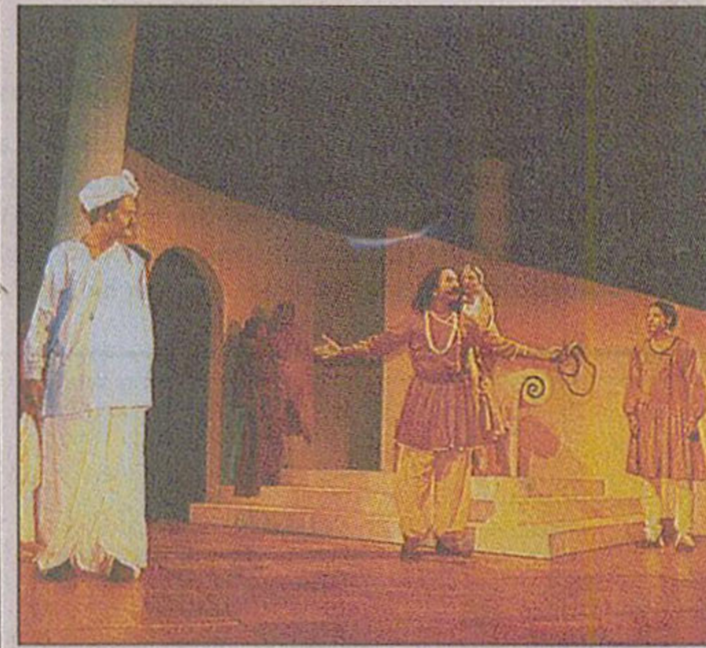
Khudhito Pashan, the last show of the festival

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The final show of the ongoing theatre festival arranged by Nandimukh, *Khudhito Pashan*, Dhaka based theatre troupe Shubochan Natya Shongsad production, will be staged today at 7 pm at the Shipakala Academy Auditorium, Chittagong.

The darker side of aristocracy -- the oppression of women -- is the theme of Tagore's classic *Khudhito*

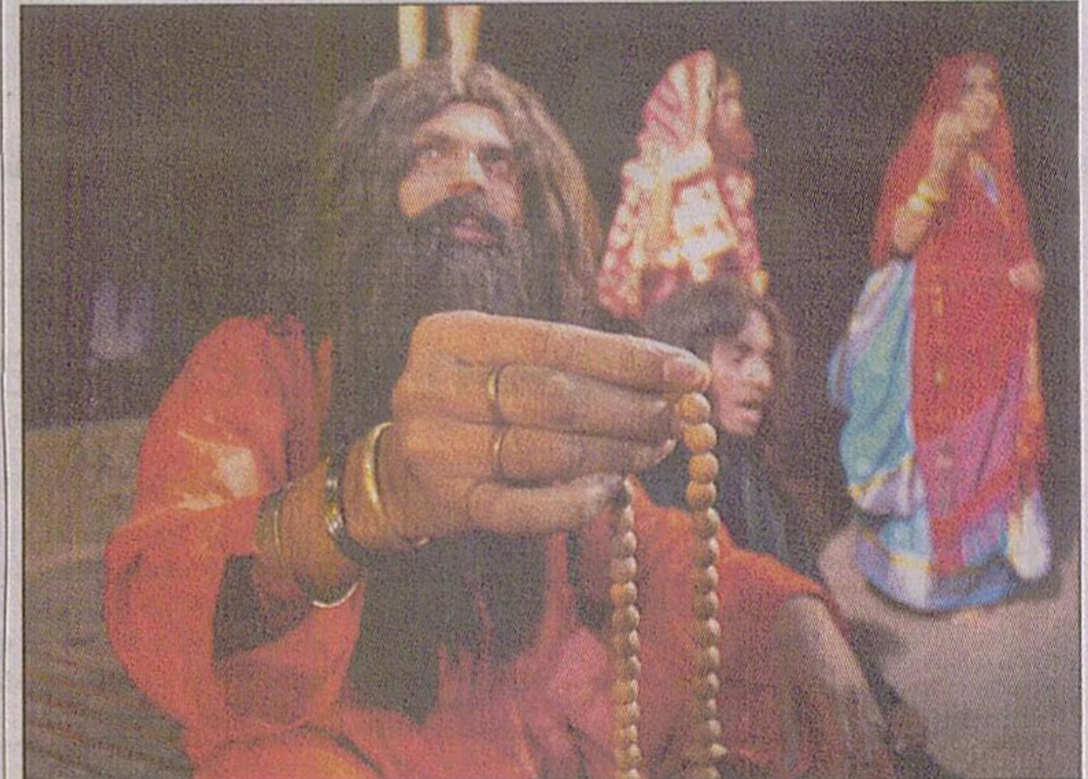
Pashan. Samar Chattopadhyaya has dramatised Tagore's short story. For professional reasons, the protagonist of *Khudhito Pashan* goes near Barich 'Prashad' (palace), which was used by King Shah Mahmud the second for his entertainment with his courtesans. There in his surrealism, the protagonist hears the wailing of the souls of courtesans. Khaled Khan directs the play.



A scene from *Khudhito Pashan*

A gripping saga

Palli Kabi Jasim Uddin's "Beder Meye" staged



The play focuses lifestyle of the gypsies

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Padatik Natya Sangsad staged Palli Kabi Jasim Uddin's timeless tale *Beder Meye* at Bangladesh Mahila Samity Auditorium recently. The play is directed by Irene Parvin Lopa.

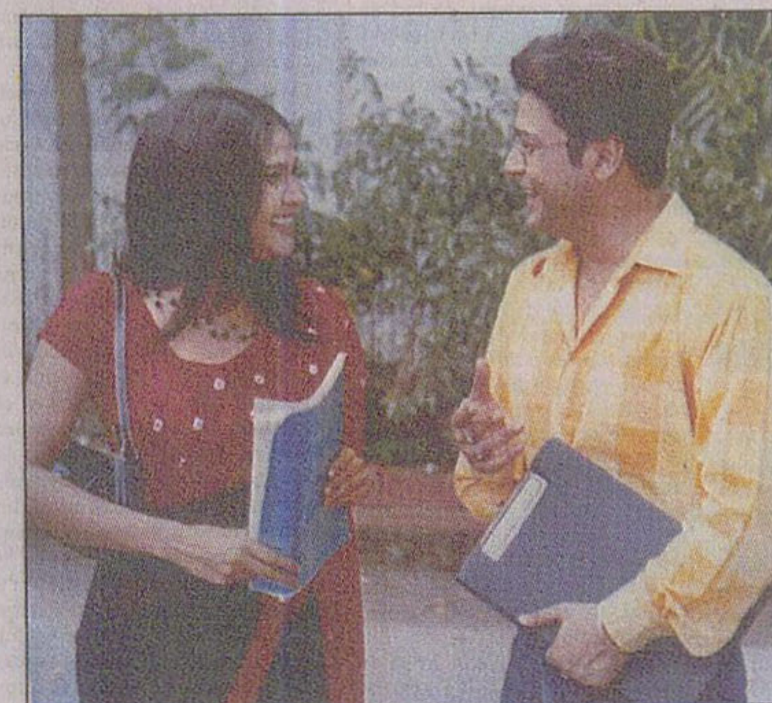
As the title implies, the play is

the saga of a *bede* girl. Named Champabati, her life changes forever when she is abducted by the *morol* (village headman). Despite fervent appeals, her husband (Gaya), fails to rescue her. He then leaves the village and marries another girl. Subsequent events

lead to a dramatic denouement. The cast comprises Wahidul Islam, Mominul Haque Dipu, Saida Samsi Ara, Shafiqur Rahman Sagor and Arefa Sultana Lina, among others.

Beder Meye is the 28th production of Padatik.

Bangla feature film *Porom Priyo* to be premiered today



Shimla and Ferdous in the film

year student of the same university she goes to. The film follows the ups and downs of Sharmin's life and unravels the uneasy rivalry of the two main male characters.

Produced under Banglalink banner, the film will be released soon in theatres and the world premier will be held on Channel-i, today at 2:40pm, says a press release.

Porom Priyo is a Bangla feature film penned by Ismail Mohammed. Scriptwriter Noor-Ul-Alam directs the film.

The film has an impressive star cast with Bulbul Ahmed, Ferdous, Shimla, Rozi Afsari, Probir Mitra and Afzal Sharif heading the list.

The film narrates the tale of an affluent family. Sharmin is a university student and the only daughter of industrialist Aziz Chowdhury. The latter wants her to tie the knot with his friend's son Salimullah Bhuiyan. With this aim in view, Salim and his father begin move in with Aziz and his family in their luxurious mansion.

A vivacious girl with strong convictions, Sharmin does not like the lascivious and greedy Salim from the very beginning. She has a fondness for Faisal, who is from a middle class family and a final

The greatest superhero movies

The Superhero genre is a crowded one, and while it has much room for mediocrity -- Ang Lee's *Hulk* comes to mind -- audiences worldwide have seen some truly special examples of caped celluloid magic.

But this is not a list of comic-book movies. Such a list would include gems like *Sin City* and *A History of Violence*. This is all about superheroes, and these are 10 must-watch films for any fan.

Hellboy
Guillermo Del Toro's 2004 adaptation of Mike Mignola's dark (albeit bright red) comic hero isn't a spectacular film. It isn't mammoth-budgeted, doesn't have an amazing theme, and has no one particularly memorable scene. Still, it's one of the most authentic recreations of a comic-book character ever seen on screen, and deserves brownie points.

X-Men
Bryan Singer's first foray into superhero cinema, the first *X-Men* film was quite a challenge. It required several extremely complex origin stories woven into a coherent plot structure. Singer manages the show with much deftness and frequent wit.

Superman II
In 1980, Richard Lester's Superman sequel had very little going for it. But despite Marlon Brando walking out of the franchise, Lester's actors didn't let him down. Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder shone as Clark and Lois in a touching, if flawed, story -- and Gene Hackman was a magnificent Lex Luthor.

Matrix
While not really a comic book hero -- well, not officially anyway, as directors Wachowski Bros never acknowledged ripping off comic

guru Warren Ellis -- Neo was nothing short of pretty darned super, not to mention cool as hell. The sequels were not as promising though.

Batman
The caped crusader came to life with Tim Burton's brooding yet whimsical version. And, with Michael Keaton as Batman and Jack Nicholson as the Joker, it was never

going to be a straight-faced attempt. The humour was dark, the dialogues were fun, Prince did the soundtrack and Nicholson's Joker remains the coolest supervillain in screen history.

Spider-Man
Sam Raimi took the reins of this long-neglected Marvel Comics favourite, and wrought some serious magic. Despite scepti-

tics wondering about the choice of Tobey Maguire for the lead role, the actor did great in a film that left the viewer with nothing to do but gape.

X2: X-Men United
By the time Bryan Singer made this sequel, he was well into super-gear, and boy does it show! Mutants have never been handled as well, and while the cool factor lay entirely with Magneto, this remains one of the sharpest films the genre has ever seen.

Superman Returns
The film opens in theatres worldwide today, and Singer becomes the genre's most-celebrated director yet as he crafts this magnificent tribute to the classic *Superman* films while taking the story forward with tremendous significance. Bringing Clark back could have really stung. Singer pulls the job off like a poet.

Superman (1978)
The new *Superman* film just underscores the immortal significance of Richard Donner's classic. Christopher Reeve was "Superman", and while modern times have the audience used to "one-of-us" superheroes, this one is so gloriously larger than life that it is still watched in pure awe.

Spider-Man 2
The webslinger again, back in a Shakespearean tale of love, responsibility, relationships, madmen and Mary Jane -- in short, another day in the life of Peter Parker, but told so superbly that this Sam Raimi film ends up not just the greatest superhero movie of all time, but one truly special blockbuster by any standards.



Spider-Man



Matrix