

Up close with Purnima

All for mainstream Bengali movies

MAHMUDA AFROZ

THE doe-eyed quintessential Bengali beauty Purnima, is perhaps the reigning dream girl in Bangladeshi cinema. At 23, she has been a part of the film industry for almost 10 years and in the process has won the hearts of millions throughout the country.

Purnima entered the film industry when she was a student of Class 9 at Science Laboratory School. Director Zakir Hossain Raju discovered her. However, before joining the industry as a lead actress, she had done *Shotru Ghayel* with Rubel as a child artist.

As a youngster, everyone around Purnima adored her. "I was a naughty kid but my teachers could never punish me. My 'gullible' and 'naive' looks would always melt their heart," admits Purnima. However when she was punished, she would discretely tie up the shoelaces of her teachers. "While they couldn't do anything about it, they would end up complaining to my mother," she recalls.

Although she is constantly in the public eye, Purnima says she is a homebody. She doesn't like interacting with strangers unless it's related to her profession. In her own words, "I am outright unsocial, I don't like partying, I would rather sit in a corner in my room and spend time listening to music."



"We do try to make good movies and need support from the audience. So please watch our movies and then you have a right to be judgmental"

Answering a question on how she handles fame, Purnima responds: "I am comfortable with my popularity. In Bangladesh we are not hunted down by the paparazzi like in the West. Only during a shoot there is a crowd, but they are decent. If I go out, hardly anyone bothers me. Besides we are what we are because of our fans. I have chosen a public career so I should know how to deal with it."

Purnima prefers movies to serials or advertisements. "The film industry is my second home. As it takes months or even years to complete a movie, the relationship between actors and the crew develops. It's like one big family. Besides everyone in the industry pampers me like a child. I just love being here." Besides in certain ways serials are more complicated feels Purnima. "One needs to memorise lengthy scripts and there are not many retakes. One has to maintain one's own wardrobe and makeup unlike in the movie industry in our neighbouring country or in the West where everything is taken care of by others."

Purnima talks about the plight of the Bangladeshi movie industry compared to its counterpart in India. "It's actually sad to see how the Bangladeshi movie industry is deteriorating. At one point we were doing better than Tollywood (the movie industry of Kolkata) but today we are lagging behind. There is no point in even trying to compare ourselves with Bollywood." The main problem Purnima feels is our use of old technology. "We still have the same old cameras, lights and other equipments that were used 25 years ago. How can one expect to keep up if there is nothing new to offer?"

Purnima calls on cine-enthusiasts to watch mainstream Bangla movies. "While there are indecent movies, there are good movies as well. People should not sneer at us just because we are from the Bangladeshi cine world. We do try to make good movies and need support from the audience. So please watch our movies and then you have a right to be judgmental," concludes Purnima.

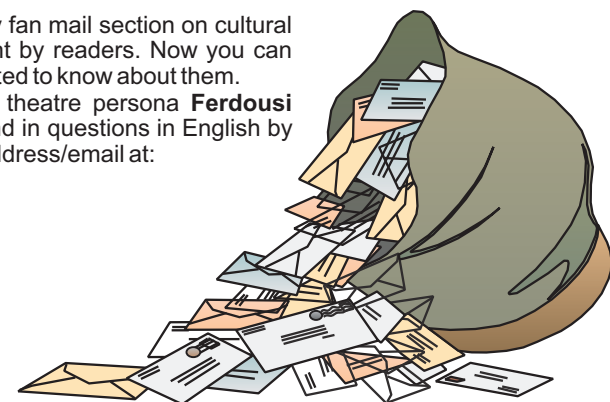
Purnima is upbeat about her role in the upcoming movie *Hridoyer Kotha*.

fan mail!

The Culture Page is starting a monthly fan mail section on cultural personalities, based on questions sent by readers. Now you can ask the stars whatever you always wanted to know about them. This month we turn the spotlight on theatre persona **Ferdousi Majumdar**. Readers are invited to send in questions in English by August 18 latest, with their full name, address/email at:

fan mail
Culture page
The Daily Star
19 Karwan Bazar
Dhaka 1215
or
culture@thedailystar.net
and
culture_dailystar@yahoo.com

Please note that *The Daily Star* holds the right to select questions sent by the readers.



Road to 'Daruchini Dwip'

Update on 'Lux Channel i Superstar'

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Lux Channel i Superstar is heating up with the selection of 20 finalists. The contestants and a group of renowned personalities are in Cox's Bazar now where a grooming session is being held.

The contestants are going through an intensive acting session in Cox's Bazar. Out of the 20 selected, 10 contestants will make it to the next round, to be held soon. The finalists were selected out of more than 10,000 entries from all over Bangladesh. Popular cultural personalities Asaduzzaman Noor, Sara Zaker and Israfil Shahin, among others are grooming the participants.

This year's winner of the contest will play the lead character in a film based on Humayun



The finalists with the judges Tariq Anam, Subarna Mustafa and Alamgir (in the middle) of *Lux Channel i Superstar*

Ahmed's popular book *Daruchini Dwip*. Channel i every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:35pm. The show is currently aired on

Movie watch

Nargis Akhter's latest venture 'Megher Koley Roud'

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

The release of the movie *Megher Koley Roud* will mark the return of director Nargis Akhter to the Bangladeshi movie circuit.

The film is a sequel to her award-winning *Meghla akash*. *Megher Koley Roud* features the ignorance, fear, stigma, discrimination in public and at workplace that hit those afflicted by HIV/AIDS and their legal battles in search of retribution.

The film stars popular actors Riaz, Popy and TV star Tony Dayes. Certain portions of the film have already been shot in Malaysia and shooting is currently underway in Bangladesh. During the 20-day round the clock shooting in Malaysia, the unit travelled to several locations, including Putrajaya, Cyberjaya, Penang Batu Ferringhi Beach, Penang Dam, KL Tower, Lake Garden, Twin Towers, National Monument, shopping malls and cultural sites.

Talking about her experience, Nargis says, "A movie should be

entertaining but at the same time can be realistic, informative and thought provoking. Malaysia is a fascinating place. The people are full of life and very hospitable. It seemed logical that I start my film there, as I understand the place well. It was indeed a matter of pride to have, Siti Faridah Hj Arshad, Penang State Assembly Woman of the Country personally visit the sets of my film and give our unit a hearty reception.

"The film will be a light-hearted, romantic, and family entertainer. I am also making sure the music of my movie catches the attention of the listeners. I hope that this film would not just cater to the taste of Bangladeshi audience but the international audience as well," she added.

The film will be completed soon and released in December.

Popy and Riaz in a scene from the movie



Discussion

Manuscript preservation: The need of the hour

KAVITA CHARANJI

Imagine a precious manuscript falling prey to the vagaries of nature, environmental pollution, or just sheer human negligence. Yet as KK Gupta consultant conservation of the National Mission for Manuscripts, based in India, points out, "Decay is the law of nature and manuscripts are no exception to this. What we can do is prolong the fight and for this one needs to identify the factors that cause decay -- such as temperature, humidity, light, environmental pollution, physical handling, disasters, biological growth and defective restoration, among others."

Gupta in the course of his visit to Dhaka, gave a presentation on Strategies of Preventive Conservation of Manuscripts at the Bangladesh National Museum -- this included causes, how to ameliorate this menace and means of generating awareness.

According to Gupta, the two major culprits behind the deterioration of manuscripts are poor storage combined with mishandling and humidity. The need of the hour, he says, is to be aware of the damaging factors and then deal with them directly. More importantly, he says, is the necessity for a "sense of belonging" akin to the way we handle and preserve our holy books, be it the *Koran*, *Bhagwat Gita* or the *Bible*.

Gupta brings with him a wealth of experience in conservation. He points out that the government-run National Mission for Manuscripts has the mandate to save this valuable but less visible cultural inheritance.

The Mission has collected data on manuscripts and brings information on the subject to



KK Gupta delivers a lecture at the National Museum

the public through lectures, seminars, publications and specially designed programmes for schoolchildren and university students.

Though the idea of lamination of sensitive documents has been floated around, Gupta is critical of this method of preservation. As he says, "Lamination may bring about change in the complexion of the paper, make it waxy to touch. Furthermore, the laminated material becomes

stiff and not always reversible."

The programme was organised jointly by the Indian High Commission and the Bangladesh National Museum. Such events are welcome, says Professor Mahmudul Haque, director general of Bangladesh National Museum, since there is "a wealth of manuscripts in Bangladesh and the Museum."

Buzz

Reclusive Suchitra may not appear for award



Suchitra Sen

"I am very happy that *Dida* (grandmother) has won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award this year," actress Raima Sen said in an interview.

Though official confirmation is not forthcoming, family sources said Bengali movie legend -- and Raima's reclusive grandmother -- Suchitra Sen has been awarded India's highest cinema honour.

That obviously leads to the next question: Would Suchitra Sen, a recluse like Hollywood legend Greta Garbo, for more than 20 years, end the mystery that shrouds her and accept the award from the President of India?

Sen's granddaughter's answer comes as a rude disappointment: "Dida won't come out of seclusion to accept the award."

But it is the Dadasaheb Phalke Award! To be conferred by no less a personage than the President. Suchitra Sen's daughter, Moonmoon Sen had nothing to add, "I don't want to talk about if Ma is going to accept the award or not."

The focus then shifts to West Bengal Congress leader Subrata Mukherjee, who is said to be the Union government's emissary to persuade the actress to accept the award in person. But Mukherjee was unavailable for comment.

"The government could not have made a better choice," a close friend of the actress who did not

want to be identified said. "She is living in a tranquil world where publicity and the glare of flashlights do not exist. I know how hard she has worked to attain this peace of existence. She will not let it go just for an award, however great," he added.

People living in and around Sen's posh south Kolkata home are bubbling with enthusiasm at the news. "I wish I could convince her to shake off her mystery veil, at least once. The award is not only an honour for her but for the entire city," said Anuradha Goswami, a high school teacher.

Disagreed another Bengali legend, writer Sunil Gangopadhyay, a former sheriff of Kolkata, "Accept it or not, Sen is India's Greta Garbo and someone of her stature has the right to accept or refuse an award. Being someone who has grown up on her films, her winning such a prestigious award is all that matters to me. Whether she accepts it or not should not be the point of discussion."

"Sen's greatness," he added, "must be assessed in respect to the celluloid world as it exists now. As we weigh Sen against the so-called stars of today, we realise how great she was. There could not have been a better choice for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award."

Source: Internet

'Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna': New Bollywood movie probes marriage

Bollywood is set to take a big leap with the opening of a blockbuster set around marital tensions, a brave departure by an industry known more for showcasing marriage as the heart of Indian family values.

Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna (Never Say Goodbye), an extra-marital potboiler which is all set to release soon, is one of the most eagerly awaited releases of the year.

The story begins where most traditional Bollywood plots end -- after a couple hold hands and walk happily into the sunset -- and explores what happens to relationships after marriage.

"The alarming statistics of failing marriages in recent times often made me wonder about the relevance of the institution to our society today," said director Karan Johar.

"The seed for *Kabhi Alvida*... was born somewhere from these thoughts."

In the past, Bollywood's attempts at examining marriage and its shortcomings were subjects touched only by art house movies with little mass appeal.

Although there were rare attempts by mainstream filmmakers as well, none went the distance and questioned the relevance of marriage itself, as *Kabhi*



(L-R) Rani Mukherjee, Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta in the movie

Alvida... does.

The accepted wisdom has been to portray young love as pure, naive and disconnected from all complications in a society, which is only now opening up to Western

social trends.

Such love, in most stories, would culminate in a happy family wedding album after the lovers had gone through a series of song and dance sequences, convinced or

rebelled against their parents and battled villains.

Kabhi Alvida...is not bereft of Bollywood's song and dance staple, but critics say it has handled the theme in a refreshingly new manner.

The film is about two seemingly happy couples who meet their soulmates outside marriage, forcing them to look at their relationships from a new perspective.

"There are many dimensions to a relationship. We don't say this or that dimension is right," Shah Rukh Khan, Bollywood's hottest star and the film's lead actor, told *Reuters*.

"We have just tried to show one dimension, one possibility."

Kabhi Alvida has several reputations riding on it -- Khan, the iconic Amitabh Bachchan, his son Abhishek, and 34-year-old Johar -- considered a Bollywood whizkid who has so far made syrupy romances that became superhits.

The film is set in New York and revolves around the lives of a set of affluent Indian immigrants, something that some critics say Indian audiences may not be able relate to.

But Johar feels relationship problems are universal.

Source: Internet