



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

“Love your language like you love your mother”

— Sharmin Lucky

Sharmin Lucky is a renowned television presenter, elocutionist and voiceover artiste. She has been hosting *The Daily Star's Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards* for the past three years. Recently, in a candid conversation with *The Daily Star*, she talked about the awards programme and her upcoming ventures.

SHARMIN JOYA

“Recitation has always been my passion,” says the artiste. “My career began through E Shomoy, a recital organisation, in 1988.” Former Cultural Minister and thespian Asaduzzaman Noor is the president of this organisation, which is set to make a comeback as Taire Naire Na. Lucky also worked as a voiceover artiste at the time. Later, she received many offers for modelling and TV shows. “Hosting the culinary show, *Siddiqa Kabir's Recipe*, was the turning point of my career,” shares Lucky. The show, aired for a staggering nine years, was a massive hit, and turned Lucky into a household name.

Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards is organised by *The Daily Star*, in association with IPDC Finance Limited. The programme honours and celebrates the unsung women change makers of the country. “I still remember the moment when I was called to host the programme's first instalment. However, I was abroad, so I could not host that

one. I always look forward to this programme,” says Lucky. “These women restore my faith in humanity.” This year is even more special to the artiste, as her organisation Ponchokonnya, a female-led repertory initiative, will kick off the show with a heartfelt recitation performance. “Ponchokonnya provides platforms for women who are passionate about elocution,” she adds.

Lucky is currently busy with Taire Naire Na, the recital organisation, conceived under the banner of E Shomoy. “Our organisation is going to complete 25 years this April. Prominent elocutionist Prodidip Ghosh has promised to join us, celebrating our silver jubilee,” she says. “I would like to say to all of my fans and well wishers, love your language like you love your mother. Bangla is very melodic and powerful.” Lucky also wants to work on improving the medium of elocution overall, as it plays a great role in language-learning.

Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards will take place today at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden.

French novelist and playwright Laurent Gaudé's literary talk at AFD

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD) hosted a discussion with Laurent Gaudé, an acclaimed French novelist and playwright on March 4 at Auditorium Nouvelle Vague, AFD, Dhanmondi. Shishir Bhattacharja, Director, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, moderated the event.

In the discussion, Gaudé talked about his journey as a novelist, the themes and characters of his novels. He is currently staying in Dhaka and collecting ideas to write his new novel.

Born in 1972, Gaudé studied Literature and Drama in Paris. In 1997, he published his first play, *Onysos le furieux* (Furious Onysos). He spent the next few years writing for theatre. In 2001, he published his first novel, *Cris* (Shouts). One year later, he won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens and the Prix des Libraires with *Death of an Ancient King*.

In 2004, he was awarded the Prix Goncourt for his novel, *The House of Scorta*, which has been translated in more than 30 countries.

Laurent Gaudé is also the author of a number of short stories and poems. His plays are performed in France and abroad. His latest book, *Our Europe*, published in 2019, was awarded the European Book Prize.



PHOTO: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA



PHOTO: COURTESY

2nd VOHH Foto Fest underway in Chattogram

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The second edition of Voice of Humanity and Hope (VOHH) Foto Fest, an international photography event, began at Shilpakala Academy in Chattogram on March 4, 2020. Eminent American war photographer Heidi Levine, along with Shoeb Faruquee, Founder and CEO,

Photo Bank Gallery, and Moududul Alam, Former President and Founder, Chittagong Photographic Society, were present as honourable guests. VOHH Foto Fest predominantly centres on humanitarian, social and environmental issues.

The festival features exhibitions, presentations, discussions, artist talks,

lectures and portfolio reviews, among other things. A master class conducted by Heidi Levine is one of the highlights of the event. Photographs from the festival will be exhibited in different locations across Chattogram, including University of Chittagong and a local garments factory. The event will conclude on March 13.

TV WATCH



‘Apon Adhar’, written by Shafiqur Rahman Shantanu and directed by Dipu Hazra, will be broadcast today at 9 pm on Maasranga Television. It features Aparna Ghose, Emon and FS Nayeem among others.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Devi: A short film with a strong message

SHABABA IQBAL

Set in a single room occupied by many women, *Devi* is the story of perseverance. The film opens with a few women who seemingly belong to different worlds but are all stuck in the same room – but why? The story unravels in the next 13 minutes, as we get to know the trauma that they have suffered.

Written and directed by Priyanka Banerjee, *Devi* is an empathetic attempt to show that no matter the age, caste, religion and class, female rape victims are all stuck in the same purgatory. Be it the God-fearing woman (Kajol), or the deaf-dumb girl (Yashaswini Dayama), or even an older lady (Neena Kulkarni) – these women are different from each other, but suffer the same fate. As they watch the news on television, they learn that their little room will have more occupants with each passing day.

Priyanka Banerjee has tried to tell an effective



story in a few minutes, and she hits hard towards the end with a spine-chilling moment. The subject and the execution of the film are strong.

When you consider the barrage of rape cases that are reported in the media every day and the fear that resides in every woman, *Devi* makes you feel even more helpless. The film is available for public viewing on YouTube.