

Shanu Reaching for the stars



Shanu after being crowned (above) and performing at ... Superstar (R)

KARIM WAHEED

A dreamy-eyed young girl in Sylhet city used to watch beauty pageants like Miss Universe, Miss World and contemplated what it would be like to wear a glittering crown, waving at a star-

struck audience. Little did the girl know her fantasy would one day turn into reality. Shanarei Devi Shanu has always been a go-getter but according to her even she was not absolutely certain initially that she could win the title *Lux Channel i Superstar*.

A graduate in English Literature from Sylhet's MC College, Shanu is a member of a theatre group called Sylhet Darpan. Those who have watched her act in the show *Lux Channel i Superstar*, can assume she has acting skills necessary to become not just a 'star' but a true actress as well. Her acting even got rave reviews from one of the toughest judges, seasoned actress Subarna Mustafa. Shanu says, she is passionate about acting but she is first and foremost, a dancer.

Shanu has been performing Manipuri dance since she was a child, like most young girls of the Manipuri community. She is fascinated by the exquisite costumes of Manipuri dancers. Clad in a traditional *janique* (skirt), *innafi* (long scarf) and blouse, Shanu must've been a vision. She even received a gold medal in the dance category (*Ka* section) at Jatiyo Shishu Puroshkar '93. She says, "Although my family and I lived in the city, we've never been alienated from our roots. Festivals like 'Rash', 'Poornia' and 'Rath-jatra' still get me all excited.

"When I was in class V, my uncle asked me if I wanted to act. Apparently, a group called Dhruvotara needed a child artiste and they thought I'd be suitable for the part. That was my first acting gig and I've been infatuated with acting ever since."

So what made her want to participate in ...*Superstar*? Shanu's response: "I was enthusiastic about the show from the get-go, as it focused not only on appearance but talent as well. I felt I had a fair shot at the competition." Incidentally, Shanu also participated in *Lux Anandadhara Miss*

Photogenic in 2000 and stood 6th in the competition. "I did get several offers for TV commercials and other projects and I could've pursued a career in the media. However, because I live in Sylhet and my parents felt I was too young to move to Dhaka and be on my own, I didn't make any effort. I've grown-up since then; I have the maturity level to decide what's good or bad for me and I'm ready to move to Dhaka for my career."

Shanu thinks that Dhaka is still the centre of our cultural arena and to make it big, artistes have no other way around but being here. "However, artistes from outside the big metropolis are getting fair chances now through talents hunts and other shows like *Close up1*, *Bengal Bikash* and ...*Superstar*," says Shanu.

Shanu is not an unfamiliar face to

the TV audience though. In 2003, she played the role of a Sylheti girl named Moyna in an Eid-special play *Boirati*, directed by Shakur Majid. The play featured popular actors Mahfuz and Srabonti as well. A sequence where Shanu's character frantically follows her cousin (Srabonti), tries to stop her but cannot and her outburst after the cousin accidentally falls off a cliff, was heart-rending.

What's next in line for this aspiring actress? "I want to join a theatre group in Dhaka and hone my acting abilities. I want to be a part of TV plays, drama serials, maybe even movies that have scripts that move me. She will be seen in an Eid-special telefilm *Polash Phooler Nolok* by noted author Emdadul Haque Milan.

Here's hoping, the newest "Superstar" can utilise her potentials and become an icon for years to come.



Ferdous and Moushumi in the movie

Meher Nigar

Nazrul's work comes alive on screen

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Impress Telefilm has produced the first film adapted from the story *Meher Nigar* by the Rebel Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Jointly directed by film actress Maushumi and Gulzar, the film features Moushumi, Ferdous, Irin Zaman, Hridoy Shaha, Probr Mitra, Reena Khan, Nader Chowdhury, Shahidul Islam Sachchu and Rehana.

The film is scheduled to be re-

leased this Eid-ul-Fitr and will also be premiered on Channel i on Eid Day. Jointly scripted by Ahmed Zaman Chowdhury, Fredous Hassan and Gitali Hassan, the film is based on a love story.

The story dates back to early twentieth century where a young Afghan man, Yousuf comes to Kashmir to take music lessons from an Indian pandit. He settles down on the bank of the river Jhelam.

Meanwhile, Shabnam, the daughter of his mentor, falls in love with him. Yousuf however, is obsessed with a girl who frequents his dreams. He eventually finds his dream-girl in Meher Nigar who is the daughter of a courtesan. But before he and Meher can enjoy togetherness, Yousuf has to go back to Afghanistan as a war breaks out in his country and the story takes a tragic turn.

CROSS-CURRENT

Amjad Ali Khan's album nominated for Grammy



Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's new album *Moksha* has been nominated for a Grammy in the 'traditional world' category.

Moksha has eight pieces including solos by Khan's sons, Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash. The

album was released in Europe in May and in US in June by Real World Records.

Khan said *Moksha* had been specially packaged for the international market. "This is an attempt to expose the western world to the magic of

sarod," he said. The eight pieces in the album are short, he added, making it easy listening for the western audience.

The final winners are to be announced in next February when the awards will be presented at a glittering function. For Khan, who is on a US tour with his sons, it has been an eventful month. His concerts have been well received. The trio will perform at a concert on October 16. The show, according to its sponsor, has already been sold out.

Conceding that he had experimented a bit in the album, Khan said: "We can innovate and create, but we have to be careful of the classical lineage. Khan said he did not agree with purists who were against experimentation. "They blindly follow conventions," he said. "I innovate, but within the tradition of classical music. We cannot destroy the sanctity of the raga."

No birthday celebrations for Bachchan

While the entire India from the television channels to radio stations were going gaga over superstar Amitabh Bachchan's birthday on October 11, the man himself had cancelled all his birthday celebration plans. He wished to keep his birthday low profile this year in the wake of the earthquake that hit India and Pakistan. Earlier he had planned a birthday bash with close friends and relatives at his residence. But later he just had breakfast with members of AB Corp and his personal staff at his office in Juhu. Also it wasn't a holiday for him on his birthday. He was shooting for an episode of *Kaun Banega Crorepati* subsequently.



Photos confirm Kutcher and Moore wedding



Cover of the OK! magazine

Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore, who had refused to confirm their September 24 wedding, have opened up their photo album.

Photos published on last Wednesday by OK! magazine, which paid an undisclosed sum for the pictures, show the couple tying the knot in a Kabbalah ceremony at their Beverly Hills home.

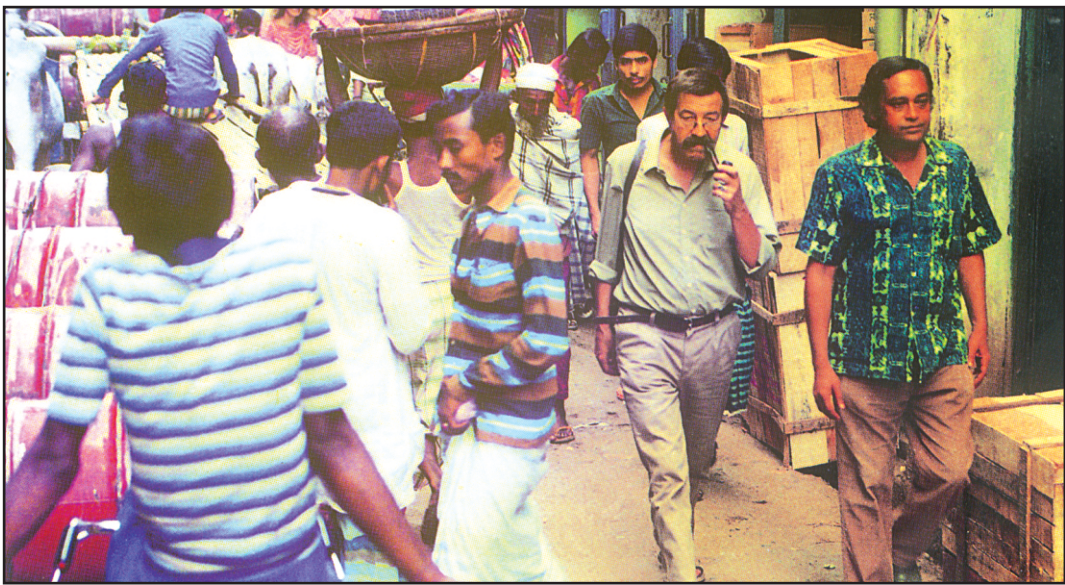
Moore's ex-husband, Bruce Willis, and their three daughters attended the ceremony. Other guests included actor Wilmer Valderrama, Kutcher's *That '70s Show* co-star.

It was the first marriage for the actor, whose film credits include *Cheaper by the Dozen* and *Guess Who?*

The actress has starred in some three dozen films during her 24-year career including *St Elmo's Fire*, *Ghost* and *G.I. Jane*.

Source: Internet

Moments with Gunter Grass



Grass walking along with Belal Chowdhury in Old Dhaka (Top) and with street children

FAYZA HAQ

Gunter Grass, a Nobel Prize laureate, is Germany's greatest living writer. To celebrate his 79th birthday Goethe Institut has organised a solo exhibition by the prominent portrait photographer Nasir Ali Mamun. The exhibit is for a fortnight, beginning from 11th October. Mamun was close to Grass when he visited Dhaka in 1986 and also when he went to Kolkata in January 2005.

Mamun, as a child, collected photographs of famous people from newspapers in the early sixties. He used to contemplate not only on the subjects but also the camera that took the photo. After 1971 he felt that he should go into a big way into photography: capturing famous people

through the lens became his obsession. He felt that his seniors went in for photographing birds, flowers and picturesque scenes. Mamun wanted to be different and his source of inspiration remained famous people all along. He had no camera and no training in photography. He faced a problem in making the famous immortal through the lens: there were no statistics of the poets, singers, scientists. He went to the Bangla Academy and got a list of a sort from there; the Atomic Energy Commission provided him some more names. He worked with borrowed cameras from friends. Often these cameras were old, covered with fungus and dated back to the thirties like Zeissikon and Vioglender makes.

"At that time in Dhaka there were

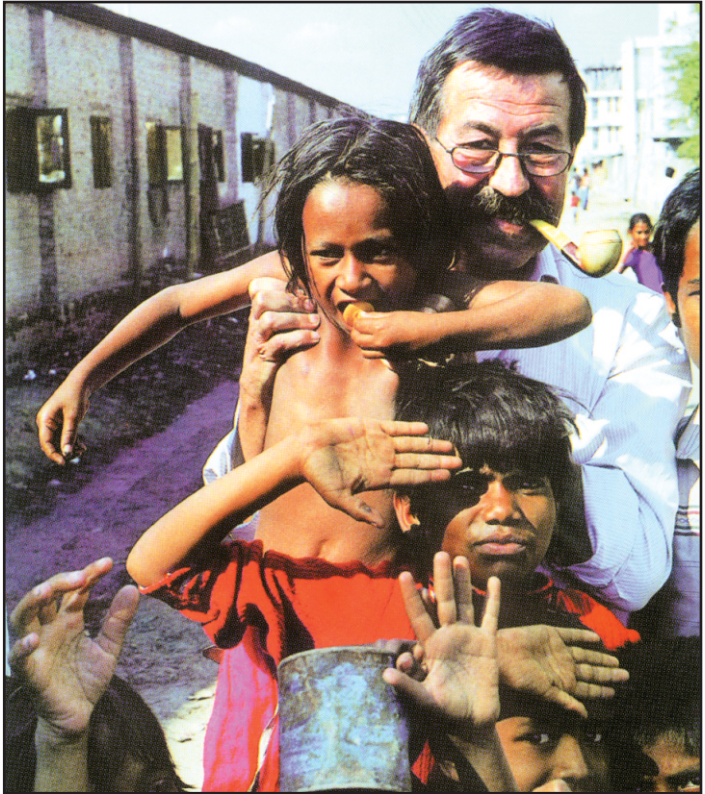
only about a 100 camera in circulation among amateurs. My father was not rich and there were nine children in our family. It was in 1977 that I had a camera of my own and it cost Tk 600. Today I'm the photo editor of *Prothom Alo*. I concentrate on portraits in black and white. I feel that emotions and pain can best be captured in black and white, which is more dramatic. With our country's humidity colour photos last longer. I work on famous people who have many frustrations of their own which can best be reflected in black and white. I sympathise with them as I too have my limitations," Mamun explained.

Why did he focus on Gunter Grass? Mamun was fascinated by him as he was a controversial figure and was world famous. His works like

"Tin Drum" intrigued all readers. He suffered during the World War II and was widely travelled. "He did not like the idea of interviews or photographs. But when he came to Dhaka in 1986 I got a chance to be with him for a week. Along with poet Belal Chowdhury and his wife Ute, we went around Dhaka. I didn't find him short tempered, but rather affectionate and sympathetic, particularly to poor slum children and vagabonds that gathered around him as we went sight seeing. When we went to Panam, Sonargaon, and his wife ate dust-covered fruit from the

trees as the street children had offered them. 'They are tokens of love' he'd explained to Ute." He admired Zainul Abedin's paintings and enjoyed the local spicy food in a floating restaurant on the Buriganga, recalled Mamun. When he returned to Kolkata 18 years later, there was heavy security, as he was now a Nobel laureate. But when Mamun finally got in touch with him Grass was as warm as ever.

The exhibition includes photographs that cover moments in Gunter Grass's visit to Dhaka and Kolkata.



Azra Another model turns actress

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Popular model Azra shouldn't find her role difficult in the 26-episode TV serial titled *Gaurochandrika*, considering the fact that she plays a model. Created for Bangla Vision, the drama serial has been written by Ejaz Munna

and directed by actor-director Shahiduzzaman Selim. Featuring Sweetie, Dilara Zaman, Milon, Raisul Islam Asad, Adnan Faruq Hillool and Tanzika, the serial is a true depiction of the local fashion circuit as well as its darker sides. This is Azra's second television appearance as an actress.



Sargam steps into its 10th year

The only regular magazine on music in the country *Sargam* has stepped into its 10th year recently, says a press release. On the occasion, a daylong programme was arranged at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club (NPC) recently. The programme included a conference participated by the representatives, training programme on cultural reporting, discussion meeting and cultural programme. Shaikat Mahmood, General Secretary of NPC inaugurated the training session while eminent journalists Fauzul Karim, Hedayet Hassan Morshed, Indra Mohan Rajbangshi and editor of *Sargam*, Quazi Rownaq Hossain attended the session as resource person. About sixty representatives from different areas of the country attended the conference.

Eminent journalist and Tagore exponent Wahidul Haque, acting editor of *Ittefaq*, Rahat Khan, editor of *News Today* and president of NPC Reazuddin Ahmed,

poet and columnist Belal Chowdhury, Nazrul exponent Asadul Haq and the chairman of the Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University Golam Rahman were present on the occasion. The discussion

session was followed by a musical soiree where noted artistes of the country such as Latifa Helen, Yasmin Mushtari, Ulka Hossain, Bulbul Mahalanobish and Lina Taposhi Khan performed.



Eminent personalities seen at the event