

'Going to the movies' maybe the most common and pleasurable form of entertainment for people all over the globe. Sadly for Bangladesh, this simple way of forgetting one's troubles for a few hours has been a rarity, especially for the middle class cine-goer. It has very little to do with the advent of cable TV and seduction of scores of channels offering oodles of glitz and glamour. It has a lot to do with the storm of low-grade films with exaggerated acting, poor plots and of course jarring vulgarity that has repulsed the sensitive film buffs and confined them to small screen entertainment. Yet very few of them would not drop this poor substitute in a second if they were promised a good, wholesome film on the big screen in a reasonably decent movie theatre.

Such a comeback may seem mere wishful thinking. But a few filmmakers have been struggling to keep the palatable film movement alive in the hope of luring back the disillusioned cinegoers to the theatres.

Samia Zaman, a well-known face of the small screen, being an anchor and producer for now closed *Ekushey TV*, has joined this slow but steady movement. Zaman has extensive media experience being a former news presenter, producer and film editor for the BBC as well as having formal training in filmmaking.

Her debut feature film '*Ranikuthir Baki Itihash*' is being released today (June 9), in major halls including Star Cineplex (Bashundhara City Complex), Modhumita and Balaka. What is surprising is that this is not a thought-provoking art film delivering important social messages. '*Ranikuthir Baki Itihash*' is a full-length feature film that is merely aimed to entertain.

With popular movie stars Ferdous, Poppy and Alamgir in the leading roles plus the regular song and dance numbers, the film will no doubt attract the usual crowd of current cinemagoers. But the plot, direction and cinematography has given the film a more sophisticated look that sets it apart from the recent barrage of tacky, unrealistic and often obscene films. This, the makers of the film believe, just maybe the magic ingredient to bring back middle class viewers to the halls.

In an exclusive interview with SWM, Samia Zaman explains her reasons for embarking upon the world of celluloid and the challenges, involved with her first commercial feature film. So what is the film about?

Samia Zaman: It's about a new couple, they go to a Nawabi palace (for his work): it's not a historical film or anything, it just happens to be



Samia Zaman, shooting her first feature film

Reviving an Old Ritual

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN



Set in an old Nawabi palace, and with special attention given to costumes, *Ranikuthir Baki Itihash* has a sophisticated ambience that sets it apart from the regular commercial film.