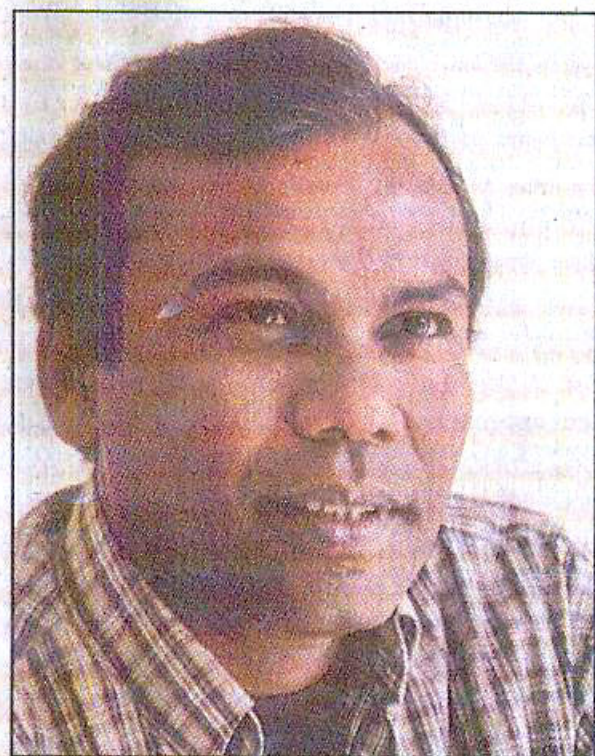


# A year of changes, and a new year beckons

The year 2007 has been significant for Bangladeshi actors -- with its share of triumphs, trials and tribulations. Many have made it to greater heights this year. The Daily Star talked to some of the familiar faces on TV who have made their mark this year. Here's what they had to share about 2007 and their plans for 2008:



## Tarin

“This was a very busy year for me. I think, I was able to give some good works to my audience. I got enormously good response for several plays that I acted in like *Modhanyo Bhoj Ki Hobe*, *Dhulo Megher Jotsna Bhromon*, *Felu di Great*, 95 hours, *Sheshe Eshe Obosheshe*, *Na Jao Na*, *Achin*, *Maya*, *Choker Bali* and more. Despite the busy life and amidst abundant TV channels, people watched these plays and appreciated my acting. I am really grateful to my audience. As for my part, I would say the characters of a Beerangana in the experimental, single-actor play *Maya*; a Pakistani girl born in the Geneva camp in *Modhanyo Bhoj Ki Hobe*, Binodini in *Choker Bali* were some of my good works this year.”



## Fazlur Rahman Babu

“This year has been eventful for me. Career-wise it was a success for me. Apart from TV and theatre, I have acted in three movies this year. Golam Rabbani Biplob's *Swapnodaray* and Enamul Karim Nirjhor's *Aha* received critical acclaim both at home and abroad. I am very optimistic about Giasuddin Selim's debut film *Monpara* that will hopefully be released in March next year. The positive audience response to serials *Bhober Haat* and *Shanto Kutir* was a big boost. I hope this year's good work will continue through the next year.”

“On the other hand, the overall situation of the country was not very promising, the devastating flood and the cyclone ‘Sidr’ have left the country and economy in disarray. Though the political scene was very quiet, the spiralling price of essentials added to the sufferings of the people. Hopefully, in the coming year these issues will be resolved.”



## Chanchal Chowdhury

“This year could not have been better for me. Popular serials like *Bhober Haat*, *Shanto Kutir* and *Neer* and several single episode quality plays have provided stability to my career as actor. Single episode plays *Goruchor*, *Warren*, *College Student*, *Haat* and others did very well. Most significantly, I got the chance to come closer to children of different classes and locality with my role of Mukul in children's programme *Stimput*. I have acted as the protagonist in Giasuddin Selim's yet to be released movie *Monpara*, which I personally believe is a great movie. I think the chance of acting in movies of such artistic value does not come too often. For 2008, I can only hope the coming year is better than the previous one.”



## Tisha

“This year I was fortunate enough to have worked in quite a few quality plays. Chayanika Chowdhury's *Bhatobashi Bhatobashi Bhatobashi*, Mezbaur Rahman Sumon's *Coffee House*, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's *Waiting Room* and 420, Golam Sohrab Dodul's *Shanto Kutir* and more are among the list of well-received tele-films and single-episode plays that I have worked in. I want to take part in more experimental projects.”

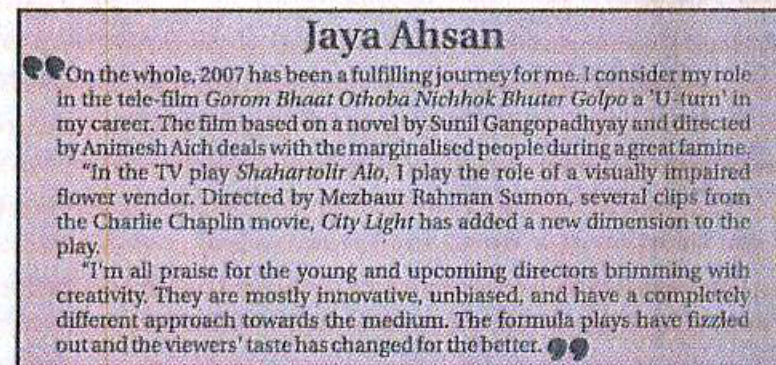
“By the grace of the Almighty, this year's success will inspire me throughout the coming year. I want to continue my studies as well.”



## Aupi Karim

“Work was good this year, especially single-episode plays. The talk show I host, *Amar Aami*, has gone down fairly well. On a personal level, I was busy with my marriage. Typhoid did hurt badly this year.”

“As far as 2008 is concerned, I don't have any specific plans. When I was single I could make decisions on my own but now I need to consult things with my husband. It is the way of the world.”



## Jaya Ahsan

“On the whole, 2007 has been a fulfilling journey for me. I consider my role in the tele-film *Goram Bhaat Orihoba Nichhok Bhuter Golpo* a ‘U-turn’ in my career. The film based on a novel by Sunil Gangopadhyay and directed by Animesh Aich deals with the marginalised people during a great famine.”

“In the TV play *Shaharitor Alo*, I play the role of a visually impaired flower vendor. Directed by Mezbaur Rahman Sumon, several clips from the Charlie Chaplin movie, *City Light* has added a new dimension to the play.”

“I'm all praise for the young and upcoming directors brimming with creativity. They are mostly innovative, unbiased, and have a completely different approach towards the medium. The formula plays have fizzled out and the viewers' taste has changed for the better.”



## Anisur Rahman Milon

“Throughout the year I have performed in nearly 35 to 40 different TV plays and tele-films including *Roudro O Megha Akasher Golpo*, *Jyotsnadhara*, *Biyer Phool*, *Nusrat Ebong Shangy Ekki Golpo* and more. I however, am not completely content; I believe I can and should do better.”

“In the coming year, I will be more careful when choosing roles and the standard of the works. I want to offer the audience and well wishers better performances next year. As an artist every role is equally important to me but my performances in *Jyotsnadhara* and *2441139* were noteworthy.”

## TV WATCH

### “Ekjon Ajmal Hossain”: Dilemmas of a Bangladeshi expatriate

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Written and directed by Shahiduzzaman Selim, tele-film *Ekjon Ajmal Hossain* features the dilemmas of a Bangladeshi expatriate Ajmal Hossain, who lives in the US.

Ajmal Hossain goes to the US to complete his PhD. To become a citizen, Ajmal marries an American. The marriage however, does not offer any solace. The obvious cultural gap between the husband and wife makes the situation worse.

Eventually, sick of it all, Ajmal wants to return home. The Bangladeshi community there lends him a hand in returning to the motherland.

Humayun Faridde, Shahiduzzaman Selim and several Bangladeshi expatriates living in Dallas, US, have performed in the tele-film.

*Ekjon Ajmal Hossain* will be aired today at 3:15 pm on ATN Bangla.



Humayun Faridde (L) and Shahiduzzaman Selim with co-artist in the tele-film

## Edutainment in “Shomoyer Kotha”: A welcome change in BTV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The burgeoning talk-shows on various TV channels are making it difficult to distinguish one from the other, as the basic format and interaction are almost identical. Subsequently the resulting monotony weighs heavily on the audience. Against this backdrop, the state-owned BTV has sought to regain the lost ground caused by the misuse of the political parties who over the years made BTV into a virtual party mouthpiece.

Lately, BTV has begun initiatives to air quality programmes based on professionalism, objectivity, and substance. As part of that process, a discussion series titled *Shomoyer Kotha*, embarked on its journey in June 2007 with the airing of an interview of the last US Ambassador Patricia Butenis. The programme is planned and hosted by Syed Munir Khasru, a faculty member of Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University and directed by Abdun Noor Tushar. The show goes on air every Friday at 9:10 am on BTV.

In a short span of time, the programme has caught the atten-



(L-R) Matior Rahman, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Manzur Elahi and Mustafizur Rahman with the host (C)

tion of viewers with its attractive and aesthetic set design, quality substance, creative format, and rich information content.

Although BTV is a state-owned terrestrial media reaching out to the masses, common people lost touch with it due to the political element and consequent poor quality. According to Syed Munir Khasru, “BTV is an organisation run on taxpayers' money and

ordinary people have the right to receive reliable information and quality analysis on nationally important issues.”

Each episode of *Shomoyer Kotha* features an issue or event of national significance. The topics are selected to ensure variation, trigger interest, enrich knowledge and recommend ways to move forward. According to Khasru, “Our goal is to blend Education and

Entertainment or in other words to provide ‘Edutainment.’”

The programme begins with the basic background information presented through a slide show which helps the audience to follow the subsequent discussion. At the end, the major inferences of the discussions are highlighted for the benefit of the viewers. Twenty episodes of the programme have been aired so far. These include Electoral and Political Reform, Anti-Corruption Drive, Price Hike of Essentials, Cricket and more. Among those interviewed are Patricia Butenis, Anwar Chowdhury (British High Commissioner) and country heads of IMF and ADB. The English subtitles for the viewers' convenience.

The year-end episode of December 26 will feature Dr. Kamal Hossain (eminent lawyer) Matior Rahman (editor, Prothom Alo), Manzur Elahi (former advisor) and Mustafizur Rahman (executive director, CPD). Two exciting episodes on the 10 most talked-about issues of 2007 will be aired on January 4 and 11, 2008.

## A keen Aishwarya on “Jodhaa-Akbar”

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai is gushing about three subjects right now in her interaction with the media -- her forthcoming film on Mughal emperor Akbar's marriage with the Rajput princess Jodhabai, life after her own marriage with actor Abhishek Bachchan and her equation with the comeback of the former queen bee Madhuri Dixit.

Aishwarya, the green-eyed beauty, is upbeat about *Jodhaa-Akbar*, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker of the Oscar-nominated *Lagaan* (starring Aamir Khan) and *Swades* (starring Shah Rukh Khan) fame. *Jodhaa-Akbar* is a period film based on the lives of the Mughal emperor (played by Hrithik Roshan) and his Rajput wife Jodhabai.

Aishwarya says essaying the character of Jodhabai is a “dream come true”. “The story is very interesting since it is about a love story between Akbar and his queen, despite their vast cultural and religious differences.”

“Jodhabai to me is a very strong woman,” Aishwarya says, adding she readily agreed to play the role after reading the script of the

movie.

The model-turned-actress, who was in Delhi recently to promote a diamond jewellery brand, indicated viewers should not be fussy about the historical accuracy of Gowariker's movie.

The director is not giving any lesson in history and the film is about two individuals discovering each other after being

brought together by an inter-religion marriage, which was the key part in the alliance between the Mughals and the Rajputs, said Aishwarya who entered Bollywood in 1997 with *Aur Pyaar Ho Gaya*.

Turning to her life after her marriage, Aishwarya said, “Abhishek is the real diamond in

my life, who is the most lovable husband in the world.”

She is also effusive about her in-laws -- Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan -- describing them as “the radiance of the diamond called Abhishek.”

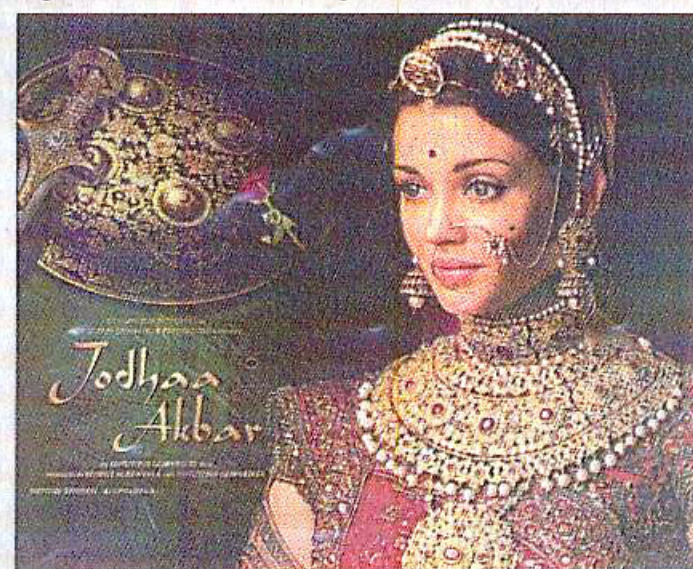
Asked if she saw any competition from the dancing diva Madhuri Dixit who made a return to Bollywood with her recent movie *Aaja Nachle*, Aishwarya answered in the negative.

“I do not have any fear from Madhuri Dixit and want to wish her all success,” said Aishwarya who acted with Madhuri in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Devdas*.

“If you have watched *Devdas*, then all answers lie there. We had shared a very good rapport while working in that film,” she said adding that given an opportunity she would work with Madhuri again if the script is interesting.

Aishwarya, whose first Hollywood venture *The Last Legion* is expected to be released early next year, denied any plan to move to Hollywood.

“I'm not shifting my base anywhere and am very much in Bollywood. I'm here to stay,” she said.



Aishwarya Rai