

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Theatre

Play: Raja Ebong Onyango
Troupe: Prachyanat
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Date: September 12
Time: 7:15pm



Group Art Exhibition

Title: Searching Our Roots
Organiser: Alliance Française de Dacca
Venue: Gallery, Alliance Française de Dacca, 26 Mirpur Road, Dharmondi
Date: September 5-18
Time: 9am-12am and 4pm-8pm (Only 4pm-8pm on Saturdays)



Film Screening

Title: Importance of Wim Wenders: A Retrospective
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society and Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, Rd 9, Dharmondi
Date: September 15-17
Time: 2pm onwards



Exhibition

Title: Eid o Aamar Swopnobhumi
Organiser: Nitya Upahar
Venue: Gallery Nitya Upahar, 3rd floor, Aziz Co-operative Super Market, Shahbag
Date: September 5-30
Time: 10am-8pm



IN CONVERSATION

Shuchanda on her National Award winning film "Hajar Bochhor Dhorey"



Kohinur Akhtar Shuchanda



Riaz and Shoshi in Hajar Bochhor Dhorey.

ERSHAD KAMOL

Kohinur Akhtar Shuchanda popularly known as 'Shuchanda' is a noted film actor of yesteryears. As a director she has achieved success as well. Her second movie, *Hajar Bochhor Dhorey*, won six National Awards for the year 2005.

Hajar Bochhor Dhorey has won awards for best film, best producer, best director, best music director, best storywriter and best art director.

An enthusiastic Shuchanda said, "I'm really happy that my film won the awards, however, I expected more awards in other categories such as best screenplay and best actor."

"Making a film based on a popular story is challenging. Throughout the shooting I was tensed as the film is based on Zahir Raihan's Adamjee Award winning novel with the same title and the expectations were high. Thanks to my groundwork for five years, I've managed it well," she added.

Was the film commercially successful? Analysing the current movie market, Shuchanda said, "It was not a blockbuster, however, considering the current stagnant situation of the movie industry, it was not financially a loss either."

Moreover, those who always complain about the shortage of quality movies in the country never go to theatres when decent

films are released. How will decent movies do business then?

Shuchanda demands the improvement of the movie theatres and controlling of video piracy. She said, "Viewers, especially women face hassles going to movie theatres. Moreover, the theatres don't provide necessary services to make the movie watching experience satisfactory. As a result most people watch television and the cable operators show pirated copies of Bangla films. So, they never feel any urge to go to the theatres."

On her emergence as a film director, Shuchanda said, "My husband Zahir Raihan insisted me to direct films. Watching my hus-

band's works, I was also keen on directing films. But, after the disappearance of Zahir Raihan following the Liberation War, I was struggling for survival, which is why I left the film industry for several years. Then I began producing films."

"As a producer I always worked with the crew closely to learn the technical aspects of the medium. After I gathered enough confidence, I emerged as a director in 1998 with the film *Bidesh Jatra*," she added.

Shuchanda's debut as an actor happened with the movie *Kagojer Nouka* (1966), directed by Soovas Dutta. In the '60s she was one of the leading actors of the film industry.

She had acted in about 100 movies. As an actor she won a Nigar Award from Pakistan in 1987 for her role in *Hum Ek Hain* -- a joint venture of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Comparing the state of the film industry in the '60s with that at present, Shuchanda said, "Totally two different worlds. Those days we maintained a harmonious relationship with each other. The industry was full of talented actors. Though the scenario is improving, many talented people are not interested in the film industry now because of a few culprits -- basically producers and directors, who have destroyed the industry by releasing substandard vulgar movies."

Homage to Zia Hyder, Mohammad Moniruzzaman

Memorial programme at Pabna Edward College

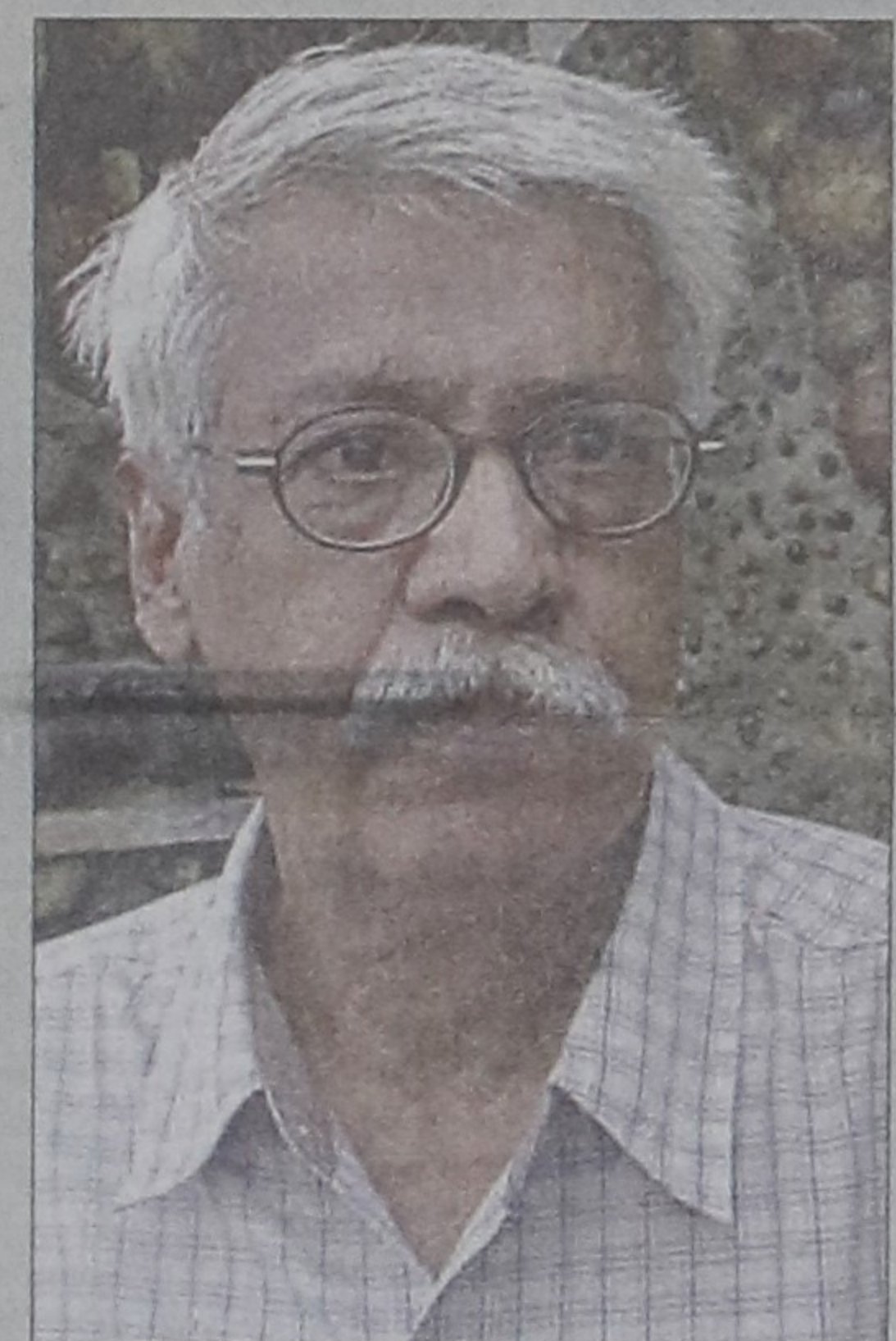
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A memorial programme in honour of noted dramatist Professor Zia Hyder and renowned lyricist Mohammad Moniruzzaman was held at the Pabna Edward College recently. The programme was held at the seminar hall of Bangla Department of the college.

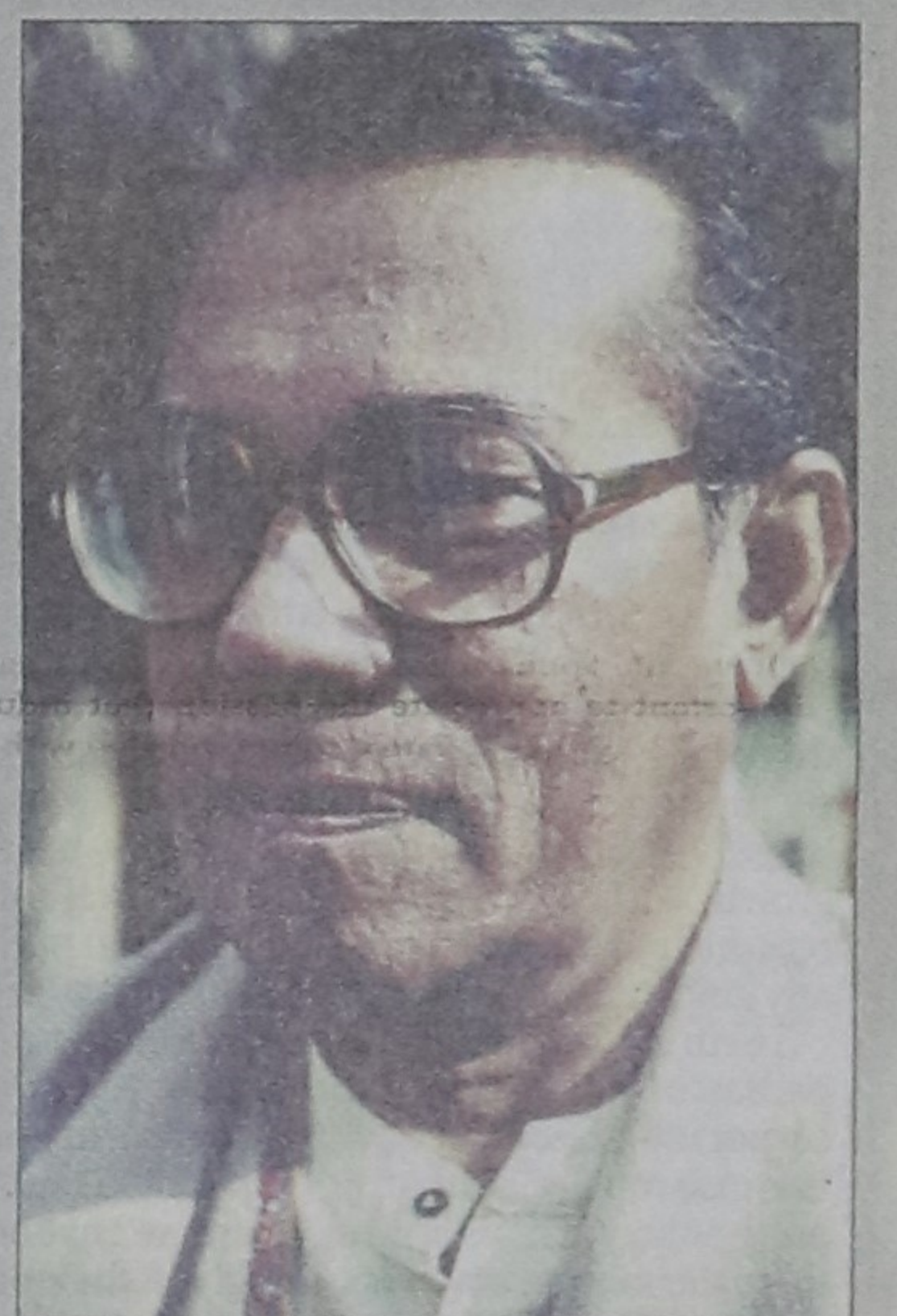
Acting head of Bangla Department, Md. Shahjahan Miah chaired the programme. All the teachers of the college including Md. Arjad

Hossain, Md. Abdul Alim and Shamima Nasrin spoke at the programme. The speakers highlighted the contributions of Zia Hyder and Mohammad Moniruzzaman to our theatre, music and culture in general.

Speakers expressed the view that both Zia Hyder and Mohammed Moniruzzaman were cultural assets. Zia Hyder had enriched the theatre practices in Bangladesh while Mohammad Moniruzzaman penned songs that remain etched in our hearts.



Zia Hyder



Mohammad Moniruzzaman

Barbra Streisand, Morgan Freeman among Kennedy honourees

REUTERS, Washington

Singer-actress Barbra Streisand, who performs for Barack Obama at a Hollywood fundraiser next week, will herself be feted in the U.S. capital later this year for her contributions to American culture and the arts.

Streisand joins actor Morgan Freeman, dancer-choreographer Twyla Tharp, country music singer George Jones and British rockers Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of the Who as the 2008 recipients of the Kennedy Centre Honours, organisers said on Tuesday.

Honourees for the 31st annual awards will be saluted on December 7 during a gala at the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, attended by President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush. The president will receive the honourees earlier that evening at the White House.

CBS will broadcast the event, which has become a highlight of Washington's cultural calendar, later in the month as a two-hour special.

"With their extraordinary genius and tenacity, the 2008 honourees have redefined the way we see, hear and feel the performing arts," Kennedy Centre Chairman Stephen Schwarzman said in a statement.

Streisand, 66, has blazed an extraordinary trail through music, theatre, film and television in the four decades since she became the toast of Broadway, launched a Grammy-winning recording career and won her first Oscar in the 1968 musical "Funny Girl."

News of her Kennedy Centre honour came a day after supporters of Obama, the Democratic nominee for president, announced Streisand would sing at a fundraising reception for the Illinois senator in Beverly Hills, California, next Tuesday.

Fellow Oscar-winner Morgan Freeman, 71, currently co-starring in the blockbuster Batman movie sequel "The Dark Knight," is recovering from injuries he suffered last month in a car crash near his home in Mississippi.



Barbra Streisand

The work of Tharp, 67, helped transform modern dance, contemporary ballet and the Broadway musical, while country crooner Jones, 76, once singled out by Frank Sinatra as "the second best singer in America," still headlines about 100 concerts a year.

Daltrey, 64, and Townshend, 63, the lead singer and lead guitarist, respectively, of the Who, are the last surviving members of the British band whose music helped define a generation of rock 'n' roll.

Toronto Film Festival '08

British filmmaker exposes India for 'all its beauty and ugliness'

AFP, Toronto

It took an Englishman with a penchant for making offbeat films to capture the eccentricities of life in Mumbai's slums, said visiting Indians who saw Danny Boyle's latest film "Slumdog Millionaire" at the Toronto film festival.

The film tracks a poor boy's suspicious rise to fortune on an Indian version of the hit television game show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" with the hustle and bustle of modern-day India as a backdrop.

It is a picaresque tale of too commonplace betrayal, greed and corruption around every corner, delving deeply into current Indian social, economic and political woes with characters seemingly right out of a Charles Dickens novel.

"As someone born and raised in Bombay, (the film) has instinctively touched the heart of our problems," said one viewer. "It's a primer about my city."

"It's exactly right," said another. Scriptwriter Simon Beaufoy ("The Full Monty") said he spent months touring the city with a translator talking with locals to try to better understand Indian society in, as Boyle described it, "all its beauty and ugliness."

In the slums, "you never get a sense of 'Oh poor them,'" Beaufoy commented, dismissing preconceived Western notions of poverty and wealth, as an example. The film was inspired by Vikas



Poster of the film.

Swarup's novel "Q&A."

Boyle, best known for his highly acclaimed first feature film "Shallow Grave" (1994) and the cult classic "Trainspotting" (1996), added: "We bring so much of our (Western) values. You can't take them there with you. It's inappropriate. They're working out their own values."

Boyle said of making his first film in India: "There were times when we thought, 'We're not going to get anything filmed today, there are just so many people' crowding the film set."

Also, Bollywood actors are "constantly doing six films at once" so scheduling shoots was difficult at best, he said. "But you have to go

with it. You can't thump your fist on a counter ... and try to reorganise the country."

Bollywood star Anil Kapoor appears in his first English-language role in the film, reprising a "lovely dance" in one scene from another of his movies.

Originally, Boyle said he had hoped for an all-Bollywood cast, but

that failed because the local actors "didn't look enough like losers" for the main role of poor Jamal.

"It's a great underdog story," he explained. "In Bollywood if you want to be a young actor breaking in to the system, you have to go to the gym for six hours a day" to bulk up. "I needed a very average-looking guy."

West London-born actor Dev Patel eventually got the part of Jamal. Patel commented he "did not enjoy" his first trip to India as a child for a family wedding because he was "bitten to death by mosquitoes."

But his stunning co-star Freida Pinto, appearing here in her first film, described him now as "a Bombay boy."

"If you stay open to it, it's an extraordinary country," said Boyle, hinting that he may return to India to make a thriller. "It's a very generous place."

The crew ran into "a bit of trouble" filming at the Taj Mahal, Boyle conceded, because they had not fully declared their intentions and the mausoleum's tour guides "didn't take too kindly to that."

But it was all worthwhile, he said. Also showing from India at the Toronto International Film Festival this week are Nandita Das's "Firaq," Priyadarshan's "Kanchivaram," "Singh is King" by Anees Bazmee and Australian-born director Megan Doneman's documentary about Kiran Bedi "Yes Madam, Sir."