

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Nazrul Anniversary**  
Discussions and cultural programme  
**Organiser:** Bangla Academy  
**Venue:** Seminar Room, Bangla Academy  
**Date:** May 25  
**Time:** 4:30pm



**French Drama Festival**  
**Organiser:** Alliance Francaise de Dhaka and Natukay Theatre Group  
**Venue:** National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
**Date:** May 15-21  
**Time:** 5pm onward



**Solo Art Exhibition**  
**Artist:** Samiran Chowdhury  
**Venue:** Gallery Kaya, H-20, R-16, Sector 4, Uttara  
**Date:** July 2-16  
**Time:** 10am 8pm



**Group Art Exhibition**  
**Title:** Rooted Creativity-2  
**Venue:** Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, R-16, H-275/F Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 18-29  
**Time:** 12 pm-8 pm



## Topu's third solo album in the pipeline



Topu released his first solo album "Bondhu Bhabo Ki?" in 2006. Last year the artiste released his second solo "Shey Ke?". The young singer-musician received a Meril Prothom Alo Award for acting in the film "Third Person Singular Number". At present the artiste is busy with his third album. The Daily Star contributor Zahid Akbar recently talked to the artiste. Excerpts from the interview:

**The Daily Star (TDS): What are you currently working on?**  
Topu: I'm working on a mixed album. Anan is arranging the album. My song, expected to feature in the album, has been penned and composed by me. Apart from this, I'm also busy with Yaatri's second album. We're hoping to release the album later this year.

**TDS: When can your fans expect your third solo album?**  
Topu: The third album is in the pipeline. So far two songs have been recorded. One of them is titled "Ei Shono". Not sure about the releasing date yet.

**TDS: You've received an award for your debut acting performance. Have you been receiving a lot of acting offers?**  
Topu: Yes, I've received a lot of offers. But I don't want to pursue acting as a fulltime profession. If I find the story interesting

and can relate to the character, I'd certainly consider the offer.

**TDS: Updates on your band Yaatri?**  
Topu: After some ups and downs now we are in a steady position. The relationship among the band members is quite cordial. I told my band-mates that they should come up with tunes first and I'd write songs based on the music. I think it would bring some variation. So far six songs have been recorded for the upcoming album. We are expecting to release the album on the coming Eid-ul-Fitr.

**TDS: Many complain that the music industry is on shaky grounds. What's your opinion on this?**  
Topu: I think the reasons behind the recent turmoil -- first and foremost, audio piracy; secondly we, the singers, are often too restless and thirdly, there are too many music studios. Because of mushrooming studios, producing an album now is not a big deal for anyone. As a result at least 20 songs are being produced everyday. Many are recording songs only to attain cheap popularity. They are not concerned about the quality of lyrics and compositions. On the other hand, unauthorised music downloads from the Internet is a crime; nevertheless, everyone does so. We need mass-awareness to come out of this situation.

## Int'l French Drama Festival 2010

# "Gondar": Resistance to conformity

JAMIL MAHMUD

On the fifth day of the ongoing International French Drama Festival, theatre troupe Prachyanat staged its production "Gondar". An adaptation of Eugene Ionesco's "The Rhinoceros," "Gondar" has been directed by Kazi Toufiqul Islam Emon. Zahurul Haque has translated the play into Bangla.

"Rhinoceros" narrates the curious story of the residents of a small French city. All the people of the city are gradually transformed into rhinos, after an imaginary epidemic breaks out. Prachyanat's production kept the story intact.

While everyone is transformed into rhinos, one individual does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis, and he is the central character of the play. Bérenger, the protagonist, is a perplexed average Joe who is often criticised by his friends for his drinking habits and indolence.

As the mass transformation ensues, Bérenger along with his colleague Daisy (with whom he is hopelessly in love with) try to resist. They agree to get married to restore the human race.

Soon afterwards, however, Daisy changes her mind and becomes a rhino. She refuses to save the human race and follows the rhinos, sud-



Actors of Prachyanat in "Gondar".

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

denly finding them beautiful, as she admires their enthusiasm and energy.

After much hesitation, Bérenger decides not to give in: "I'm the last man, I will stay till the end! I'm not giving up!" He sobbingly declares.

The play, which belongs to the genre, 'Theatre of the Absurd,' is a metaphor for totalitarianism, which was on the rise in Europe prior to World War II. It deals with the themes of conformity and resistance. The

play is often read as a response to the sudden upsurge of Communism, Fascism and Nazism prior to World War II.

Shatabdi Wadud played the role of Bérenger. Ritu-e-Sattar enacted the role of Daisy. Hira Chowdhury, Sanjeeda Priti and Saiful Islam Janel performed other central roles.

The weeklong festival ends today with the staging of the Helene Cixous' play "Drums on the Dam." One of the organisers, Fame School

of Drama (Chittagong), will stage the play. Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, Natukey and Fame School of Drama have jointly arranged the festival.

The weeklong festival features seven plays by world-renowned French playwrights. A felicitation programme will be held today where the organisers will honour theatre personalities Ramendu Majumdar and Ataur Rahman, playwright and poet Syed Shamsul Haq and litterateur Shawkat Osman (posthumous).

## Giving Hrithik Roshan a Hollywood makeover

When Brett Ratner got ready to show "Kites: The Remix" to producer Rakesh Roshan and star Hrithik Roshan, along with executives from Reliance Big Pictures, the film's distributors, he was very nervous.

The man who directed Anthony Hopkins in "Red Dragon" and Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker in three "Rush Hour" movies, admits that he wasn't sure if the Roshans would like his version.

Among other things, the 130-minute long film had been cut down to 90 minutes. "I knew it had worked out well when I saw a big smile on Hrithik's face," he says. "He (Hrithik) said, 'You did an amazing thing. I did not even miss the dancing.'"

"I have kept the style of the filmmakers," Ratner adds. "But I did away with most of the dancing because it was making the film too long for international audiences. I also got the American score added, and improved on the sound. The film sounded too thin to me. Now, when you watch the remixed edition you will feel like you are watching a big Hollywood action film."

He says he got into making the new version of "Kites" many months ago when Amit Khanna, chairman, Reliance Big Pictures, came to see him in Hollywood with Rakesh Roshan.

"They showed the film to me and asked what could be done to make it appeal to non-Indian audiences," he recalls.

"Of the few Bollywood films I have seen including '3 Idiots' which I liked quite a bit, I found the length was too much of a problem," he says.

"In Indian films, everything is large. They push the drama to melodrama, the comedy becomes broad comedy. It is not wrong. But it is a cultural thing. For an international audience, I wanted to turn 'Kites' into a more compact film."

When he began working on the slimmer edition, Ratner whose "Rush Hour" films are known for their



Hrithik Roshan and Mexican actress Barbara Mori in "Kites".

full-throttle action and comedy asked himself, how he would have handled the film if he were making it.

"People in the industry know very well that I am not a snob," he says. "I do all kinds of films including TV and music videos, too. I consider myself a storyteller first. So it was important to me that the distractions from the story (in 'Kites') should be removed."

He says Hollywood has the tradition of taking foreign films and adapt them for the American market.

"Before I did the first 'Rush Hour' (in 1998), Hollywood distributors had taken some of his Hong Kong films which were in Chinese and given them an American look -- with American soundtrack and voices. I am carrying on that tradition with 'Kites'."

"Some people may not appreciate what I have done but I have a feeling this remix version could lead to making Bollywood experience omnipotent. This could be the first big step towards globalisation of Bollywood movies outside the Diaspora market. And then people will say, Brett Ratner did it, he started the process."

"I consider my version the appetiser," he says chuckling. "If you want the main course, see Anurag Basu's full version. It is very enjoyable in its own right."

He says given the film's international cast -- with Barbara Mori who plays Hrithik's love interest being a big television star in Mexico and other countries in Latin America -- the market could be quite substantial in many parts of the world where Bollywood films don't get theatrical release.

"There is also the novelty factor," he continues. "It is not like a Hollywood actor with a Spanish girl. But an Indian boy and a Spanish girl is surely an interesting combination."

Brett Ratner has long been interested in foreign films. "At the Oscars, my favourite category is foreign language movies," he says.

He has been working with Reliance to mount several projects. "I found them to be forthright, professional and respectful of what I want to do with them," he says.

Compiled by Correspondent

## Sneak Peek: "Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey" Chittagong Uprising comes to the big screen

Deepika Padukone sports a traditional Bengali look in "Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey," a period film based on the Chittagong Uprising of 1930.

The film is based on the book "Do and Die" by Manini Chatterjee.

"Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey" is directed by Ashutosh Gowariker and stars Abhishek Bachchan and Deepika in the lead roles.

Earlier Asin Thotumkal was supposed to do

the female lead but she opted out of the project.

The lyrics for the film are written by Javed Akhtar and music is composed by Sohail Sen.

"Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey" is being shot in Goa and is scheduled for release in December, 2010.

Source: Internet



Deepika Padukone (centre) and co-actors in the film.

## DeWyze, Bowersox left to duel on "American Idol" finale

AP, Los Angeles

Casey James was cut Wednesday from "American Idol," leaving Crystal Bowersox and Lee DeWyze to duke it out in the finale of the popular Fox singing competition next week.

James, the long-haired 27-year-old musician from Fort Worth, Texas, was revealed to have received the fewest viewer votes after his ho-hum performances Tuesday.

"I can't believe it, man," gushed James. "I'm so thankful for the opportunity."

James consistently gratified the judges throughout the contest with his bluesy stylings but never seemed to wow the panel.

But his fate seemed sealed Tuesday when Simon Cowell compared his rendition of Eric Hutchinson's "OK, It's Alright With Me" to a salad.

James' departure means either Bowersox, the earthy 24-year-old musician from Toledo, Ohio, or DeWyze, the bashful 24-year-old paint sales clerk from Mount Prospect, Illi-

nois, will be crowned "American Idol" next Wednesday.

DeWyze told host Ryan Seacrest that he's "never wanted to win more than I do right now," while Bowersox thanked the judges for their continued support.

"Everything that you guys have said has been helpful," beamed Bowersox.

The duo had long been considered to be the front-runners of the ninth season, never appearing as one of the show's bottom vote-getters. Bowersox solidified her finale spot Tuesday with Melissa Etheridge's "Come To My Window" and Paul McCartney's "Maybe I'm Amazed," while DeWyze delighted with Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man" and Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah."

"It's just totally different than I would ever thought it would have been," DeWyze said of the experience.

The finale comes during a slump for the aging but popular Fox franchise. Seacrest revealed that more than 47 million votes were



Lee DeWyze and Crystal Bowersox.

cast this week for Bowersox, DeWyze and James. At this point in the competition last year, the host announced more than 88 million votes were received for Danny Gokey, Adam Lambert and Kris Allen, who went on to win the eighth season.