

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

### Contemporary Norwegian Glass and Ceramics

Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, R-16, H-275F, Dhanmondi  
Date: August 6-20  
Time: 12pm-8pm



### Musical Soiree

Artiste: Mita Haq  
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, R-24, Gulshan-1  
Date: August 7  
Time: 7pm



### Musical Programme

To observe Nazrul death anniversary  
Organiser: Chhayanaout  
Venue: Chhayanaout Sangskriti Bhaban, Dhanmondi  
Date: August 7  
Time: 7pm



### Bangla Film Festival

Organiser: Weekly Mukhomukhi  
Venue: Zahir Raihan Colour Lab Auditorium, BFDC  
Date: Aug 1-8  
Time: 5:30 pm



## The tradition of staging Tagore's plays in Bangladesh

### In conversation with Ananta Hira

JAMIL MAHMUD

With an intention to stage plays by Rabindranath Tagore, as a regular theatrical practice, a theatre troupe emerged in Bangladesh seven years ago. The troupe, Prangane Mor, made its debut through the play "Shyama Prem," an adaptation of the Tagore drama "Shyama." The troupe is the brainchild of actor-directed Ananta Hira. Hira directed "Shyama Prem" as well. His fascination with everything Tagore inspired him to take the initiative.

On the eve of Tagore's death anniversary, Hira talked about the ongoing tradition of staging Tagore plays in Bangladesh.

In the past seven years Prangane Mor has worked tirelessly, and has staged five productions. Of these, three are based on Tagore's works -- "Shyama Prem," "Swadeshi" and "Rakto Karobi." Nuna Afroz directed the latter two. Hira performed in all three plays.

Hira also performed in four more Tagore plays, including three Nagarik productions (he is a former member of Nagarik). The Nagarik plays are "Achalayatan," directed by Aly Zaker; "Muktodhara," directed by Khaled Khan and "Rother Roshi," directed by Abul Hayat.

The artiste feels that Tagore's presence in Bangladeshi theatre is inadequate. "Considering the history of Bangladeshi theatre, few Tagore plays have been staged over the years. Perhaps, some feel that Tagore's works are complex. That, however, is a misconception," Hira said.

"There are many theatre troupes across the globe who exclusively stage plays by Shakespeare or Ibsen. Why can't we have troupes who would particularly stage Tagore plays?" asked Hira.

Hira believes that the volume of Tagore's work is so opulent, there would never



Ananta Hira

be a shortage of ideas and material.

Tagore's mastery has always inspired Hira. Though he has been familiar with Tagore's literature since childhood, the artiste said that his fondness received a boost when he was a member of the troupe Nagarik. "Nagarik made a great impact on my impressions of Tagore. The troupe has so far staged five Tagore plays," said Hira.

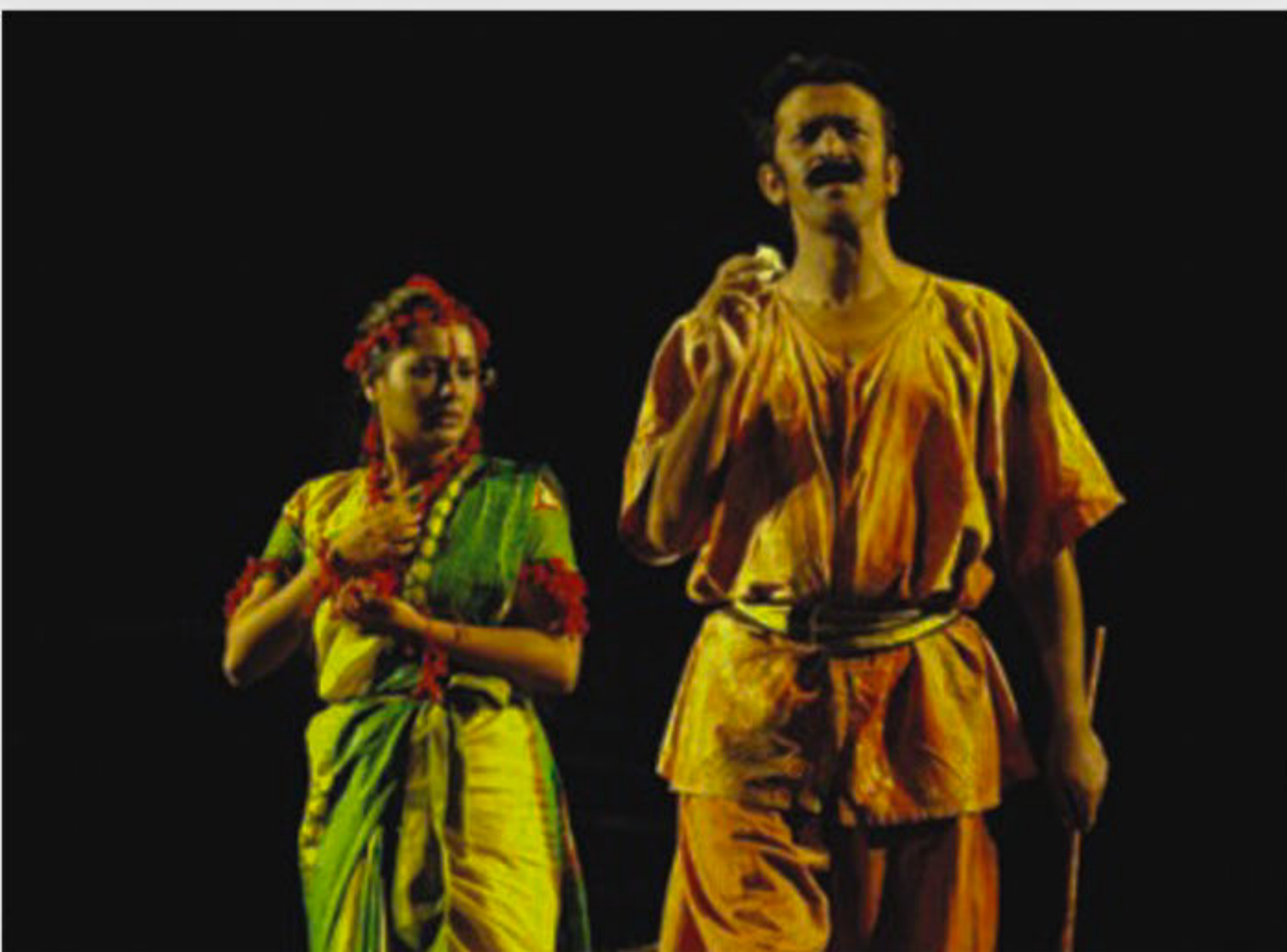
Last year Hira's troupe

organised an eight-day festival featuring only Tagore plays. According to Hira, the festival was the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Troupes from Bangladesh and India staged plays at the festival.

Hira plans to celebrate Tagore's 150th birth anniversary with a grand festival. He said that at least five Indian troupes would be invited to the festival, where they would have premieres of their productions. Bangladeshi troupes would stage their productions at the festival as well.

He also informed that his troupe would most likely stage its new play at the festival. The play, titled "Robi O Nari," will feature female protagonists created by Tagore. "The play will be an interpretation of how Tagore saw women in his writings at different ages," said Hira, who wants to direct the play.

According to Hira, Tagore's works remarkably address human psyche. His works are universal and their appeal would never fade. Hira ended the conversation with two questions, "Why do we celebrate the bard only on his anniversaries? Can't we celebrate him everyday, within ourselves?"



"Rakto Karobi" is one of the popular Tagore plays that are often staged in Bangladesh.

## Singer Wyclef Jean files to run for Haiti's presidency



Wyclef Jean greets supporters after submitting the paperwork to run for president of Haiti.

AP, Port-Au-Prince

Singer Wyclef Jean officially announced his bid to be president of Haiti to a roaring crowd of supporters on Thursday, thrusting himself into a contentious race to lead an impoverished country reeling from a devastating earthquake.

At one point the hip-hop artist-turned-politician bodysurfed on the hands of bandana-waving backers in Haiti's capital and stepped onto a speaker truck to address the crowd of hundreds. Jean had submitted

his candidacy papers 10 minutes before the provisional electoral office closed.

"America has Barack Obama and Haiti has Wyclef Jean," shouted Jean, who was born in Haiti but raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. Many in the crowd wore T-shirts distributed by supporters. At times, Jean carried his daughter in his arms.

"It's a moment in time and in history," the singer told The Associated Press. "It's very emotional."

The former Fugees frontman enters a highly competitive and crowded race

for a difficult and dangerous job. Only one person has completed a democratically elected 5-year term in Haiti's history -- current President Rene Preval -- who is poised to do it again and hand it off to an elected successor.

The winner of the November 28 general elections inherits a destroyed capital, 1.6 million homeless people and countless groups fighting over billions of dollars in international reconstruction funds pledged after a January earthquake that killed an estimated 300,000 people.

Jean originally planned to join the coalition of Pierre Eric Jean-Jacques, former Chamber of Deputies leader. But he switched at the last minute to Jean-Jacques' brother's party to make room for government planner Leslie Voltaire in Jean-Jacques' coalition.

The switch is not expected to affect Jean's chances.

If Jean's candidacy is approved, he will face several candidates who lack his international fame but have more political clout. Among the most formidable is ousted ex-Prime Minister Jacques-

Edouard Alexis, who secured the backing of President Rene Preval's powerful Unity party this week. Preval is barred from running by the constitution.

Jean's U.S. upbringing could be a roadblock to his candidacy, but the singer says his appointment as a roving ambassador by Preval in 2007 exempts him from the residency requirement.

The singer was born on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince but left the country as a child and grew up in Brooklyn. He gained fame as a member of the Fugees and went on to have a successful solo career. He is known for such hit singles as "We Trying to Stay Alive" and "Gone Till November." With the Fugees, he recorded the Grammy-winning, multiplatinum-selling album "The Score."

In recent years, he has been active in Haiti with the charity Yele Haiti, prompting long-running speculation that he would run for president one day.

Earlier Thursday, he stepped down as leader of Yele Haiti, which faced criticism for alleged financial improprieties.

## Impress Telefilm buys rights to "Titash Ekti Nadir Naam" and "Padma Nadir Majhi"

A CORRESPONDENT

Impress Telefilm Limited has bought rights to four acclaimed films produced by Ashirbad Chalachchitra. The films include "Titash Ekti Nadir Naam" directed by Ritwik Kumar Ghatak and "Padma Nadir Majhi" by Gautam Ghosh. Through this Impress Telefilm's archive of cinema has become richer.

The other films [produced by Ashirbad Chalachchitra] that Impress Telefilm has purchased are "The Name of a River" and "Hothat Brishti" directed by Anup Singh and Basu Chatterjee respectively.

A programme was arranged at the Channel i Tejgaon office on the occasion. Managing Director of Impress Telefilm Ltd and Channel i, Faridur Reza Sagor; proprietor of Ashirbad Chalachchitra, Habibur Rahman Khan and internationally famed Indian filmmaker Gautam Ghosh were present at the programme.

"Though funds are necessary for all things, I personally regard this



Rosy Afsari and Kabori in "Titash Ekti Nadir Naam".

moment as an auspicious one. I'm excited that Channel i can now air these remarkable films. Impress Telefilm has so far produced and presented 56 films in the last 10 years, of which several have attained international

fame," Faridur Reza Sagor said.

"I'm glad that I could attend this event. Being here brings back memories of when I made 'Padma Nadir Majhi'. I wish Impress Telefilm all the best in their endeavour

towards giving the audience opportunities to watch good cinema," Gautam Ghosh said.

Habibur Rahman Khan said, "These films will definitely enrich the collection of Impress Telefilm."

## Bollywood royalty

### "Mughal-e-Azam" turns 50

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

It was a contrasting tale of two actors of Hindi cinema -- one a thespian who can legitimately claim to a 'been there, done that' attitude and the other a young actress aspiring to leave an indelible mark.

If on one hand August 5, 2010 marked 50 years of making of K Asif's magnum opus "Mughal-e-Azam" and saw its hero Dilip Kumar going down the memory lane and recalling his experience of the shooting, on the other hand, it was time for Sonam Kapoor to look forward to playing the role of Anarkali, a role immortalised by Madhubala in the 1960 movie.

Let's be in rewind mode first. Half a century down the timeline, Dilip Kumar remembers every minute detail of the movie. Clearly, he has not allowed his memory to gather dust over the passage of time on how the celluloid story of a love affair between 16th century Mughal Emperor Akbar's son Salim and the royal courtesan Anarkali was made.

"Mughal-e-Azam" was an altogether different experience. Asif trusted me enough to leave the delineation of Salim completely to me. The shooting in Rajasthan was most memorable. Imagine my state with my body covered by armour in the desert heat!" -- the 87-year-old actor said at a function organised in Mumbai to mark 50

years of the film.

It took nine years to make "Mughal-e-Azam" but Dilip Kumar always felt the delay was worth the wait. "Such was the all-round commitment that nobody saw the delay as tiresome. A film involving such overwhelming craftsmanship, minute detailing, massive gathering of artistes and unit hands, strenuous schedules with large units of artistes and trained animals, day and night shoots cannot be a simple affair," said the veteran actor.

"We were acutely conscious of the hard work we would have to put in as well as the responsibility we would have to shoulder while evoking a historical period that shaped the cultural, political and social ethos of the years that followed," he said adding it was wonderful to know that the film retains its appeal as much as it had generated when it was first released.

Dilip Kumar's wife Saira Banu was also in a reminiscent mood but for different reasons. She said if a film was being made on the love story between Salim and Anarkali, another such story was unfolding quietly as she prepared to attend the premiere of "Mughal-e-Azam."

"For an entire week in the run up to the premiere of 'Mughal-e-Azam', I prepared myself for the event, draping

my mother's saris, applying and reapplying nail varnish, wearing high heels and practicing to walk confidently in them just to be noticed and acknowledged by Dilip sahab at the event," Saira Banu said.

However, Saira Banu had to be sorely disappointed, as Dilip Kumar did not turn up at the premiere, knowing little that "God had a splendid plan up his sleeve for me," she recalled, alluding to the marriage between the two six years later -- in 1966.

"Many years later when the colour version of 'Mughal-e-Azam' premiered in Mumbai, I was walking with him as his wife -- this time enjoying the adulation as the crowds waved out to Dilip sahab and saying a quiet prayer of gratitude to God for making my dream come true so beautifully," she said.

Saira Banu had her dream fulfilled, but Sonam Kapoor is waiting for her dream to come true. Sonam said that she would love to essay the role of Anarkali in a remake of "Mughal-e-Azam".

Sonam said the 1960 film has always been her favourite and she can't see anyone else playing Anarkali, the beautiful but defiant dancer who falls in love with the Mughal crown prince Salim.

Asked who she would like to play the role of Salim, Sonam promptly named Abhishek Bachchan, her co-star in "Dilli-6".



Dilip Kumar and Madhubala in "Mughal-e-Azam".