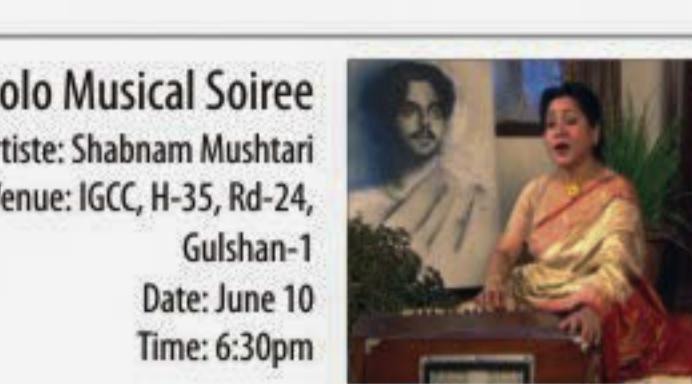


WHAT'S ON



Mahfuz Ahmed @DS Café

Mahfuz Ahmed is one of the most popular actors in the Bangladeshi TV media. He has personified diverse characters throughout his extended acting career. The deft actor has gone behind the camera and directed TV plays and serials as well. He has acted in films too and won a National Film Award for his performance in "Lal Sabu". "Chota Pagol", a serial directed by him, has become very popular among the audiences; Mahfuz plays the protagonist in it. Recently, this busy actor-director was the featured guest at DS Café, and spoke to his fans over the phone and Star Arts & Entertainment.

The Daily Star (TDS): How is the serial "Chota Pagol" progressing?

Mahfuz: We are at the final stage of the serial. The plot is thickening over a relationship. The story focuses on the struggles and hardships a young widow faces in a rural setting.

TDS: What makes this serial different from other plays?

Mahfuz: Usually most of the plays/serials with a rural storyline are set in the same area. They always have Shaal and Gojari trees, and it seems like the entire country looks like that. Majority of these plays are shot in Pubail. "Chota Pagol" has been shot in Munshiganj, Bikrampur and the banks of Padma. I grew up in a village and know what a real village looks like.

Another feature that sets the serial apart is the use of Noakali dialect -- moving away from the usual Pabna and Kushtia lingo that is widely used in TV plays. We also didn't cast actors who are originally from the Noakali region. So, the language the actors are using on the serial is not hardcore Noakali dialect; it's uncomplicated enough for everyone to understand. I didn't compromise on quality.

A journalist, London: Which is your dream role? Acting opposite which actress gave you the most satisfaction?

Mahfuz: My dream role -- which will probably remain a dream -- is Amit from Rabindranath Tagore's "Shesher Kobita". Several attempts were taken to film the story. Shomi Kaiser and I were cast as Labano and Amit for a Bangladeshi production. We rehearsed for two months. The more we rehearsed, the more the role seemed elusive. That project was scrapped. Later, producers in Kolkata made another attempt, but I lacked the courage. The more I read "Shesher Kobita",



the role [Amit] seems harder to portray. I feel that I may do injustice to Amit's character.

As for your second question, Aipi Karim, Tarin and Joya Ahsan are very talented actresses who I love working with. I have done many plays with these three actresses. I acted opposite Joya in an Arun Chowdhury production called "Kagojer Phul" this was way before she became "Joy Ahsan". I also had many acting opportunities opposite Aipi and Tarin, on both single-episode plays and serials. Also, one of my most memorable experiences has been working with Rupa Ganguly. I worked with her on an India-Bangladesh joint production, which was aired on Ekushey Television.

TDS: Who is your favourite director?
Mahfuz: Giasuddin Selim tops that list. He has the ability to bring out the character from inside an actor. He is a director who helps the actors see things from other perspectives. I admire Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's work too. I acted in some of his earlier works like "Shoro Borno Theatre", "Ekamboborti", "Balok Balika". Farooki also has the ability to interpret a character and convey his ideas to the actor.

Sagar Chowdhury, Syblet: You used to be a journalist. How did you get into the world of acting?

Mahfuz: Everyone has to begin somewhere. I chose journalism. And no, I never had any aspiration about acting.

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soap trend is an imitation of what's become popular in our neighbouring country?

Mahfuz: Sadly, we are easily influenced by foreign trends, whether it is clothes or culture. Daily soaps have gained popularity on Indian channels, but it won't survive on our TV, as this doesn't really represent our culture or us.

TDS: But "Shokal Shondha" followed this trend and was a huge success...

Mahfuz: Yes, because "Shokal Shondha" incorporated true Bangladeshi elements into that format and was not a blind imitation. It takes skills to produce something like that.

Mehedi, Rajshahi: It's very exciting to be speaking to you. I'm a huge fan.

Mahfuz: I'm also glad to be talking to you. Take care of yourself.

TDS: Why did you decide to take up direction?

Mahfuz: I did it to take some time off from acting. Actor Mahfuz Ahmed and the individual Mahfuz have both benefited from it. If acting remained my only source of income, I would have been forced to take up any offer. But the director Mahfuz Ahmed will add longevity and value to my acting résumé.

Mahmud Manzur, Eskaton, Dhaka: When do you plan to direct a movie? "Chota Pagol", "Nurul Huda" and other plays directed by you have revealed your directorial talents.

Mahfuz: Your words are very encouraging. However making something for the TV and for the silver screen are two very different things. So far I've done well with TV plays, but that might not be the same case for movies. However, like everyone else I have a dream of directing a film. But I want to make it for the masses, and not just for film festivals.

Tarek, Jamalpur: I'm a huge fan. I watch all of your plays regularly, along with "Chota Pagol".

Mahfuz: Thank you for calling from Jamalpur. Keep watching "Chota Pagol".

Shonali, Uttara, Dhaka: Can you sing a song from the film "Lal Sabu"?

Mahfuz: I wish I could, but I can't sing. Thank you for calling.

Lonny, Banani, Dhaka: Which director are you originally from?

Mahfuz: Noakali.

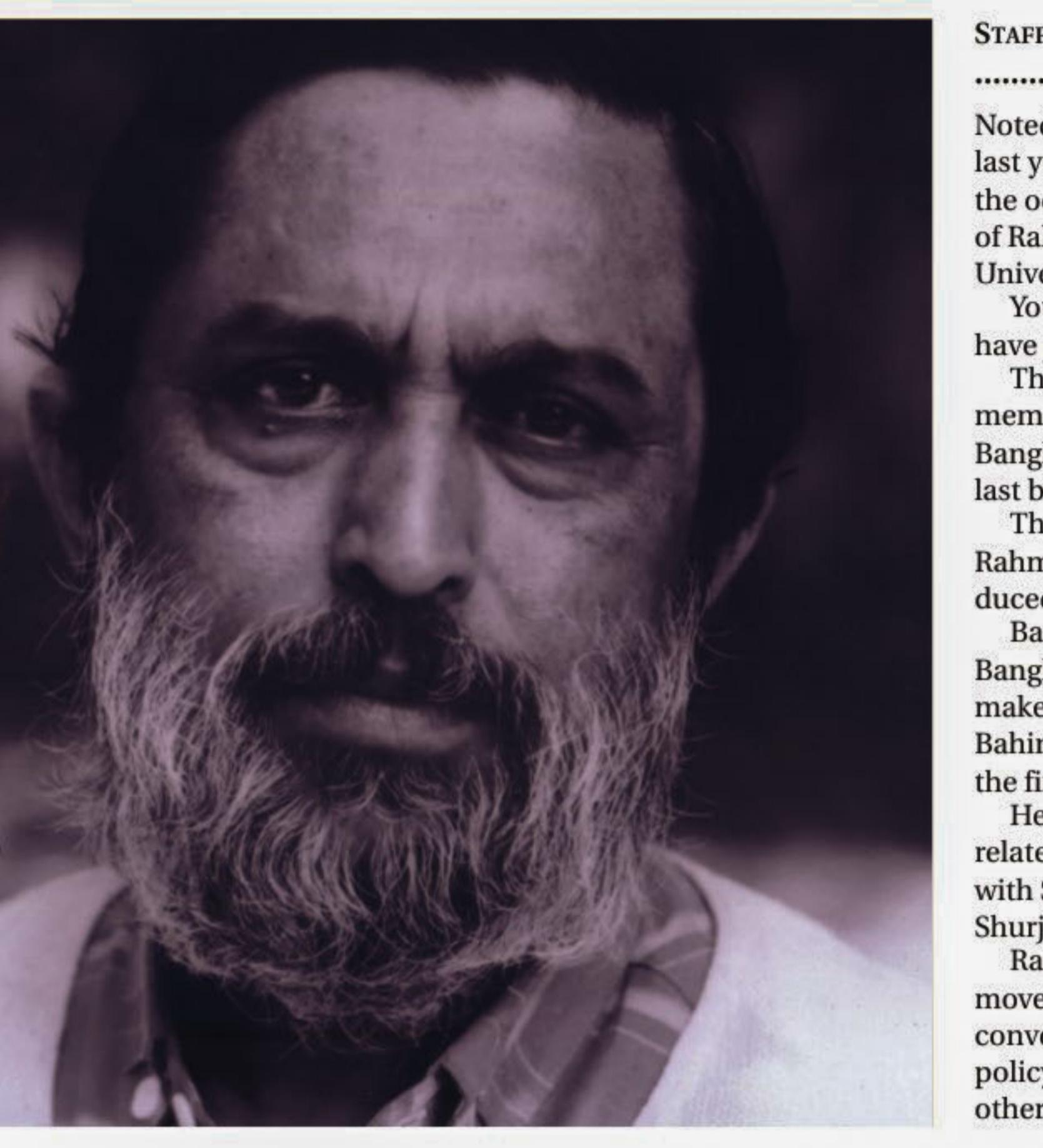
Nazmul, Singapore: I love your acting.

Mahfuz: Thank you for calling. I hope you do well on foreign soil.

TDS: Do you think the recent daily

Transcribed by Shah Alam Shazu

Documentary on Badal Rahman



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted filmmaker Badal Rahman passed away on June 11, last year. Tomorrow marks his first death anniversary. On the occasion, a documentary titled "Pathikrit", on the life of Rahman will be screened tomorrow at TSC, Dhaka University.

Young filmmakers Saiful Islam and Belayet Hossain have jointly directed the documentary.

The screening of the documentary is part of a commemorative programme by Federation of Film Societies of Bangladesh (FFSB). Rahman served as its president till his last breath.

The documentary will shed light on different aspects of Rahman's life and works. Movieana Film Society has produced the documentary.

Badal Rahman was a "first" in many aspects of Bangladeshi cinema. He was the first Bangladeshi filmmaker to direct a full-length feature film ("Emil-er Goenda Bahini") for children. He was also the co-coordinator of the first film appreciation course in Bangladesh.

He was among the first Bangladeshi to earn a film-related degree. After returning to Bangladesh, he, along with Syed Salahuddin Zaki, made his first film "Prottashor Shurjo" in 1974.

Rahman was actively involved with the film society

movement in Bangladesh from its beginning. He was the convenor of the current movement to form a national film policy. "Self Portrait" and "Shilpir Shilpo" are amongst his other notable films.

Boishakhi TV
09:35 Cartoon: Tom and Jerry
10:30 Theatre
03:00 Bangla Feature Film
06:55 Chhaya Rang
08:40 Hati
09:00 Drama Serial

ATN BANGLA
10:30 Baner Ghosh
02:59 Bangla Feature Film
06:15 Amra Korbo Joy
08:00 Meghe Dhaka Tara
10:45 Bihango Kotha
11:00 Gaane Gaane

Diganta TV
09:05 Shastha Diganta
11:30 Meley Ichchheyguli
03:05 Music Hour
05:30 School Angina
08:30 Bhabosh Mor Gaan
11:00 Shorol Poth

CHANNEL I
11:05 Teleshomoy
01:30 Hridoyer Gaan
02:40 Tele-film
06:00 Campus Hero
07:50 Khude Gaanaj
11:30 Fun Club Tournament

ETV
10:02 Sonamoni Shukhe
01:30 Oshukhe
03:00 Bangla Feature Film
05:30 Mukto Khorob

RADIO
abc radio FM 89.2
06:00 Bhor Janay
09:00 Mukhorito Jiboney
12:00 Duran Duprey
03:00 Duranto Bilekey
05:00 Shondhatar
07:00 Shobhajatra
09:00 Raxi er Akhey
11:00 Golyer Shech Nei

RADIO FOORTI
02:15 Teleshomoy
04:30 Bhor Janay
06:00 Bumper to Bumper
10:00 Club Foorti

Tula Rashi
On Desh TV at 09:45pm
Single Episode TV Play
Cast: Dr. Enamul Haque, Bidya Sinha Mim

An American Werewolf in London
On HBO at 11:45pm
Genre: Horror
Cast: David Naughton, Jenny Agutter

Rumali
On ntv at 08:15pm
Drama Serial
Cast: Subarna Mustafa, Jerry

ntv

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