WHAT'S ON

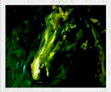
Tagore Film Retrospective
Organiser: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre
Venue: Main Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: Sept. 23-26

Musical Soiree
Singer: Subir Nandi
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre
Date: Sept 24
Time: 6:30pm

Dance Performance
Title: The Gitanjali Journey
Venue: Chhayanaut , Dhanmondi
Date: Sept 22
Time: 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Film Screening
Title: Matir Moina
Venue: Mirpur-12, Block-D, Eidgah math, Dhaka.
Date: Sept 23

Album Launch and Musical Soiree
Singer: Parveen Sultana
Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum
Date: Sept 21
Time: 6pm



Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Dravid Saikot
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, Dhanmondi
Date: Sept 16-23
Time: 10am-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Zebun Naher
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: Sept 9-22

GOETHE-INSTITUT

Film Screening
Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society
Films By Contemporary German Women Filmmakers
Venue: Goethe Institut, H-10, Rd-9, Dhanmondi.
Date: Sept 19-21
Time: 3, 5 & 7pm

An actor par excellence

Time out with **Humayun Faridee**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Humayun Faridee is the embodiment of all that the word "actor" holds. He has proven his mettle on stage, television and the silver screen. Recently the star had a tête-à-tête with The Daily Star.

The Daily Star (TDS): Tell us about your recent works.

Faridee: Both acting and directing are keeping me busy these days. I'm directing the serial "Tokhon Boshonto" (on Boishakhi TV), as well as playing in the role of an entrepreneur. Other serials directed by me include "Bharabari Barabari" and "Chhayabithi", along with some single-episode TV plays.

TDS: What is the storyline of "Tokhon Boshonto"?

Faridee: It's about urban life, focusing on two families sharing the same roof. It can be defined as a social or family drama.

TDS: You have had a long acting career. Are you satisfied with your achievements?

Faridee: Satisfaction is a relative concept. An artiste is rarely satisfied, but I find happiness in my work. Meanwhile when I look at my own performances, my errors become clear to me -- prompting me to think that maybe I should have done it differently. Some works give me 10 percent dissatisfaction, while others give me 50 percent.

TDS: Do you have a dream role?

Faridee: The greatest tragedy for an actor is that he cannot perform all his favourite characters in a lifetime. My favourite characters are Shakespeare's King Lear and Hamlet. But I reckon I probably will never get to play these roles. I also wanted to portray the role of Kumud, from a story by Manik Bandopadhyay. There are many characters created by Rabindranath whom I love, but I'm afraid to play them.

TDS: If a veteran thespian like you is afraid to play certain characters, are the contemporary artistes who are playing these roles, doing justice to them?

Faridee: It is tough to bring the works of Rabindranath to the stage or screen. The ambiance and costumes are expensive to produce for television, while maintaining that specific diction is also hard.

TDS: Are the difficulties financial or intellectual?

Faridee: Both.

TDS: What are your expectations from movies?

Faridee: Film is a media that completely relies on directors. My opinions don't count that much here. I'm only a fragment of a large scene, following what the director tells me.

TDS: Many of your contemporaries are venturing into fields outside acting. Why not you?

Faridee: I can't do anything other than acting.

TDS: Is that really true?

Faridee: Yes it is. I tried my hand at business. But I do not understand finance. That is why business or traditional jobs are not for me.

TDS: You also produced a movie.

Faridee: Three of us produced the movie "Palabi Kothaye", which was directed by Shahidul Islam Khokon. The film was not a hit at the box office.

TDS: Any future plan to produce films?

Faridee: I don't have a deep pocket to produce a film.

TDS: Whom do you blame for the slump in the movie industry?

Faridee: Everyone is to blame. Starting from artistes, the producers, directors, distributors and audience -- all share the blame.

TDS: How do you view the latest trend of TV channel's producing films?

Faridee: Flip sides of the coin are present in this trend. First of all the positive side includes the making of decent movies. But it is impossible to put up a good movie with a small budget of only Tk 40-50 lakh .You need at least Tk 90 lakh to produce a good movie in this country. As a result, the quality drops. Audiences meanwhile are being drawn more to their TV sets than cinema halls. However, wholesome movies that have no vulgar elements are being made.

TDS: Haste is also being noticed in the making of TV plays nowadays.

Faridee: Earlier people used to watch only BTV, where great serials like "Shokal-Shondha", "Oyomoy" and "Shongshoptok" were aired. Now with the arrival of more channels, people find it hard to select which play/serial to watch. The flood of commercials is also a headache, which drives viewers away from a channel during breaks. They do not return to the play/serial, losing all interest. Overall, artistes are being denied the path to massive fame, which we enjoyed. The standard of plays has also fallen. There were only a handful of newspapers in our time, and with greater publicity and exposure the new actors should have been bigger stars.

TDS: Any actor who influenced or inspired you?

Faridee: I learned several things from performances of great actors like Kamal Hassan and Amitabh Bachchan. Dilip Kumar is my idol. I was lucky enough to meet him twice -- once at his Mumbai residence and once at Dhaka Sheraton.

TDS: You are a good writer. Why don't you write more often?

Faridee: Due to my procrastination.

TDS: Do you miss anything from the 1980s?

Faridee: The theatre.

TDS: What are the reasons behind you not returning to the stage?

Faridee: I don't have the strength to do theatre anymore. Even if I try, I won't be able to give my 100 percent.

TDS: Why have you been absent from BTV-produced dramas?

Faridee: Public servants lose their creativity. There may be some exceptions though. In the past, there was creativity. In our times we used to rehearse five days a week.

TDS: What is the difference between Faridee in "Dohon" and Faridee in commercial movies?

Faridee: The difference is huge. I turned my performances in commercial films into products.

TDS: Any comment on the recent directors?

Faridee: Many are proving their worth. After working in Ashraful Islam Ripon's "Mrittubaan", I understood his brilliance. Another great director is Amitabh Reza, who directed "Sporsher Baire" in which I acted with Suborna. I should also mention Giasuddin Selim and Animesh Aich.

TDS: Do you remember the works you did with Dhaka Theatre?

Faridee: Of course. I played Shorpo Raj Tokkhok in the drama "Shokuntola". Then I did "Fonimonsha". Other works with Dhaka Theatre include "Kittonkhola", "Keramat Mongol", "Shongbad Cartoon", "Muntasir Fantasy". With Goethe Institute, I did "Dhurto Uee", which was my final stage performance. I also did a street play, "Bashon".

TDS: Which was your favourite role on stage?

Faridee: I loved the Chhayaranjan character in "Kittonkhola". I also liked the role of Keramot.

TDS: Favourite TV roles?

Faridee: There are many. Sheraj Talukdar in "Bhangoner Shobdo Shuni" is one of my favourites. I had a dialogue in the play "Ami toh jomi kini nah, fani kini" that later became a favourite among the audience. I also liked Ramzan from "Shongshoptok". Other characters that I like include Gojendro of "Abar Gronthikgon Kohe" and the lawyer from "Kothao Keu Nei".

Abir Abdullah's photo exhibition opens today

Photographs on display.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted photographer Abir Abdullah's three-day photo exhibition, titled "Plight of the Waterlogged People", begins today at Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi in Dhaka.

Abdullah has been efficiently capturing the social, political and economic impacts of the rivers through his black and white as well as colour photographs.

In recent times, Abdullah was assigned by Oxfam's project, Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL), to delineate the hardship of thousands of people through his powerful shots. The exhibition focuses on Satkhira where people have been waterlogged for the past few months.

CSRL convener and former advisor to the caretaker government, Dr. C.S. Karim will inaugurate the photo exhibition. A steering committee member of CSRL, Dr. Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, Oxfam's Country Director Gareth Price Jones and Abir Abdullah will speak at the inauguration.

Abdullah embarked on his photographic career at Drik Picture Library in 1996. He currently works as a photo journalist with the Bangladesh bureau of the European Press Photo Agency (EPA). He has bagged many national and international awards, including the Mother Jones grant for his works on war veterans in Bangladesh. His photographs have been published in Time, Newsweek, Herald Tribune and others.

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

ATN BANGLA
12:15 Off Time
05:20 Obiram Bangladesh
08:40 Drama Serial: Ei Shahorey
10:55 Drama Serial: Uttaradhikar
01:15 ATN Music

CHANNEL i
01:05 Ebong Cinemar Gaan
04:05 Business Talk
06:00 Drama Serial: Dahan
06:25 Drama Serial: Robin Hood
07:50 Khude Gaanraj

Rtv
12:35 Bangla Feature Film
05:00 Cinema R Gaan
09:50 R Music
11:30 Drama Serial: Ronger Shongshar
12:05 Kichhu Dekha Kichhu Kotha

ETV
11:30 Ekushey-er Business
04:30 Gaaner Opare
05:30 Binodoner Bishwa
07:50 Music Station
08:20 Drama Serial: Ohongkar

BANGLAVISION
11:05 Shokal Belar Roddur
01:05 Bangla Feature Film
05:20 Porikkha Prostuti
09:05 Chakri Chai
11:25 Raat Biratey

Desh TV
04:00 Desh Janopod
04:30 Durpath
09:45 Ke Hote Chay Kotipoti
12:30 Total Sports

Boishakhi TV
10:30 Bangla Feature Film
04:15 Shorashori Doctor
08:10 Drama Serial: Ecaruser Dana
10:50 Reporters Dairy
11:30 Boishakhi Sanskriti O Binodon Sangbad

Maasranga Television
10:02 Bangla Feature Film
06:30 Neer-er Kabbo
09:02 Drama Serial: Santaran
09:30 Hari Jitee Nahi Laaj
11:00 Gaanpoka

Z Studio
01:30 Jack
03:45 Starship Troopers
07:00 Terminal Velocity
09:30 The Pacifier
11:30 Seabiscuit

Star Movies
03:50 Open Season
07:00 Harry Brown
08:45 Major Movie Star
10:25 Shanghai Knights
12:20 Other Side

HBO
03:15 The Last Airbender
05:25 Grease
07:30 Wimbledon
09:30 Sherlock Holmes
12:15 Rocky III

Star World
03:30 Cops
07:30 India's Most Desirable
09:30 Master Chef Australia
10:30 Bones
12:00 The Simpson's

National Geographic Channel
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
06:00 Wild Russia
08:00 Dog Whisperer
09:00 Nat Geo Wild
11:30 Caught in the act

Discovery Channel
02:30 Mega Moves
08:30 World War II in Colour
09:30 Man vs. Wild
10:30 Man Woman Wild

RADIO

abc radio FM 89.2
06:00 Bhorer Janalay
09:00 Mukhorito Jiboney
12:00 Darun Dupurey
03:00 Duranto Bikeley
05:00 Shondha Tara
07:00 Shaj-er Maya
09:00 Raat-er Akashey
11:00 Galper Shesh Nei

Radio Foorti
07:30 Hello Dhaka
10:00 Morning Express
12:00 No Tension
04:00 Dhaka Calling
09:00 Knight Riders

RADIO TODAY FM 89.6
08:00 Good Morning Dhaka
12:00 Today's Adda
04:00 U Turn
07:00 Tobey Tai Hok
10:00 Raat Bhor Gaan

Raat Biratey
On BANGLAVISION at 11:25pm
Street Show
Guest: Prince Mahmud

Sherlock Holmes
On HBO at 09:30pm
Genre: Action/ Adventure
Cast: Robert Downey Jr., Jude Law

Galpo Shalpo Gaan
On ETV at 10:10pm
Talk Show
Host: Fawzia Erina

DRAMA SERIAL

ATN BANGLA
08:00pm Adarsha Mess Bari
09:20pm Poush Phaguner Pala
CHANNEL i
09:35pm Ekla Pakhi
Rtv
08:20pm Shaat Purusher Dhaka
09:05pm Boyra Paribar
ETV
09:30pm Ghatak Baki Bhai
BANGLAVISION
08:15pm No Problem
Desh TV
07:45pm Gohiney
08:15pm Sat Kahon
Boishakhi TV
08:45pm O Chand
Maasranga Television
10:00pm Galpo Shalpo Gaan
Desh TV
11:45pm Shoja Kotha
Boishakhi TV
12:00am Zero Hour
Maasranga Television
07:30pm Prime Issue
12:00am Shamprotik
ATN BANGLA

NEWS BULLETIN

BTV
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 2:00 pm.5:00 pm.8:00 pm.
News (English) at 10:00am, 4:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).
CHANNEL-i
News (Bangla): 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am
ATN BANGLA
NEWS (Bangla): 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm, 1:00 am, 4:00 am
01:00pm, 3:00pm, 04:00pm
News (English): 9:00 am, 6:00 pm.
BANGLAVISION
News (Bangla) at 7:30am. 1:30pm. 5:00pm. 7:15pm. 10:30pm.
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00am. 12:00am. 4:00pm.
News (English) at 6:00pm
Rtv
News (Bangla): 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am
ntv
News (Bangla):7:30am, 12:02pm, 2:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am
ETV
News (Bangla): 9:00am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 11:00pm

TALK SHOW

CHANNEL i
09:45am Tritio Matra
12:30pm Taroka Kothon
Rtv
10:40am Tarokalap
07:40pm Our Democracy
ntv
12:30am Ei Shomoy
ETV
10:10pm Galpo Shalpo Gaan
Desh TV
11:45pm Shoja Kotha
Boishakhi TV
12:00am Zero Hour
Maasranga Television
07:30pm Prime Issue
12:00am Shamprotik
ATN BANGLA

THEATRE TODAY

"We need committed youngsters"

-- **Ahmed Gias**, chief secretary of Subachan

JAMIL MAHMUD

What people see nowadays in theatre is not the same as in its early days. Activists had to struggle to take theatre to its current position; theatre is now considered one of the strongest performing art forms in the country. After reaching this position under the leadership of a group of first generation activists, at present theatre practices are significantly run by a group of second and third generation activists. The "Theatre Today" series features interviews of these young theatre activists, through which the current theatre scenario will also be highlighted.

Ahmed Gias, chief secretary of Subachan Natya Sangsad, is a third generation theatre activist. He joined the troupe back in 1988 through a two-month workshop conducted by Professor Syed Jamil Ahmed. His first play, as part of the troupe, was "Ajo Kritodash". The play gained much popularity. Among his troupe's over 30 productions, Gias performed in nearly 20. His notable plays include "Rastro Bonam", "Chakro", "Khandani Kissa" and the recent "Mohajoner Nao".

Apart from the creative side, Gias has great organisational skills. He occupies important posts in the committees of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation -- Shammilito Shangskritk Jote and Bangladesh Patho Natok Parishad. He has held his current post in his troupe since 1999.

Though theatre seems to be a promising sector in Bangladeshi culture, it faces some obstacles.

"Back in early 1990s, being involved in theatre was not that easy. During the movement against the Ershad regime to restore democracy, we had to struggle a lot. We had a lack of manpower and resources; at times one performer had to play several roles. But what we, the young activists, had was sincere commitment. I never considered leaving theatre even during my worst days," said Gias.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

As chief of a theatre troupe, he shared his point of view on young activists today. According to Gias, as in previous times, theatre still faces several issues but these are different. His main observation is that now theatre has significantly lost creativity and dedicated young activists.

"I can say that lack of commitment is apparent. It is true that theatre [in Bangladesh] is a practice from which one still can't expect financial return. And people don't have much time for something that apparently gives nothing in return. But the truth is wherever you go, you cannot pursue your goals without commitment," said Gias.

"You would find unsatisfactory turnout at discussions. Many join theatre only to take a shortcut to learn acting, because someone tells him/her to do so. Young activists often change troupes within a short period of time. If this trend continues, we have reason to worry," he added.

"Lack of space for rehearsals is one of the major issues. Without space for rehearsals, how can we groom young actors, directors and theatre technicians?"

The government should take necessary steps immediately on this front, believes Gias. As a leader of BGTF, Gias said that his organisation has been working over the years to ease these crises. His suggestion to the government is to allot spaces for theatre troupes on a rental basis.

Gias also feels that there's a lack of talented playwrights among the young. This crisis comes forth when a troupe plans a new play. "You could count the number of young playwrights in theatre, but at the same time, you would find uncountable writers for TV plays and serials," said Gias.

Nevertheless, it appears as an astonishing feat to Gias that even after facing such obstacles they are still fighting and continuing theatre practice. "I salute those people who are involved in this journey," said Gias.

He believes that existence of parallel cultural activism such as traditional musical practice and recitation are essential for theatre to survive.

Street plays on the banks of Chiknai river

The plays focus on injustices and irregularities inherent in our society.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Chatmohar Shomonnoy Theatre organised a day long street show on September, 14 at Bothor field of Chatmohar upazila under Pabna. The artistes travelled by boats and performed in different places marking their annual programmes.

At Bothor field, the troupe performed three street shows: "Hamba", "Aiyana" and "Go-Jatra". Young artistes of the organisation also performed a mimo-drama 'Batowara'.

The young artistes' gesticulations without any verbal dialogues amused the viewers in particular. A large crowd gathered to watch the show.

The artistes also performed at Chaikola village. Members of Chatmohar Shomonnoy Theatre said that all the plays were performed on the banks of the river Chiknai. Traveling by boats, over 50 theatre artistes performed in different places.

President of the organisation Md. Asaduzzaman Dulal said that through the boat shows they have tried to generate awareness among the rural people about different issues.

"The plays we performed present a critique of the society. We are trying to point out injustices and irregularities inherent in our society," said Dulal.

Tagore Stories on Films

A retrospective screening of the film adaptations of Rabindranath Tagore's works will be held at the Main Auditorium, National Museum in Dhaka, from September 23, says a press release. Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Dhaka will arrange the screening that will continue till September 26.

The screening is part of the ongoing joint celebrations -- by India and Bangladesh -- of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

"Tagore Stories on Film" will showcase the popular stories written by Tagore adapted for the big screen, and directed by such renowned Indian directors as Satyajit Ray, Tapan Sinha, Hemen Gupta etc.

The films to be screened are "Khudhito Pashan", "Teen Konya", "Kabuliwala", "Ghare Baire", "Char Adhyay", "Notir Puja" and "Rabindranath Tagore" (both documentaries by Satyajit Ray).

The screening will begin at 3:30pm everyday.

Complimentary passes may be collected from Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre's offices in Dhanmondi and Gulshan 1.

Lebanese film wins Toronto festival fans' award

AP, *Toronto*

"Where Do We Go Now?" a bittersweet comedy set in war-torn Lebanon, bested two well-received entries starring George Clooney to win the people's choice award Sunday at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The Cadillac People's Choice award, which also includes a C$15,000 cash prize, is voted on by festival audiences and has typically been regarded as a bellwether for Oscar success.

Lebanese-Canadian director-actress Nadine Labaki's feminist film about village women bent on keeping their hot-headed men out of a religious war was chosen earlier this month as Lebanon's 2011 entry in the best foreign language film category for the Academy Awards.

Labaki, who also stars in the film, was travelling in Europe when she heard the news, which was announced Sunday at a closing brunch for the 11-day festival.

Festival programmer Rasha Salti accepted the award on the filmmaker's behalf, reading a statement sent by Labaki from an airport in Germany.

"I'm thrilled, I'm happy, I'm ecstatic, I'm excited -- my day that had just started on the wrong foot because of a flight cancellation has just been turned upside down," the 37-year-old Labaki said in her statement.

"I'm running around jumping up and down at the Frankfurt airport. Tomorrow we'll be screening 'Where Do We Go Now?' for the first time in Lebanon and I will be proud and happy to announce the news in front of my crew, my family and the Lebanese audience."

Festival director Piers Handling noted it was a surprise triumph for a film that was overshadowed by heavily promoted, star-studded Hollywood films. These included Clooney's two films, "The Descendants" and "The Ides of March".

Last year's fans' pick, "The King's Speech", went on to take four Oscars, including best picture, and the 2008 people's choice winner, "Slumdog Millionaire", took best picture and seven other Oscars.

Quebec director Philippe Falardeau's "Monsieur Lazhar", about an Algerian schoolteacher in Quebec and his relationship with two students, won the award for best Canadian feature and a C$30,000 prize.

The best first Canadian feature award, which includes a C$15,000 prize, went to director Nathan Morlando's period piece "Edwin Boyd", starring Scott Speedman as the notorious Canadian bank robber.

"Where Do We Go Now?" garnered rave reviews at this year's Cannes Film Festival, where it screened on the margins of the official competition. It follows Labaki's feature "Caramel", a sweet love story set in a Beirut beauty salon, which was Lebanon's entry for the 2007 best foreign language film Oscar.

Set in a remote village where the church and the mosque stand side by side, "Where Do We Go Now?" follows the antics of the town's women to keep their blowhard men from starting a religious war. Women heartsick over sons, husbands and fathers lost to previous flare-ups unite to distract their men with clever ruses, from faking a miracle to hiring a troop of Ukrainian strippers.

Labaki wrote the screenplay for the film, which was shot on location in three remote Lebanese villages with a cast made up almost entirely of non-professional actors. Labaki, who is married to the film's compoer, Khaled Mouzannar, also included a handful of old-school song-and-dance numbers that buoy the mood.