

THE WEEKENDER

Aly Zaker unwinds in productivity

FAHIM FERDOUS

Aly Zaker is a colossal figure in the country's cultural arena. Even at the age of 69, he remains busy with his work on theatre, running a company, and writing. But even a man of his level of drive needs to take a break sometime. How does he do that? The Daily Star looked to find out.

How are your weekends usually spent?
Zaker: There's no definite set, really. I have various engagements in the cultural arena even on weekends, so I attend to them. Apart from that, our theatre troupe has found a new timing for rehearsal: on weekend mornings till lunch. We have found that it's a very good time as there's very little interruption. We're currently rehearsing on our new production "Galelio Galelei" -- to be first staged in August. We don't rehearse every weekend, though.

If you do have a day or two when the schedules are not packed...

Zaker: I usually go out of the city. We



have a village home, in Gazipur. It's not very far so I visit quite often. It lets me out of the hustle and bustle of the city. I am also writing, and I usually write more than one book simultaneously, so I keep a little time

open for that as well.
Is there anything specific you're working on right now?

Zaker: I am currently compiling a 'coffee-table book' of my pictures. It's going to be some 200 pages, with narrations by me. I'm really excited about it.

Is there any activity that you enjoy in particular on your leisure?

Zaker: I love to take photos. Whenever I go out of Dhaka, I love taking my camera with me; and even inside the city. I also love cycling, so if there is an opportunity, I take out my bike and go for a ride.

Do you get to travel on extended holidays or vacations?

Zaker: Unfortunately, that hasn't happened in the last couple of years. But I have had to go to Singapore for medical reasons, so we try to sort of convert them into vacations, have a good time. However, we're thinking of taking a vacation soon; we haven't pinned down a place, though.

PHOTO COURTESY: ALY ZAKER

ONE YEAR ON...

Stars think back on Humayun Ahmed



Humayun Ahmed: at the home he built with a lot of love, Nuhash Prolli.



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Arriving on the literary scene with novels like "Nondito Noroke" and "Shonkhoni Karagar", Humayun Ahmed was an immediate favourite among readers. His skills with the pen did not go unnoticed by the critics, as he became the recipient of the prestigious Bangla Academy award at an early age, and the Ekushey Padak later in his life.

The author, who enjoyed unprecedented levels of popularity, also won accolades as a playwright and director. He created timeless classics like "Kothao Keu Nei", "Bohubrihi", "Oyomoy" and "Eishob Dintrati" for the television, while making a new record for National Film Awards with his celluloid feature "Agnor Poroshmoni".

The creator of literary characters like Himu, Misir Ali and Shubro breathed his last on July 19, 2012, while undergoing medical treatment in New York. On his first death anniversary today, many stars who worked with the maestro gave

their take on how he had influenced their lives.

Jayanta Chattopadhyay:

As far as I can tell, I've worked with Humayun Ahmed in almost all his projects -- be it TV dramas or films. Our relationship was not confined to the artiste-director label. We were very close. There were only a few people who would address Humayun Ahmed as 'tumi'; I was one of those few. There are countless memories with him that I cherish. It's hard to even imagine that he is gone. We had wonderful chitchats during the shooting of "Ghetupuro Komola". I've never met a more knowledgeable person than him. I miss him every step of my life.

Munmun Ahmed:
My first work with Humayun Ahmed was in the drama "Shawkat Shaheer Gaari

Kena". I went on to do many more TV plays with him. We had so many memorable conversations during the shooting for "Amar Achhe Jol" in Sylhet. My final work with him was in "Ghetupuro Komola". Humayun Ahmed had a long standing relationship with my family, and we saw him as a guardian. Whenever I visited Nuhash Palli, he would show me the trees that he had collected. He once gave me lychees from his tree and advised that I should make 'Achaar' with the sour ones. I get emotional whenever I talk about him. A person like him needed to be with us for a longer time.

Zahid Hassan:
In my acting career, his last on the TV dramas that brought me the most popularity were directed by Humayun

Ahmed. I was fortunate enough to be close to such a talented person. There was a time when we grew very close. His addas always kept everyone in good spirits during shooting breaks. My performance in his "Srabon Megher Din" won me a National Film Award. I also worked in "Amar Achhe Jol". It's a strange feeling to realise that a year has passed since he left us.

Shadhin Khoshru:
The credit for my identity as an actor belongs completely to Humayun Ahmed. He brought me to the world of acting. There was a time, when I was in all of his dramas and films. I had the chance to travel to many countries with him. He was not only a popular author-playwright, he was also a wonderful human being. I learned a lot from him. Sometimes, it's hard to believe that Humayun Ahmed is no more. I feel like I've lost a guardian.



Chhayanaut's homage to Bipul Bhattacharya

As homage to Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste Bipul Bhattacharya, Chhayanaut is holding a memorial programme at its auditorium today at 11am, according to a press release. Bipul Bhattacharya was a folk music teacher at Chhayanaut.

Cultural personalities, fellow artistes, colleagues among others will remember the recently deceased artiste at the programme that will also feature choral folk songs performance and screening of the film "Muktir Gaan", directed by Tareque and Catherine Masud. The director duo once mentioned in a comment on Bipul Bhattacharya: "Bipul Bhattacharya is the soul of 'Muktir Gaan'". His voice, singing uplifting folk songs about the Liberation War, infuses the film with power and grace. Without Bipul Bhattacharya, there would be no 'Muktir Gaan'".

An active artiste of Bangladesh Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha during the country's War of Liberation in 1971, Bhattacharya's songs inspired the freedom fighters during the War of Liberation in 1971. He was only 16 then. The songs ignited the patriotic sentiments of the common people as well as the soldiers on the battlefield.

NEWS bytes



RDJ named Forbes' highest-paid actor

Robert Downey Jr. star of "The Avengers" and "Iron Man 3", has topped Forbes' list of highest-paid actors, with estimated earnings of \$75 million. In second place is Channing Tatum, who financed and starred in "Magic Mike". Directed by Steven Soderbergh, it made \$167 million, contributing to the actor's \$60 million pay. Completing the top three is Australian actor Hugh Jackman, whose new film "The Wolverine" is about to open in the UK. He is thought to have earned \$55 million in the same period - June 2012 to June 2013.

Other stars in the top 10 include Mark Wahlberg, Adam Sandler, Denzel Washington, last year's topper Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio and Liam Neeson.

Source: BBC

Kamol Dasgupta on GAAN-ER OPAREY

TV WATCH

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking the death anniversary (July 20) and birth anniversary (July 28) of legendary composer-musician Kamol Dasgupta, satellite TV channel ETV's regular musical programme "Gaan-er Oparey" has been arranged differently. "Gaan-er Oparey" will have songs composed by Dasgupta in all the four episodes this July.

Dasgupta's son Shafin Ahmed will perform music on the first and last week of July while Sushmita Anis and Alif will perform Dasgupta's

compositions on the second and third week respectively. Produced by Mohsin Rahman, "Gaan-er Oparey" is aired every Friday at 8:20pm.

Dasgupta was the legend who created a bold identity in the sphere of Bangla music during the Rabindra-Nazrul era (1930s and 1940s).

Dasgupta not only managed to dominate the contemporary Bangla music scene, but also made a breakthrough as an uber-popular composer of Urdu/Hindi geet and ghazal. Dasgupta composed many songs penned by our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.



ELEGY

The big baddie of Bollywood



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

As a young man, he wanted to be a photographer, but he ended up in front of the camera, and Bollywood got one of its most respected actors and a towering villain.

Pran Krishan Sikand, popularly known as Pran, died in a hospital in Mumbai on Friday night after prolonged illness at the age of 93, bringing down the curtains on a career of over 400 films that spanned more than six decades.

Pran will be forever remembered for bringing on-screen villains on par with the heroes, ruling the industry from 1969 to 1982. He commanded equal respect for his negative characters in "Madhumati", "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai", "Ram Aur Shyam" and "Devdas".

Sometimes his role was more prominent and central to a film than the hero, as were the cases in "Victoria No 203" (along with Ashok Kumar) and "Dharma". He even got to sing one of Bollywood's most popular songs, "Yaari hai imaan mera yaar meri zindagi" in "Zanjeer" (1973) -- the film that catapulted Amitabh Bachchan to stardom.

The actor took on myriad persona in his films -- ranging from lecherous villain in "Madhumati", suave and scheming baddie in "Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai", village dacoit in "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai", and the comic villain in "Half-Ticket". His flair for comedy was also evident in films where he played the good guy, such as "Victoria No 203", "Jungle Mein Mangal" and "Kasauti".



The unstoppable BINDU

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Since her successes at the Lux Superstar pageant, Bindu has been an unstoppable force in the media -- topping many of her contemporaries in the scene. The actress, who is a popular face in TV dramas, recently spoke to The Daily Star about her recent assignments and more.

How busy are you with Eid projects?

Bindu: Most of my current works are Eid dramas. Already, I've done around 20 dramas and telefilms for Eid, with more in the offing. However, I always focus on the quality of the plays and not the numbers.

Which one of those did you enjoy the most?
Bindu: I liked all of them. It was great working in a Rayhan Khan telefilm, where I act opposite model Nobel. The story of the telefilm is very interesting.

You've been a part of Mir Sabbir's dramas for the last couple of Eids. Tell us more.

Bindu: I worked in two plays by Mir Sabbir this Eid. One was a one-hour-play called "Kudduser Murgi Prem". I laughed a lot when I heard the title for the first time. The other project was a five-episode drama by Mir Sabbir which will be aired on Boishakhi TV. I play opposite Zahid Hassan in the play.

Do you think the Eid dramas are a little one-dimensional?
Bindu: Each play has its unique story, while my characters are all different.

Recently, I took a break for a couple of months from acting. During that time, the scripts that I received were all similar. I turned them down because I don't want to pursue monotonous stories. So this time, I can strongly say that I chose the Eid dramas because each of them is unique.

Would you share one such story?

Bindu: I can mention a very unique drama by Matia Banu, which will be aired on SA TV. Birds play a huge role in the drama, and I enjoyed working with birds. I did another Eid drama, where I play a con artist who tricks everyone to steal money. Another project I did was completely action-based.

You have been absent from serials. What's the reason?

Bindu: I choose to stay out because I have no faith in the scripts that I'm offered. When I go through the scripts, I see that the serials have momentum till the 20th episode, but fade out soon after. I avoid doing serials for this reason.

You were also offered spots in Kolkata films and dramas?

Bindu: I was offered roles in two Kolkata films at the start of the year, but couldn't find time. My busy schedule also kept me from working in a Kolkata serial. I was offered. My first priority remains working on projects in my own country.

What is the viewership like for hundreds of Eid dramas?

Bindu: I believe that Eid is the only time when viewers are truly eager to watch TV plays. They watch more plays during Eid, than the rest of the year. That's why I work extra hard for the Eid plays, so that I'm satisfied with a performance which the audience can also enjoy.

It's True!

In 2001, Bob Marley was posthumously awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a feature-length documentary about his life, "Rebel Music", won various awards at the Grammys. With contributions from Rita, The Wailers, and Marley's lovers and children, it also tells much of the story in his own words. Internationally, Marley's message also continues to reverberate amongst various indigenous communities. For instance, the Australian Aborigines continue to burn a sacred flame to honour his memory in Sydney's Victoria Park, while members of the Amerindian Hopi and Havasupai tribe revere his work. There are also many tributes to Bob Marley throughout India, including restaurants, hotels, and cultural festivals.

