



PHOTO: SAURAV DEY

"Incredible doors have opened" -- Nicholas Simon

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Nicholas Simon is a veteran Hollywood producer, with films like "Act of Valor" and "City of Ghosts" to his credit. Recently, his crew shot at a shipyard in Chittagong, for an upcoming Hollywood film. Although he was not at liberty to discuss anything about the film, Simon spoke to The Daily Star in general about his experience and the potential for Bangladesh as an international filming location.

How did you end up here in Bangladesh to shoot?

Simon: I've been working in Asia, mainly Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand since 1994. I have a new company, that has worked in Hollywood films like "Act of Valor" and "Transformers 3", and we also do high profile international TV commercials. A Hollywood studio called me up six months ago and said they wanted to shoot here in Chittagong. I'd never thought of shooting here, so I did some research, and found out there has been very little international production here. I eventually contacted the US Embassy, and they connected me to four companies here. Eventually, I chose Adshop, Tariq's (Tariq Anam Khan) company for the liaison here, convinced the studio that it was possible logistically and in terms of permissions, and here we are.

Tell us about the shooting experience here.

Simon: It's been amazing, actually. I just spoke with the foreign crew that came here, and they were

all blown away with enthusiasm. A lot of the Bangladeshi crew wasn't very experienced, but they were very eager to learn, and there was no ego issue. All in all, I think incredible doors were opened.

The actors were not here for the shoot. Is this a common thing for Hollywood films nowadays?

Simon: The way films are made now, especially large Hollywood movies -- if you look at "The Hobbit", or "Harry Potter", so much of what is filmed is not on location. It's shot in studio, and then the outdoor location is shot, and then put together in chroma-key. On one side, I understand that people would want Hollywood stars to shoot here, but the studio would never consider it; it would be too big of a hassle and expense. I like to look at the positive side, though; the technology opens up locations for filming that would otherwise not be feasible.

What are the prospects for Bangladesh as an international filming location?

Simon: I think you have huge potential to replace India as a location. India is one of the most difficult places in the world to shoot in, firstly because of the visa situation, and then -- for the lack of a better word -- the presence of a heavy mafia, whether you're looking for a location, or hiring people. It's complicated and expensive, so for international features and TV commercials, India doesn't have a very good reputation. So why not shoot Calcutta (Kolkata) here? Or Bombay (Mumbai)? I think it's a huge market you can tap in. I know for my

clients in England or in the States, my company will promote Bangladesh, particularly for international TV commercials, because the market for it is so much bigger. We've already sent location scouts to the Sunderbans. We've also sent someone to take photos of Sonargaon. And also, in our industry others will hear that we came here and shot on budget and on time, and our accounting was all legit, and they'll make a note of it. Even some of the crew that worked said they would recommend this to other production companies they work with.

What do you think Bangladesh lacks, in terms of being feasible for such future ventures?

Simon: What I was surprised is that you have almost nothing of a tourism industry. Tourism and film production go hand in hand. What do we need? We need good food, good places to stay and good communication. Apart from the planes, transportation is a pain. You don't have many hotels, and they are incredibly expensive. This same hotel where we're staying now would be one-fourth the price in Bangkok. That's where this country is not competitive. But if people start seeing more in films and TV commercials, they will take more interest and the tourism sector can benefit from that too. Also, the lack of equipment and crew is a setback, but those issues are nothing a production company can't handle, if they decide to shoot here. Once the critical mass gets there, the rest can be figured out. So yeah, I am excited!

Exhibition marking Shafiuddin's birthday begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An exhibition, marking 92nd birth anniversary of Shilpaguru Shafiuddin Ahmed, begins today at Gallery Chittrak in the capital's Dhanmondi. The exhibition features prints by Ahmed Nazir and paintings by noted artists of 1930s and 40s.

The exhibition is dedicated to Shilpaguru Shafiuddin Ahmed and his teachers and friends.

Eminent artists Qayyum Chowdhury and Rafiqun Nabi will inaugurate the exhibition at 6 pm. Professor Syed Azizul Huq will attend the opening ceremony as special guest. The exhibition, opening from 10am to 8pm daily, will end on July 5.



"Argentina is my favourite because of Maradona" -- Nirob

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Model-turned-actor Nirob is at the peak of his career on the silver screen. Even as he shoots for over a dozen movies, some of his celluloid works have been released while others are close to release.

Excerpts from a recent interview with the actor:

World Cup fever has gripped the entire country. Which is your favourite team?

Nirob: I've been a supporter of Argentina since my childhood. You could put it down to my family, mother included, who were avid supporters of the team. I'm a big fan of Maradona. It is for him that my allegiance lies with the Argentine side.

How closely are you following the tournament?

Nirob: It's a special kind of excitement, that

comes once every four years. I want to watch the matches along with my friends. Particularly if Argentina is on the field, there is no chance of me missing the game. I'm always wearing an Argentina jersey when I watch them play.

What is your shooting schedule right now?

Nirob: I'm busy with films. I am totally into cinema right now. I want to become a proper film artiste, and not just the protagonist.

You have also recently signed a foreign film?

Nirob: Yes, a Malaysian movie for which shooting is almost over. The film will be released in six countries simultaneously. I feel great at getting to appear in the project.

You are also likely to work with Tollywood heartthrob Raima Sen in a film?

Nirob: "Sadarghat" is an Indo-Bangladesh joint production film, directed by Lal Sankar Bhattacharya. The interesting thing is that it will not depict the story of Dhaka's Sadarghat. The storyline is based on legendary actress Suchitra Sen. In the movie, the character played by Moon Moon Sen dreams of setting up a restaurant in Bangladesh named Sadarghat.



PHOTO: SAURAV DEY

GoT finale sets new viewership record



Emilia Clarke plays dragon-taming princess Daenerys Targaryen in the series.

The closing episode of fantasy TV series "Game of Thrones" drew 7.1 million viewers on HBO in the US on Sunday, beating the 5.4 million who tuned in for the previous season's last episode.

Once repeats were taken into account, the finale for the fourth season was seen by 9.3 million people. Total viewing figures, including video on demand and mobile streaming have not yet been released. It is now HBO's most popular series, surpassing "The Sopranos".

The average audience during series four, including catch-up services, has been 18.6 million per episode. "The Sopranos" audience peaked at 18.2m in 2002, giving it the HBO record until now.

The show is engaged in a ratings war with zombie thriller "The Walking Dead", which attracted 15.7 million viewers for its season finale in April.

However, broadcaster AMC said its audience jumped to 28 million once repeats and on-

demand figures were taken into account.

The final episode, "The Children", saw many of the show's leading characters making key decisions which will impact them in future episodes, while several met a typically grisly end.

Season five has already been confirmed. The TV series is based on the books, "A Song of Ice and Fire" by George RR Martin, set in the mythical, medieval land of Westeros. In the north, a massive wall of ice keeps out barbarian "wildlings" and zombie-like "white walkers". South of the wall, there is a bitter war between rival claimants for the Iron Throne and rule of the seven kingdoms of Westeros. Meanwhile, a princess exiled to distant lands with three dragons has rallied an army of freed slaves.

The show, which first aired in 2011, features actors including Peter Dinklage, Charles Dance, Lena Headey, Emilia Clarke and Maisie Williams.

Source: BBC

Is Shraddha the villain in "Ek Villain"?

For some time now, speculation has been rife about who the real villain of upcoming Bollywood film "Ek Villain" is -- Sidharth Malhotra or Riteish Deshmukh? And now, there's a new twist in the tale.

It recently emerged on a blog that Shraddha Kapoor is the culprit. An online video featuring Shraddha in a hoodie has triggered the speculation. "Little did I know that the hoodie would become such a rage," says director Mohit Suri. "I've been wearing one ever since we started shooting. People have even asked me if the hoodies are for sale. I guess the intrigue level is soaring."

Tanuj Garg, CEO of Balaji Motion Pictures, which is producing the movie, said, "We're enjoying the theories around the villain's identity. But there's much more to the film than just that." The film releases on June 27.

Source: TOI



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR FAVOURITE MARVEL SUPERHEROES



The Daily Star | STAR Cinemax
X-MEN QUIZ CONTEST

10 winners everyday! 2 Premium tickets for each winner

Quiz 03

1. Before "X-men: Days of Future Past" how many X-men movies were released?
2. Jennifer Lawrence played the character named . . .

Answer of quiz 02

1. Bryan Singer; 2. Huge Jackman

Quiz 02 winners
1. Farabi Rahman, Uttara; 2. Sadafuzzamani Tuli, Tejgaon; 3. Ridwanul Karim, Kalabagan; 4. Novera Moyeen, Asad Gate; 5. Syeda Maniza Rahman, Hatirpul; 6. Sadia Esha, Elephant Road; 7. Frajana Amin, Shewrapara; 8. Nazmul Hassan, Pallabi; 9. Dibakar Dip, Tolarbagh; 10. Nahian Arefin, Mirpur

email your answers to marvels.xmen@gmail.com by 4.00pm today with your name, DOB, mobile number and address. The winners of the quiz will be announced tomorrow in the newspaper and through email.



THE USAID COMPETITIVE FELLOWSHIP AWARDS PROGRAM FOR MPH GRADUATES 2015

Overview: As part of the Next Generation of Public Health Experts Program, funded by USAID, the James P. Grant School of Public Health at BRAC Institute of Global Health at BRAC University is offering the USAID Competitive Fellowship Awards Program to develop promising public health experts.

Masters of Public Health (MPH) graduates are invited to apply.

Upon selection, fellows are placed at leading public health organizations across Bangladesh.

The fellowship appointment is for 6 to 12 months. Fellows will receive a stipend with incentives for placements in under-served and high-needs areas.

Eligibility: Applicants must be Bangladeshi citizens, and MPH graduates.

Application: Interested candidates are requested to submit the following:

- 1) A completed Application Form (available at: http://sph.bracu.ac.bd/images/FELLOWSHIP/application_form_mph_fellowship.pdf)
- 2) A CV and two references

Deadline: Rolling application deadline. Applicants are encouraged to apply by August 7, 2014.

For proposal submission and further inquiries: Ms. Khadija Leena, Email: leena@bracu.ac.bd, or call at +88 (02) 9827501-4 Ext: 6009 or visit: <http://bigh.bracu.ac.bd> or www.jpgsph.org

