

# PERISCOPING INTO BANGLA CINEMA

STAR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Today is National Film Day. On this day in 1957, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – the erstwhile Industries, Commerce, Relief and Disaster Management Minister – raised the FDC Bill at the East Pakistan provincial council and played a pivotal role in the establishment of a complete film studio. The present government has been celebrating this day as National Film Day, much to the delight of those involved in the industry. This year three-day celebrations will mark the event. Rallies, seminars, fairs and cultural events will be held from today to April 5, including the ceremony of the National Film Awards 2013. Film icon Razzaq has been made convener of the national committee for the observance, along with 11 sub-committees. Organisers hope that this year's event will be better and brighter than past years. Asian TV will broadcast the events live. Marking National Film Day, Star Arts & Entertainment Desk spoke to Gazi Rakayet – whose debut film "Mrittika Maya" won a record-breaking number of National Film Awards – about his work; Mosihuddin Shaker, the veteran helmer of the classic "Surjo Dighol Bari", about a comparative look of films of yesteryears and now -- as well as actors Apu Biswas and Nirab, about their thoughts on the film industry.

## "Development of cinema is a long journey" ...Nirab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nirab has been in the film industry for a while now, and has found a footing as a leading man on the silver screen. Talking to The Daily Star, he shared his insights about the industry's dynamics, and how it is moving ahead.

"The last three months have been frustrating for the film industry because of the country's current situation. Not many films have released, and those that have released have not done great business because people have not been in the right frame of mind to watch films. But overall, one of our biggest limitations is budget, and it's directly connected to the size of the market. You cannot convince a producer to invest 10 crores in the market even if you promise the most amazing film; because he knows this market will not yield enough monetary returns for him. Just as a small example, Shah Rukh Khan released 'Don 2' in 17 countries and 3500 cinema halls at once; our films release in around 35 halls. And the market will not grow overnight. The after-effects of the vulgarity that prevailed in Bangla cinema 10-15 years ago, still linger; the people that turned away from our films because of that, will only start coming back eventually when they are convinced that our cinema is getting better. I think in the last few years, better stories have been told in films, our film's music has improved a great deal, and piracy has gone down. It has not happened automatically; people have been working hard, and the results are showing."

"Because of digital filmmaking, good movies are being made on small budgets, and that has attracted more investors. That, in turn has increased competition, and competition is the best way to raise the standards of an industry. Development of cinema is a long journey, and I believe our films are moving towards the better."



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Gazi Rakayet, a popular actor and director, has left distinguishable marks in the spheres of television and theatre where he has been working for decades. Starting off his career as an actor on the stage, Rakayet gradually moved to theatre direction before stepping into the vast territory of television drama as an actor, director and script writer.

Later, Rakayet ventured into filmmaking with his first feature film "Mrittika Maya" that brought this talented artiste the rare achievement of National Film Awards in 17 categories.

An excerpt from this actor-director's recent conversation with this correspondent.

**What's the impetus behind the artistic excellence of an artiste?**

Rakayet: I think there lives a

king inside the heart of every artiste. And that's why he/she wants the world to know the works of that inner king. Some artistes achieve it through hard work and perseverance, while the rest fail. As an artiste, I am driven by the irresistible desire to showcase my work for people.

**Did you ever think of getting such accolades while "Mrittika Maya" was in the making?**

Rakayet: No. It never came to my mind while I was working on the project. However, it is true that this award has brought me immense respect, success and love in my personal and family life as well as on a national platform. I am a teacher, theatre artiste and director. I am happy in the respect that I receive in these spheres.

**Your take on this award?**

Rakayet: It's a record which no

## Only quality works can immortalise an artiste

... Gazi Rakayet

film in our country has ever set before. I think I was honest to my work and I worked hard which brought me this success. This achievement has enlivened my work and the film will forever be remembered. That's my achievement as the director of "Mrittika Maya".

**What drove you to make such a film?**

Rakayet: When I was in my early 20s, I resolved that whatever I did in life must contribute to the welfare of people. That commitment is still the force behind my work.

**What's the theory behind your success?**

Rakayet: My good intent, perseverance and hard work have landed me here. I want to live through my works. Only quality works can immortalise an artiste.



PHOTO: STAR

## "We're going to a school without teachers" ... Apu Biswas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apu Biswas, one of the busiest film actresses of our times, spoke to The Daily Star about the limitations and scenario of the film industry of the country. Excerpts:

"We are continuously striving to do better work and to take our cinema further, but the problem is we don't really know how to get there. It's true for everyone involved in the industry – from on-screen artistes to technicians. We do not have a guideline to follow, so everyone is doing what they think is best, but the industry cannot progress like that. It's like we're all going to school, but there are no teachers. I think directors, artistes, producers – we all need some form of schooling and exercise, so we have a clear direction. Today's world is very competitive; thanks to the internet, everything is at the tip of everyone's fingertips. If what we do is not good enough, people will naturally choose something else."

"While the new wave of digital cinema has its upsides, there are downsides too. People not equipped with the right skills are making sub-standard works, and those are also releasing in halls, and count towards our cinema industry, which is actually drawing the industry back."

"Our film industry has to step up. When I was young, I'd see a heroine wearing a pretty dress and I'd make a dress like that. I can't say with certainty that anyone follows my fashion now. It's a collective struggle of ours, to take Bangla cinema to greater heights."

## "We need a film-friendly environment"

... Masihuddin Shaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Masihuddin Shaker is a noted filmmaker and architect. He is famous for his film "Surjadighal Bari". In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, he shared his visions on film making of the past and present time while addressing some important issues. Excerpts:

"I think that the relation between art and commercialisation should be balanced. A good film always contains two features -- idealistic substance and entertaining elements.

Perhaps, there are some able filmmakers in our society, but they are subservient to the producers. The producers primarily think of the returns on his/her money invested. That's why they try to control everything. On the other hand, an overall decay of our collective values and ideals prevails in our political, economic and social phases. If these persist, a creative and sensitive field like films cannot go ahead. The change of our political culture is a must to save not only film but also our overall culture."

"The people have taken film as a business. But it is a powerful medium of art. Film can change many things in society. Filmmakers have now become dependent on the investors. The making of good films even mediocre social films has become rare. Filmmaking on government grants must be enhanced and encouraged. The most important thing is to create a film-friendly environment in Bangladesh. We have to address the real points; otherwise, observance of National Film Day will bear little fruit."



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

## NEWS bytes

### Mark Wahlberg to produce Boston bombing film



Mark Wahlberg is to co-produce and potentially star in a film about the 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon and the city-wide manhunt that followed.

"Patriots' Day" will be based on the first-hand account of Ed Davis, whom Wahlberg may play in the drama.

"There is nothing more compelling than a real story populated by real heroes," said CBS Films president Terry Press.

Three people, including an eight-year-old boy, were killed after two pressure cooker bombs detonated in April 2013. A

police officer was fatally shot days after the attack, in which more than 260 people were injured.

According to CBS Films, "Patriots' Day" will be "an intense thriller, spanning the five-day search up to the infamous siege... in Watertown (near Boston)".

20th Century Fox is working on a rival project, entitled "Boston Strong", about the deadliest terror attack on US soil since 9/11.

Source: BBC

## IT'S TRUE!



While Bob Dylan was in his 10th grade, his back-up band was rejected from a high school talent show because the student council judged his performance at the audition too shocking. Finally, when his talent received recognition and he was about to sign his first contract with Columbia Records, Dylan conned his way out of a stipulation that required his parents to sign the contract -- as Dylan at 20, was considered a minor at the time -- by convincing John Hammond that he was an orphan.



**FURIOUS 7** The Daily Star | STAR CINEPLEX **FURIOUS7 QUIZ CONTEST**

**15 WINNERS EVERYDAY! 2 PREMIUM TICKETS FOR EACH WINNER**

Furious 7 is a 2015 American action film. It is the sequel to the 2013 film Fast & Furious 6 and the seventh installment in the Fast & Furious film series. The DAILY STAR together with STAR CINEPLEX will host a quiz for the FURIOUS lovers in the Arts & Entertainment section everyday from 05 April, 2015 to 09 April, 2015.