

Int'l Children's Film Fest, Bangladesh
 Title: Future in Frames
 Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Public Library, Shahbagh
 Date: Jan 23-29; Time: 11am-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Title: Time, Coincidence & History by Dhali Al Mamoon
 Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhanmondi
 Date: Jan 23-Mar 19
 Time: 12-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Title: "Less is More" by Asem Ansari
 Venue: Gallery Chitrag, Rd-6, H-4, Dhanmondi
 Date: January 15-31
 Time: 10am-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Gulshan Hossain
 Venue: Athena Gallery of Fine Arts, AJ Heights, Cha 7/1/D, Uttara Badda
 Date: Jan 16-Feb 6
 Time: 10am-8pm

Contemporary Print Exhibition
 Venue: Shilpangan/H-7, R-13, Dhanmondi
 Date: Jan 15-30
 Time: 3-8pm

NEWS bytes

Chris Rock

rewriting Oscar monologue

Chris Rock is still on board to host the Oscars this year despite calls for him to join the boycott protesting the Academy's lack of diversity. Academy Awards producer Reginald Hudlin told Entertainment Tonight at Saturday's NAACP Image Awards lunch that Rock's opening monologue will address the #OscarsSoWhite conversation in a big way. Rock reportedly reworked his entire set of jokes when such figures as Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith announced they would be boycotting the ceremony. "Chris is hard at work. He and his writing staff locked themselves in a room," Hudlin told ET. "As things got a little provocative and exciting, he said, 'I'm throwing out the show I wrote and writing a new show.'" However, Hudlin indicated that he and his team are



prepared for Rock to make some controversial statements.

"And, yes, the Academy is ready for him to do that," Hudlin said. "They're excited about him doing that. They know that's what we need. They know that's what the public wants, and we deliver what the people want."

Source: Internet



Curtain rises on 9th Int'l Children's Film Festival

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth edition of International Children's Film Festival Bangladesh is currently on at 15 venues in Dhaka, Sylhet and Rajshahi.

The inauguration ceremony of the event was held at Shawkat Osman Auditorium of Central Public Library in the capital on January 23 amid enthusiasm and festivity.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith inaugurated the festival as chief guest while Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor was the special guest at the event.

Later, a discussion was held at the main venue. Children's Film Society Bangladesh general secretary Munira Morshed Munni; celebrated cultural personality Syed Hasan Imam; Pran-RFL Group's head of marketing and sales AKM Moinul Islam; festival director Rayeed Morshed; co-director Abir Ferdous and eminent filmmaker Morshedul Islam spoke at the discussion.

Speakers emphasised the importance of film as medium to boost creativity of youngsters and

make them better citizens. Rayeed Morshed and co-director Abir Ferdous focused on the features of the event.

Finance Ministry has funded taka 10 lakh for the festival, while Cultural Affairs Ministry and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy have provided taka three lakh and one lakh respectively, said the organisers.

They also informed that for the first time, the festival will have buses to pick students from different schools in the capital.

Following the formal inauguration ceremony, German film "My Friend Raffi" was screened.

In addition to the screening of over 150 films, the event also features competitions in a number of categories, a seminar, workshop and more.

There will be a competition for Bangladeshi children filmmakers where 33 films by Bangladeshi children will be screened. Of these 33 films, five will receive awards. A five-member jury board has been formed comprising children and teenagers for the category.

The festival will run till January 29.

FILM REVIEW

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: A tale of complex struggles

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Rubaiyat Hossain came under a storm of criticism after her debut film "Meherjan" touched a very sensitive nerve of patriotism that saw her almost equally condemned in Bangladesh as internationally attention-drawing. Five years almost to the day, her second film "Under Construction" hit theatres in Dhaka on January 22, after making a half-year tour of 18 film festivals, from Seattle to Haifa (Israel) to Dhaka. The 88-minute revolves around Indian actress Shahana Goswami (as Roya), with Kolkata's powerhouse actor Rahul Bose, Bangladesh's theatre veterans Shahadat Hossain and Toufiqul Islam Emon, Rikita Shimu (who was last seen in Tareque Masud's "Runway"), Mita Rahman, Sohel Mondal Shobuj and familiar TV faces Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed and Orchita Sporshia.

"Under Construction" is the story of Roya, a Bangalee woman in her 30s, in search of her own identity in a society that puts her in boxes of their own. Drawing parallels with Tagore's "Rokto Korobi" (quite directly, as Roya plays a theatre actress portraying Nandini for 12 years) into the 'Jokkho Puri' that women garment workers work in, Roya's introspection and complexities of relationships-- with her husband, mother, maid, theatre director, a friend and a high-profile art curator -- are brought out, along with contemporary issues of Bangladesh like religious fanaticism and the tragedies of Rana Plaza and Tazreen Garments.

In terms of acting, Shahana Goswami does a commendable job, particularly with her mannerisms and diction of a Dhaka resident. The other standout actress is Mita Rahman in the role of



Roya's mother--- as a strong, blunt middle-aged woman living on her own. The pair of Shimu and Shobuj as the maid her lift-man love interest also fare quite well, while Emon and Nawshaba -- playing the theatre director and Roya's friend respectively, are solid in their characters. The rest of the character portrayals are unconvincing, for different reasons. Rahul Bose, playing a former Dhaka'ite settled abroad, cannot get out of his Kolkata accent; Sporshia is inconsequential as an actress (with her character development beginning and ending in backless blouses and posh sitting posture) and even then she sticks looks like an utter misfit as a young theatre actress, and Shahadat Hossain's (who plays Roya's husband -- a rich, jet-setting architect) brilliance as an actor is largely negated by his one weakness; dialogues in English. However, most characters get more convincing as the film goes on (possibly because they grasp the character better in the course of filming).

Good things about the film: the complexity of the story deserves two thumbs up; the symbolism in some of the sequences (the most memorable of them separately involving an anaconda, a catfish in a bowl, and a goldfish and a pet turtle in a bathtub) are striking, and some of the dialogues are pure gold. Rabindra Sangeet "Tomaye Gaan Shonabo" that united Arnob and Sahana Bajpaie for a song after a decade -- hits all the right cinematic notes as well. The art direction (some of it inspired by and collaborated with renowned artist Monirul Islam) is also a great aesthetic touch.

The negatives: Some of the acting, and lack of coherence in the characters and screenplay ruins the storytelling for the general audience, at least of Dhaka. And in Rubaiyat's quest for bold filmmaking, at least one cringe-worthy dialogue makes its way into the film (which is surprising, considering the snipping of some of the 'mature' scenes in the trailer that weren't seen at the theatres, presumably by the censor board.)

To the foreign film critic, issues like women's social and internal struggles in a country, religious fanaticism and the deplorable lives of lower-class working women are the perfect film fodder; to Bangladesh's socially-conscious, creative minds of the cultural arena, the film's introspection and imagery are inspiring; to the general audience, a film can still draw in audiences without the typical entertainment value if it's a gripping story, but the film somehow falls short of that either. In essence, "Under Construction" is a story that needed to be told, but deserved to be told better.

SABA AND PRACHI reunite after 15 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

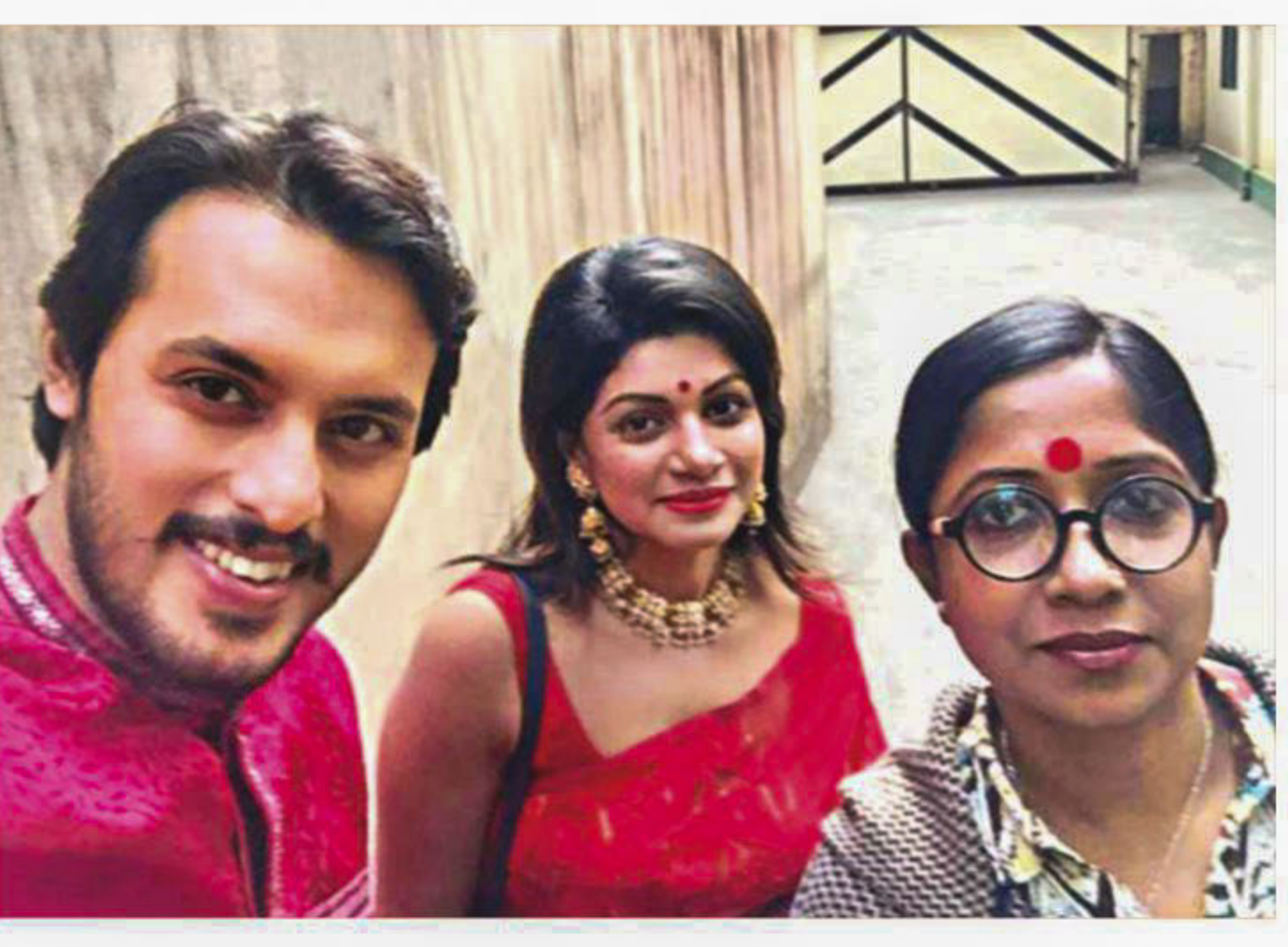
Popular actors Rokeya Prachi and Sohana Saba have reunited on screen after 15 years for a single-episode television play "Bodhuboron".

Written by Mannan Hira and directed by Rokeya Prachi, the play has been shot recently in Pubail near the capital. Irfan Sazzad plays the male lead alongside Saba.

Saba said, "The script is interesting, and the role I played called to me when I first read the script. I am hopeful that the audience will like it."

Sohana Saba and Rokeya Prachi first appeared onscreen together 15 years ago in television play "Biprotip". Saba made her debut television appearance in the play which was directed by Giasuddin Selim.

After that both Rokeya Prachi and Saba have done many plays but were never seen together.



"The Big Short" wins Top honours at PGA Awards



A still from "The Big Short".

In a major surprise, Paramount's "The Big Short" won the Darryl F. Zanuck Award from the Producers Guild of America as the year's top movie. The comedy-drama -- delving into the 2008 financial crisis and starring Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling and Brad Pitt -- won over "Bridge of Spies", "Brooklyn", "Ex Machina", "Mad Max: Fury Road", "The Martian", "The Revenant", "Sicario", "Spotlight" and "Straight Outta Compton".

"Game of Thrones", "Transparent" and "Fargo" took the top TV awards in ceremonies at the Century Plaza while "Inside Out" and "Amy" won the other key film awards.

a leading 12 Oscar nominations -- had been considered the front-runners for the PGA trophy with "The Big Short", "The Martian" and "Mad Max: Fury Road" regarded as upset candidates. Alejandro Inarritu's "Birdman" won the Zanuck, and the Best Picture Oscar last year.

The Zanuck trophy is based on voting by the 7,000 members of the PGA. The award has become a strong indicator of Oscar sentiment in recent years, partly due to it using a preferential balloting system similar to that of the AMPAS. It's matched the Oscar for best picture in 19 of its 26 years -- including the last eight.

The PGA win for "The Big Short" was the second for Kleiner, Pitt and Gardner, who were

producers on "12 Years a Slave" two years ago. "The Big Short" has received Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best Director for McKay, Best Supporting Actor for Bale, Best Adapted Screenplay for McKay and Charles Randolph and Best Editing for Hank Corwin.

Amy Winehouse documentary "Amy" won for top documentary for James Gay-Rees. The Oscar front-runner topped "The Hunting Ground", "The Look of Silence", "Meru" and "Something Better to Come".

Disney-Pixar's "Inside Out" won the award for top animated movie for producer Jonas Rivera. The film that became a surprise hit with worldwide grosses of \$856 million, topped "Anomalisa", "The Good Dinosaur", "Minions" and "The Peanuts Movie" and is widely expected to win the Oscar.

The second season of FX's "Fargo" won the David L. Wolper Award for long-form television for the second year in a row. The fifth season of HBO's "Game of Thrones" took the Norman Felton Award for best drama series and the first season of "Transparent" won the Danny Thomas Award for top comedy series.

"Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" won the Live Entertainment and Talk Television award. NBC's "The Voice" took the competition TV award for the second year in a row. "The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst" won the non-fiction TV award.

Lady Gaga dazzled the audience with her performance of "Til It Happens to You" as part of the introduction to "The Hunting Ground" winning the honorary Stanley Kramer Award. The song, co-written with Diane Warren, is up for the Oscar for Best Original Song.

Source: Variety



Popular elocutionist Shimul Mustapha recites at a poetry recitation programme at Umesh Chandra Public Library in Khulna. Organised by poet Smritilekha Biswas, the event was held on January 22.