



Star Showbiz  
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# THE BERLINALE EXPERIENCE

The first stop for the film enthusiast begins here, at the Berlin Film Festival, founded in 1951. Of all the film festivals held, this is considered the largest publicly attended with around 300,000 tickets sold and 500,000 admissions. This year's 66th Berlin Film Festival was held from the 11th-20th February, 2016. Nowadays though, these events aren't just festivals, but bazaars as well, where film buffs around the world gather to discuss their favourite topic. There are also plenty of workshops and trainings conducted for anyone interested in learning more about their craft. Showbiz had attended this major film festival this year and so, this week, we bring to you, an exclusive look into one of the most celebrated events of the year.



COVER STORY

## MEETING MERYL STREEP AND GEORGE CLOONEY

While on my long flight from Dhaka to Berlin, I came across a captivating film, while browsing the internet, which starred my favorite actress Meryl Streep. I heard earlier that she would be present at this year's Berlin Film Festival, but imagine my surprise when I find out on the first day of the festival that she would be the head of the jury!

It is difficult to explain the joy of seeing your favorite artist in the flesh every day, for eleven days. Despite being such a glorious international star, she was rather simplistic. I think the bigger a person becomes, the simpler they tend to be.

In an earlier interview, Meryl Streep mentioned that she did not know how juries deal with complicated decisions at film festivals, and if she was ever assigned the task, she might not be able to handle it. So when she was made the head of the jury at this year's Berlin Film Festival, the first question she was asked was regarding the verdicts the jury had to make. After a brief silence, she replied with a sweet smile, that she did fear the role momentarily, but since jury consists of seven members, she would let them make the decision.

The next question posed to her was that if she was excluded from the decision making, then it would be an even number of judges, three or three, which would not be appropriate. Armed with a smile, she jokingly replied that since four out of the seven judges were female, she would be in support of women empowerment. She also said that she would be in favor of those who had the most chances of winning. She immediately clarified that there would be no bias towards the women-centric issues. She also mentioned that the members of the jury were more experienced from her, and that she would learn from them.

Every morning, there would be a press show and almost all the members of the jury were present. This presented a great opportunity for me to see Meryl Streep more often. Every time I saw her, I would plan on talking to her, but every moment she came up in front, I was dumbfounded. I would end up asking myself, "How could she act so nicely?"

Attending the event was another actor who I consider one of the greats; George Clooney. Unfortunately, he was only there for two days. He was seen more alongside his newly-

## IMPORTANCE OF THESE FESTIVALS FROM THE BENGALI STANDPOINT

Every major film festival has their individual school of thought. Therefore, visiting as many as possible will help in expanding the horizon of understanding films. As a member of Star Showbiz, I feel that the ever-growing film community here needs to attend these festivals as much as possible if they wish to grab the international spotlight, because we are certainly not lacking for talent.

it film making, film workshops, film production, film distribution, script writing or acting. Also, getting discouraged through a rejection from any festival is no excuse to give up.

In the Berlin Film Festival for example, there are many sub categories, apart from the main competition, where you may win and be equally recognized. There is a variety of more than eleven different segments in the Berlin Film Festival. This means one has more chances of participating, even winning. **OPPORTUNITY FOR FILM PRODUCERS**

The producers' focus is mainly within the Bangladesh market, but if they can envision expanding to the international market, it opens up doors for many more opportunities. A joint effort can be established for co-production through collective funds, technical assistance, or even distribution. Thus, films need not be released only in Bangladesh, but at other countries simultaneously. May sound like a lot, but it really isn't. You can even attend the International film bazaars where you can sell your product. I have realized that films aren't bound by language at European film festivals. Multiple language based films are entered and all are equally treated. I believe that if people in this profession are serious, they can venture into new territories and breakthroughs will no longer be an imagination.

Instead of wasting more time, those who are interested should immediately start exploring the opportunities. Perhaps, next year, at the 67th Berlin Film Festival, Bangladesh will participate at any major segment and you never know, maybe even bring home an award.

By Rafi Hossain and Minam Haque



wed bride Amal Clooney than he was at the press conference. He would hold on to her in way as though she could be taken away at any moment. My effort at taking a picture with him remains but a wish. Even though Clooney was not a member of the jury, he starred in the opening film of the festival, "Hail Cesar", by the renowned film makers, the Coen Brothers. Considering their commercial successes and critical acclamations worldwide, they themselves are an institution of the film world.

At this year's Berlin Film Festival, there was a documentary by a Bangladeshi named Naeem Mohaiemen, which was selected under the 'forum' category. I believe it was a big leap, and may act as an inspiration for the young talents of our country.

**HOW TO'S**  
If you love film, you have to be part of all its happenings. It's that simple.

In this era of connectivity, one can research and concentrate on their particular interest and work on it with relative ease. Be