



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## “I feel at home in front of the camera” ... Deepa

SHAH ALAM SHAHU

Deepa Khandakar has been entertaining the TV audiences with her consistent performances for over a decade. The actress is still spending busy time shooting for serials and one-hour plays. She talked about her profession and more in a recent talk with The Daily Star. Excerpts:

**What's going on in your professional calendar currently?**  
Deepa: I'm busy shooting for the serial "Gulbahar" to be aired on BT. Besides, a shoot for the series "Golpo Seshe Ghumer Deshe", based on children, is underway. It will be aired on Duronto TV. Recently, I completed shooting for a one-hour play directed by Chayanika Chowdhury. I'm mostly busy with drama serials at the moment.

**You were also involved with anchoring. How is that going?**  
Deepa: I currently don't have any TV anchoring commitments on my hands. I usually just do it out of hobby. The last time I emceed a programme was for Ekushey TV, where the guests were Sara Zaker, and an author. Before this, I anchored a programme for Maasranga Television.

**In your long acting career, have you ever had any hesitations standing before the camera?**  
Deepa: Not really, no. I feel at home in front of the camera. The TV play fraternity is like a family now. It's something I love and respect. So there is never an uncomfortable moment in front of the camera.

**What type of work are you most drawn to?**  
Deepa: Any challenging character and unique plot, because it is not easy to perform in such work. I want to do characters that people will remember.

**Do you get the chance to watch your own plays?**  
Deepa: I do. I don't work seven days a week, because I make sure I have time set aside for my kids. I like to see what my work looks on screen, and where I can improve.

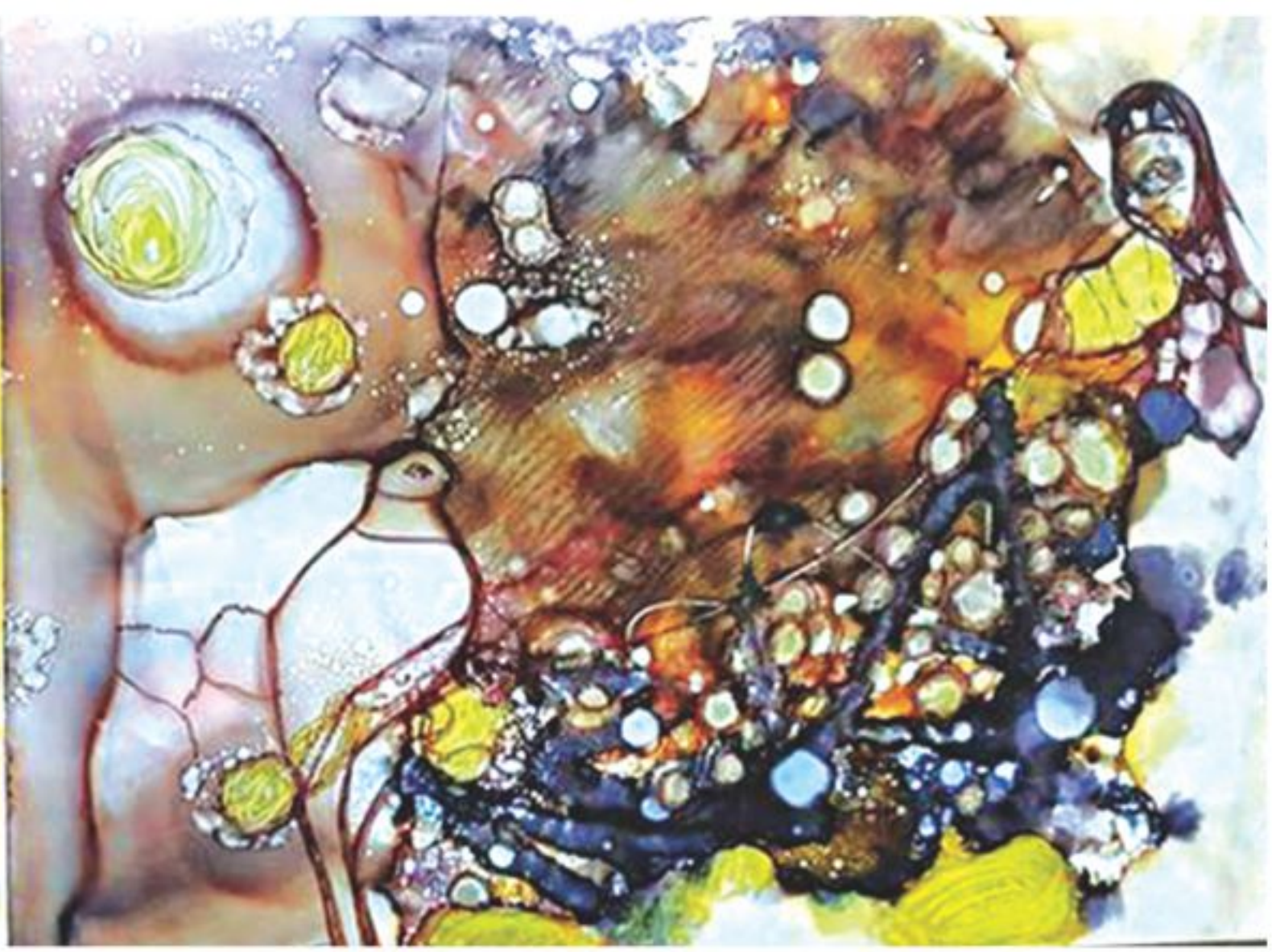
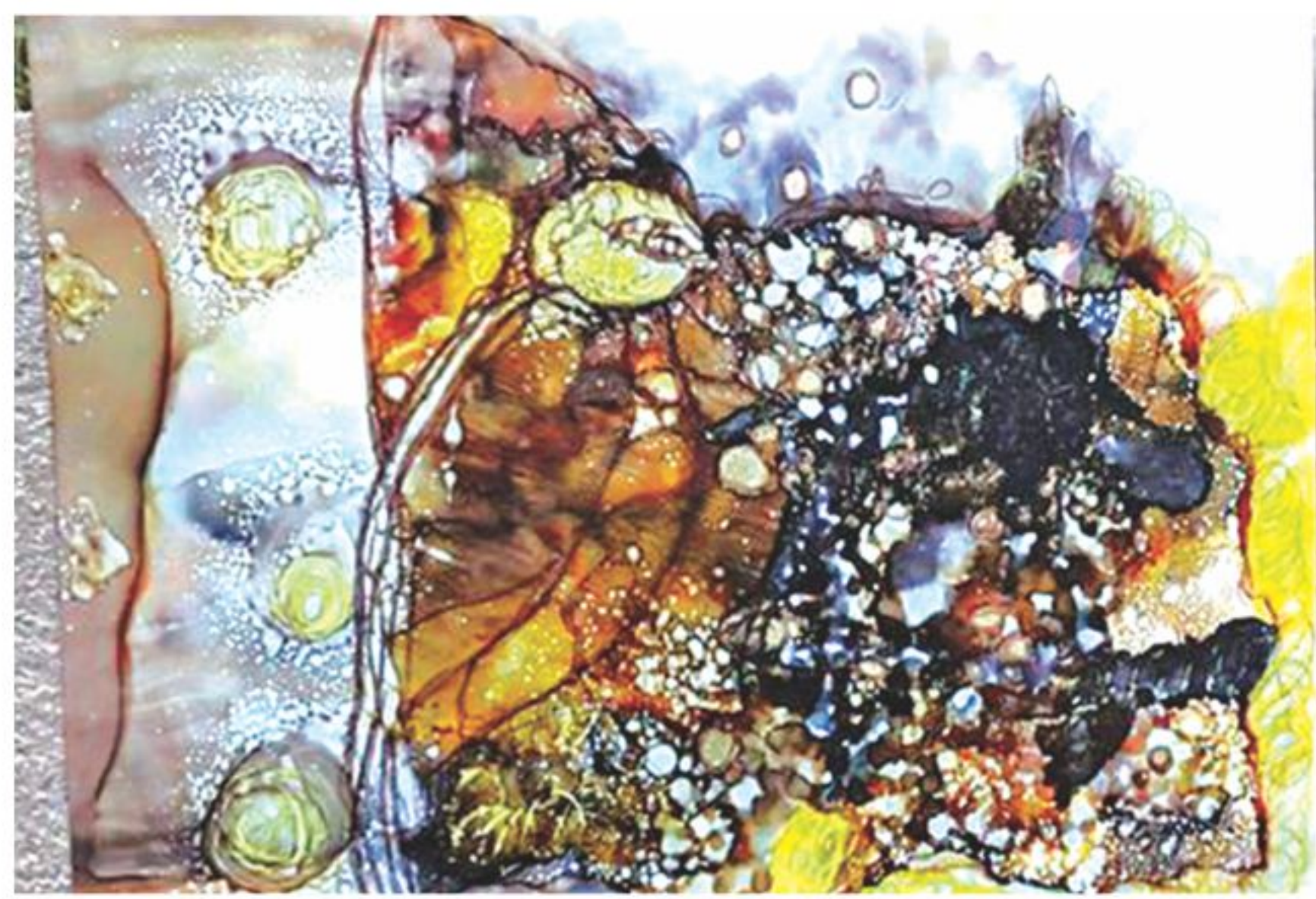
**What is your favorite pastime?**  
Deepa: Watching movies. Any free time I get I watch movies. It's a great way to refresh your mind.

**How do you pass your leisure time?**  
Deepa: If I have free time, I love watching movies.

**What's the last film you watched at theatre?**  
Deepa: Aynabaji. I went with a big group and we all enjoyed the movie.

**Is there a place in Bangladesh you have always wanted to visit but never got around to?**

Deepa: Although I have traveled a lot within and outside the country, mostly due to work, Bandarban and Khagrachhari are two places I haven't visited yet. But, I have a plan to go there next time.



## “Destiny Diversity” opens today

A Correspondent

The first solo art exhibition of Dr Hafiza Nilofar Khan, a Bangladeshi American visual artist is in town from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, will be held at Dhaka's Radius Art Gallery from March 31 to April 2. The opening of the show, entitled "Destiny

Diversity" will be inaugurated by Professor Rokeya Sultana of Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Art. Architect-artist Mustapha Khaled Polash will be special guest at the event.

A former English newscaster on Bangladesh Television and the Head of the English Department at Independent University, Bangladesh,

Dr. Khan is a self-taught artist, who loves to incorporate media, literature, feminist theory and pop culture into her mixed media visual art. Inspired by her husband, Dr. Carl Bloom, who is also a professor of English and an artist, Dr. Khan entered the art world in 2001, when the couple was residing in Dhaka and teaching at the North South University.

Though acrylic was the medium with which Dr. Khan started her artistic journey, after relocating to America she discovered multifarious mediums such as encaustic, alcohol ink, pebeo (oil-based French medium), gelatoes, pan pastels etc. and began experimenting with them on various surfaces.

## “Music is a natural form of expression for me”

In conversation with Waqeel Ahad

Fahmim Ferdous

Waqeel Ahad is a familiar name to music connoisseurs of the country. An avid songwriter and musician, Waqeel has treaded various paths of music, although his repute is in folk. The singer-composer recently also ventured into a new avenue of the arts, playing an important character in Liberation War-based film "Bhuban Majhi". In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, Waqeel shares his artistic process and future plans. Excerpts: **What is keeping you busy lately?**

Waqeel: At the moment, I am working with Bappa Mazumdar on an album of my original songs. We have completed two tracks. I have some live shows coming up on Pahela Baishakh, so preparations are on for that. Apart from that writing and composing songs is always going on.

**On that topic, you have reportedly written over a thousand songs. What is the drive behind that?**

Waqeel: My father is a writer and freelance journalist, and from a young age I used to write rhymes and poems. In my teens I started writing songs in my diary, and I realised anything I want to express strongly, it comes to me through songs. The music of any part of the world reflects the societal and cultural structure, and that is why music of different parts of the world sounds different. But I don't feel constrained by that. I feel like someone can sit at home and write music of the hills. I have many songs that musically sound like they are from somewhere else. But it's also a bit of a growing pain that I cannot record or perform all those songs; people often want to listen to the songs you have already made and are popular. That bothers me at times.

**Now, going away from music a little bit, how did you end up acting in a full-fledged feature film?**

Waqeel: I was a part of theatre troupe Loko Natyadal for years, but not with plans to act in films or TV. I delved into it because everything in life we go through there is a part of theatre in it. I met Arefeen bhai ("Bhuban Majhi" helmer Fakhrul Arefeen Khan) while singing for another project of his. And he thought I would be the right fit for a character in the film he was looking for.

**What has the feedback been for your acting debut? Does it mean you'll be acting more regularly?**

Waqeel: The feedback has been good; people have praised the film, and my work in it. But personally I feel like I should have done better, if I could do it with a little more time and better orientation. About further acting plans, I don't want to do it just for the sake of it: If there really is something in it for me as an artiste, then why not? I actually did act in a short film titled "Shakkhatkar" before "Bhuban Majhi", which will hopefully come out soon.

**As an artiste, what's the big goal?**

Waqeel: I want to write songs and sing for as long as I can. I want to play the flute, and paint. Through my music, I am also doing some awareness-building work; that is another avenue I want to go far. And I want to work for children. In a nutshell, I want to inspire people through whatever I do. I want my work to be meaningful. As a person and an artiste, I am always open.



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## THEATRE “Dhaleshwari Opera” on stage tonight

A Correspondent

Following the success of his first production in 2014 with "Ondhokare Methane", Pantha Shahriar is directing a second repertory production, which is said to be a loose adaptation of "Macbeth". Titled "Dhaleshwari Opera", the production will be staged at the main auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's National Theatre Hall tonight at 7pm.

The production unit consists of members from five core groups. Pantha Shahriar, a member of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya is also part of the lead cast, along with Tropa Majumdar from the troupe Theatre, and Shatabdi Wadud from Prachyanat. Faiz Zahir from Aranyak is in charge of the set with Tusha from Centre for Asian Theatre taking care of music direction.

Pantha Shahriar revealed that the motivation behind the production

was in remembrance of William Shakespeare's upcoming birth and death anniversary next month, (April 23). "We are also dedicating the production to the troupe that brought the play to life for the first time in Bangladesh; spearheaded by Aly Zaker and Ferdousi Majumdar. When people mention 'Macbeth' adaptations in Bangladesh, these two figures spring to mind," he added.

"As this play is a free adaptation, I would like for people to think of it as a separate entity. 'Macbeth' is one of Shakespeare's most well-known and celebrated works, which is why I have chosen this play in light of the playwright's birth and death anniversary. However, there have been countless adaptations in many uniquely varying contexts all over the world, and we have sought to experiment a little, by adapting the script into a jatra-style play," said the director.