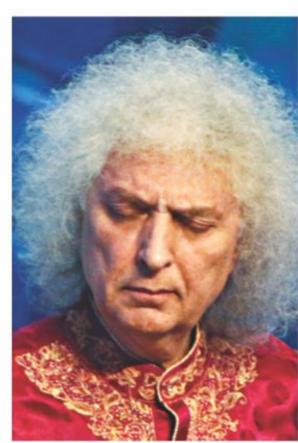


South Asian Music Fest in Singapore this month

BLUES COMMUNICATIONS' EVENT TO FEATURE CLASSICAL MAESTROS



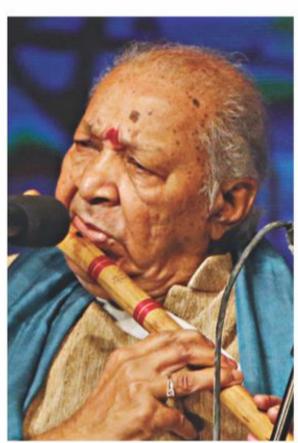
Rezwana Choudhury Bannya



Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma



Laisa Ahmed Lisa



Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia

ZAHANGIR ALOM
Classical Music is regarded as one of the divine forms of performing art, and Blues Communications is committed to creating a platform for this form of classical art in Bangladesh. The organisers of events like Bengal Classical Music Fest and Jazz & Blues Fest are organising a four-day South Asian Music Festival: Timeless Classical Echoes -- to be held at Sands Theatre, Marina Bay Sands in Singapore from September 21-24. As part of their vision to spread

classical music beyond borders, Blues Communications in association with Perfect Harmony Global are set to host the grand festival that will feature artistes from Bangladesh and India, including eminent music maestros like Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pt. Birju Maharaj, Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma, Dr. L. Subramaniam and Vidushi Bombay Jayashri and Ustad Shujaat Khan, among others. Shama Rahman (vocals), Homayoun Sakhi (rabab), Kaushiki Chakraborty (vocals) and Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma (santoor) will per-

form on the opening day; Luva Nahid Choudhury (vocals), Shubhendra and Saskia Rao (sitar and cello duet), Sawani Shende (vocals) and Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute) will perform on the second day (September 22). Laisa Ahmed Lisa (vocals), Niladri Kumar (sitar), Deepak Pandit (violin) and Pt. Birju Maharaj (kathak dance) will perform on the third day (September 23). The concluding day's performers are Rezwana Choudhury Bannya (vocals), Ustad Shujaat Khan (sitar), Vidushi Bombay Jayashri (vocals) and Dr. L.

Subramaniam. The festival promises to make it one of the most celebrated music festivals in the island city. The four-day festival will host four artistes each day, including both Bangladeshi artistes as well as Indian classical legends. Noted musicians like Vijay Ghate, Tanmoy Bose, Ojas Adhiya and Amit Dutt Choubey on tabla; Ajay Joglekar on the harmonium and Carnatic artistes will accompany the maestros on mridangam and kharjira. Channel i is the broadcast partner of the festival.

SHAJAL making the most of Eid downtime

SHAH ALAM SHAZU
With Eid ul Azha festivities still heavy in the air, there is a rare respite for showbiz personalities. Popular actor Shajal makes the most of this downtime to breathe easy, while viewers enjoy watching him onscreen in Eid TV plays. In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, the artiste talks about his time off, and his recent works.

on this day. I rarely venture out of town; the farthest I will travel to is the outskirts of the capital. On longer breaks, I enjoy leaving town and even travelling out of the country.
Do you watch your own plays?
Shajal: Yes. I quite enjoy sitting back to watch my TV plays with my family I also like to see my peers on screen.
How productive have you been this Eid?

Where do you spend your Eid holidays?
Shajal: I usually spend the festival break in Dhaka, and it's the same this year. However, there have been occasions when I had to be out of the country to do shows at this time of the year.
What are your plans for the holidays?
Shajal: After hectic shooting schedules, I look forward to Eid every year. It's when I can sleep for as long as I want, spend time with my family, and meet up with my friends. Relatives that I normally don't see year round all gather together

Shajal: I am not sure of the number of plays I have done, but I can say for sure that each narrative is captivating. I have tried to keep it as interesting as possible by choosing to do many, varied roles.
Eid is a time when TV channels air week long special programmes. How do you view this trend?
Shajal: I feel this has a positive impact. Eid is a rare time when everyone gets time off, and they deserve to get good entertainment. It's also one of the only holidays when people can spend time with their family and friends. It is very gratifying for actors to be able to bring them together in front of the TV screen.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI WORSHEH



From "Rabeya" to "Noor Banu": The many avatars of TOYA

NAZIBA BASHER

Mumtaheena Chowdhury Toya made a name for herself in the top five of 2010's edition of Lux-Channel i Superstar. But the model-turned-actress has made leaps throughout her seven years in the industry. Her first venture was the single episode play "Odekha Megher Kabbo" directed by Rumana Rashid Ishita.

Toya-starrer short film "Roop" was released earlier this year, where she portrayed an acid attack victim. She says, "The reason I really wanted to do this character is that many acid attack cases go unnoticed. In 'Roop' my character Rabeya wants to take revenge on her attacker because the authorities are not helpful. While the make-up was difficult and time consuming, once half my face was distorted, I got into character quite easily. I felt like I didn't belong to this society anymore. I kept wondering what these victims go through and it was heart-breaking."
After Roop, Toya's next avatar was that of a sex worker. The web series "Admission Test" gave Toya the challenge of playing the role of Noor Banu. "I had to live in Daulatdia, the

largest brothel in Bangladesh, throughout shooting. The first couple of shoots were awkward. I felt uncomfortable to play a sex worker in front of actual sex workers, pretending to know what their lives are like. But after the initial scenes, I started making friends with them, and that made me more comfortable," she told The Daily Star.
Toya has more interesting roles on the way. "I have an upcoming work by Imraul Rafat which will be themed on recent incidents of girls falling victims of rape and assault at parties and events. I am researching on the topic. I also have an upcoming serial where the lifespan of a singular character will be shown - so I will have to play schoolgirl, college girl, middle aged woman, and also an elderly lady."

Apart from modelling and acting on television, Toya is also regularly featured in short films and music videos. This Eid-ul-Azha, she appeared in a music video by Sayera Reza, and worked in a TVC under Amitabh Reza's direction. Toya also hosted Rtv's special Eid show "HowCow", which aired during the run-up to Eid-ul-Azha. She is also part of Eid special web-series "Palabi Kothaye", co-starring Marzuk Russel.
Toya has an upcoming film titled "Bengali Beauty", based in the 70's, where she will play the titular role. The film is directed by Raasaan Noor, and her cast members include Pijush Bandyopadhyay, Naila Azad Nupur, Masum, Mili and Naziba Basher. The film is to be released in December.

"NEPOTISM IS OVERRATED"

Kareena Kapoor jumps in on the Bollywood debate



Kareena Kapoor, who belongs to one of the oldest and most active acting families in Bollywood, offered her opinion about the nepotism debate fellow actor Kangana Ranaut sparked off. In an interview to Filmfare, she said nepotism can only get you so far. In the end, it's talent that counts.
"A lot of things seem out of context," she said. "Doesn't nepotism exist in every possible field? But nobody addresses that. In business families, the son takes over the business. A politician's son takes over his place. These are not considered nepotism but in the industry it makes for a nice read. Also, not many star kids have achieved what their parents have. So I don't understand why people are going on about it. Basically, the industry is a ruthless place. It's about talent and survival of the fittest. Otherwise, a lot of star kids would've been No.1 stars in our country."
The debate on nepotism was stirred by Kangana Ranaut in an appearance

on talk show "Koffee With Karan" earlier this year. She accused the Bollywood director of being the "flag bearer of nepotism" in the industry. The comments didn't sit too well with Johar, who responded on several occasions, most recent of which was at the IIFA Awards in July.
"If there's Ranbir Kapoor, there's also Ranveer Singh who's not from the industry. So honestly, nepotism is overrated," Kareena continued. "More than in business, more than in politics, in the industry, it's your hard work and talent that will take you far. That's exactly the reason why Kangana Ranaut is considered such a great actress. And she's not from the industry. If there's Alia Bhatt, there's also Kangana. It's not only about star kids."
Kareena is currently shooting for "Veere Di Wedding", her comeback movie after becoming mother to Taimur Ali Khan.
Source: Hindustan Times

Gulzar: From garage worker to lyricist

SUBRATA ACHARYA, Kolkata

Gulzar, one of the most prominent Indian lyricists of the sub-continent, dwelt on his spiritual connection with Rabindranath Tagore recently, when he spoke at the publishing ceremony of his two books - "Pantabhate" and "Pluto" in Kolkata.

The celebrations were organised at Nandan, known as Kolkata's intellectual hub, in which legendary poet Shankha Ghosh, Satyajit Ray's son Sandeep Roy, composer Shantunou Maitra, poet Shudhanshu Roy and others were present.
At the event, Gulzar said, "It was while working as a garage mechanic that I got involved in the film industry through director Bimal Roy." It was under his guidance that the Urdu-speaking Gulzar was introduced to the Bangla language. "If I wasn't given the task to make Urdu translations of Rabindranath's poetry, perhaps I would never have become a poet myself."
At the ceremony, Gulzar opened up on his memories of the likes of Hemanta Mukherjee, RD Burman, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Usha Uthup and more. One moment, there was a tear at the corner of his eye, the next a playful smile at the corner of his lips. The lyricist expressed himself to everyone in his own language.
In the book "Pantabhate", the poet wrote about his childhood, adolescence, and memories of youth. "Pluto" focuses more on his struggles, family and ancestors, carefully crafting one story after the other.

