

ABOUT MISIR ALI

DIRECTOR'S CUT
ANAM BISWAS



Creating Misir Ali for the big screen is a big task because Misir Ali is big. He is one of the iconic characters Bangladeshi and Bangla literature has ever created. During my post production trip to Kolkata for *Debi*, I saw several kids buying *Misir Ali Shomogro* from College Street. They were very excited.

Every person who has known Misir is excited about him. They love him. They know the way he walks and talks, his almost magical ability to see through things, his impulsivity and sense of humor. Every reader has seen Misir in his head. As a reader, I have seen him too. So, there are like millions of Misir Alis living in our minds and I realized that my Misir will never match completely with another's. So, what now?

Eventually, I had to accept that the only thing we can do is to find an actor who



can deliver the essence of Misir, who can hold that blend of logic and impulsivity with ingenuity. That's it, nothing more, nothing less.

Chanchal bhai is loved by all, but it was a relief to see how people loved his grey hair, his impulsivity and his sense of

humor. They whole *Shamoly Theatre* was laughing when Misir was calling a villager "kola bhai". I heard people loved this part in almost every other theatre as well.

Yes, I heard the audience wanted to see Misir some more, but they accepted our Misir. And I knew people would want to

see Misir more, because the Misir living in our minds are the culmination of many Misir books, not exactly the Misir of *Debi*, the first novel of the series. Well, we had one scene, almost like a separate story, showing Misir's magic right at the beginning. A pre-title.

We shot it, but during the edit it looked a bit separated from the story and it was a separate story. Then we thought of using it as a Misir teaser. But that did not happen due to time crunch. Now looking back, it seems the scene might have worked, people would have had a bit more of Misir.

But, never mind. We kind of remained true to the Misir of the novel *Debi*.

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Anam Biswas is a Director, Advertiser, Composer and Writer

"OH MY SWEET LAND"



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



WHAT'S IN THE THEATER?
ABDUS SELIM

Being homeless is perhaps the most cursed life a human being can lead. In spite of the high sounding human rights moralism propagated by big powers and human rights watchdogs, numerous homeless people are constantly being humiliated, harassed and even traded by the power mongering vicious circles globally. On top of that, in the name of purging or unseating dictatorship and dictators from many countries – mostly in the Muslim countries like Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria (and mysteriously not Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) – the super powers or the so called guardians of democracy are taking advantage of the naivety of the rest of the world, indulging in military operations and upsetting the normal life of the common people of those countries so much so that millions of ordinary innocent people just end up

being rootless refugees. These rootless people or refugees are forced to seek asylums in rich and developed countries and mostly end up being granted mere refugee status, and we all know a refugee is always a mean refugee, a homeless itinerant leading an utterly mortifying life eternally nursing that nostalgic melody deep in their heart, 'Sweet is the air that blows from home,' and constantly suffering the gnaw of homeland deprivation.

Oh My Sweet Land is such an episode depicted through a play that narrates 'the state of the humanitarian crisis in Syria and beyond.' The play is performed by Corinne Jaber, a half-Syrian, presently a *Paris-dweller*, who made off to the Middle East tailing her *refugee activist lover*, and she have had obvious encounters with *abandoned Syrians who* happen to be mute victims of the *cruelty of the war*. The play has been

conceived, written and played by Cornie. Amir Niaz Zuabi has done the directorial work of the play; while Nicolas Chorier has carried away the technical direction and lighting. Sponsored by Goethe-Institute Dhaka and *Shilopakala Academy Bangladesh* this mono-dramatic *theatrical depiction of the suffering of Syrians* came on stage at Experimental Theatre Hall, *Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy* on November 12, 2018.

Do the plot and storyline appear unfamiliar? Not at all! This is the very experience of our nine-month long Liberation War in 1971 when millions of unarmed guiltless people fled away under compulsion from their hearth and home and crossed over to India as refugees to save their lives. This state of affairs is not altogether alien in our life and while watching the play I genuinely felt an amazing affinity with the story Corinne

unfolded in her kitchen while cooking her dinner on stage. This write up is in no way a review of the play but definitely an expression of our solidarity with the suffering rootless, homeless refugees globally. Thank God we were victorious and able to come back home in an independent country but what about the millions of Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghans and the likes who are still bearing the brunt of being mean refugees in many places of the world uprooted from their homelands? When are the fake and opportunistic guardians of democracy going to refrain from their activities of egomania and let us – innocent defenseless people – live peacefully, I wonder!

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The writer is a theatre activist, playwright and theatre critic. He is also a Bangla Academy awardee for translation