



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Embracing your inner geek

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Shakib Chowdhury, Gibran Tanwir, Alif Alauddin and Farooq Shams – four friends who had set out on a light-hearted journey of talking about pop culture, have inadvertently started one of the most popular web shows in Bangladesh, *Geek Myth*. Having begun as a show which revolved around the hosts' love for cinema, comics and other pop culture phenomena from outside the country, the crew is now delivering reviews and talks about Bangladeshi films as well. "Before we started the show, we were just film geeks and Alif was the only person in the group that initiated the talks about music," says Cryptic Fate frontman Shakib Chowdhury. "Initially, I wanted to tinker with the idea of a web-based show, drawing inspiration from *Collider*, and told the others to watch it. When we started *Geek Myth*, the first two episodes were shot in Farooq's house!"

Having 72 episodes as of yet, the series is now a fan favourite on the internet. When the show made the jump to radio, it was a turnaround for the geeks. "Our show on Dhaka FM helped us become more organised as a crew, since we had to follow a certain time limit and discipline," says Alif Alauddin, who is a popular singer and a co-host in another renowned show,

Music Buzz. Even though the shift to radio gave *Geek Myth* a much-needed sense of direction, the limitations pushed the crew to go the indie way again.

The current product has taken a weekly format, while the show lasts anywhere between 40 minutes to an hour. Besides the videos, the earnest and sometimes controversial reviews written by Shakib Chowdhury also make sporadic appearances. "When Shakib reviewed *Aquaman*, and he absolutely hated it, we all got a lot of hate from people," says Gibran Tanwir. "However, that is the essence of criticism. You can have differing opinions, and trust me, we have many fights amongst ourselves because of it."

The people at *Geek Myth* hope that they can start a new trend of honest criticism in the Bangladeshi film and music industries. "I'm not saying that we will single-handedly change the industry. In fact, we will be more than happy if more people follow this format and put forth their own opinions, as long as they are honest," says Farooq Shams. In response to a comment about the crew having come a long way since their inception in 2017, Shakib fittingly replied, "We haven't come a long way at all. In fact, there's a long way to go for us and hopefully you will all join the journey."

WHAT'S ON

An Ode to the Moon & Menstrual Cycle
Title: LAL
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Date: February 19-23
Details:
www.facebook.com/jatrabirrotiworld

Winter Festival
Title: Him Utsab
Venue: Jahangirnagar University
Date: January 17-January 19
Time: 10 am



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: The Brilliant Moon
Artist: Iffat Ara Dewan
Venue: Gallery Shilpangan, Lalmaia
Date: Jan 15-28
Time: 3-8 pm

Theatre
Title: Hamlet
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 19
Time: 6:30 pm



Bulbul Chowdhury Birth Centenary
Organisers: BSA & BNSS
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Yearlong Celebration currently under way

Musical Evening
Title: Raga Tales: Sitar-Tabla
Venue: Junction, Niketon, Gulshan 1
Date: Today
Time: 8:15 pm - 10:00 pm
Hotline: 01722488909



Chobi Mela X to open on February 28

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

The tenth edition of Chobi Mela launches on February 28, 2019. In a press conference held yesterday at Drik's new gallery in Panthapath, the organisers updated the media on the upcoming programme. The festival will continue with many happenings till March 9.

Chobi Mela - International Festival of Photography is put together biannually by Drik Picture Library Ltd. and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute. Since its inception in 2000, Chobi Mela has been the most significant photography event in Asia and the first of a regular biennale.

The Advisory Board of Chobi Mela X consists of renowned personalities including the likes of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, Khondokar Ibrahim Khaled, Khushi Kabir, Kunda Dixit, Raghu Rai, Rehman Sobhan, Serajul Islam Choudhury and Sultana Kamal.

"These names prove the worth of Chobi Mela and how it is recognised internationally," said Khushi Kabir at the press conference. "Every year, I look forward to Chobi Mela. Now that I am a part of it, I am very

excited to see what it has to offer to art lovers."

The theme of this year's exhibition pertains to the word, 'place.' "The theme is quite relevant to the time that we are living in. Chobi Mela is very geographically diverse," said Tanzim Wahab, one of the curators of the exhibition. He further mentioned that the archive section, curated by Yasmin Saba, and the creations of photojournalist Rashid Talukdar, are going to be essential elements of the exhibition.

The curatorial team includes ASM Rezaur Rahman, Munem Wasif, Tanzim Wahab and Sarker Protick. The participating countries include Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland and Syria among others. The organisers also mentioned that this year many female photographers are participating in the exhibition. Chobi Mela X will also arrange different workshops, panel discussions, artist talks, seminars, gallery walks and other activities.

The director of Chobi Mela, Shahidul Alam, informed that renowned writer Arundhati Roy will be visiting Bangladesh for the first time to attend the exhibition.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Women in Cinema Conference 2019 at DIFF

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

An array of topics on women in film was discussed at the fifth Dhaka International Conference on Women in Cinema 2019. The conference was organised at Alliance Française de Dhaka by Rainbow Film Society, in association with the Women and Gender Studies department of the University of Dhaka (DU), as a part of the 17th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF).

Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, professor of International Relations at Dhaka University, inaugurated the conference in the presence of Sydney Levine, director of the conference. Dr Sanzida Akhter, chairman of Women and Gender Studies department at DU, Olivier Dintinger, director of Alliance Française de Dhaka and Ahmed Muztaba Zamal, director of DIFF were also present. Local and international delegates, filmmakers and writers gathered at the conference, which addressed issues concerning women, through the work of the female participants invited from home and abroad. The interac-



PHOTO: STAR

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session also touched base with the #MeToo movement.

Turkish film critic and historian Alin Tasciyan presented a paper that focused on the new generation of contemporary women directors' place in

world cinema and their protests against structural male violence. Dr Gitiara Nasreen, professor of Mass Communication and Journalism at DU presented the paper titled, *From Screen to Screen: Women's Experience of Watching Cinema in Urban Bangladesh*. Indian filmmaker and social activist Dr Debjani Halder presented the paper, *Body is not her own: Patriarchy, Violence and prostitution in post-nineties none mainstream Cinema: A Critical Feminist Approach*. Key Words: *Body, Sexuality, Violence and Indian Cinema*. Montenegrin film theorist and critic Maja Bogojevic Papers presented the paper, *Cinematic gaze and gender masquerading: Some film examples*. Indian filmmaker and actress Aparajita Ghosh focused on issues surrounding women through her paper, *Role of Indian film schools in creating women filmmakers* and the paper, *What are American women doing to alleviate gender discrimination in cinema?* was presented by American writer

Sydney Levine.

"Changing the scenario for women is also about developing our own consciousness and raising our families to understand the change in the air. We also would like more men to participate," remarked Levin. She also mentioned that the next festival would like to include more interactive sessions with film students and young filmmakers.

Professor Alexis Krasilovsky from Department of Cinema & TV Arts, California State University has been conducting lectures on different heroines' journeys for two decades. She said, "The main factor about change is the formulas for the hero's journey. Films can be constructed in different ways based on different cultures."

"We received an immense response. The conference on women in cinema has become one of the major events of DIFF. Next year, it will definitely be bigger and better," said Ahmed Muztaba Zamal.

Zahid Hasan to direct 'Hulusthul TV'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Noted actor Zahid Hasan has proved himself as a director with many projects in the past. A new television serial under his direction, titled, *Hulusthul TV*, will be shot soon. The serial will be filmed in Sirajganj and Dhaka.

Written by Zakir Hossain Uzzal, the series will star Zahid Hasan, the director himself. "We are still deciding on the rest of the cast," said Zahid Hasan. "I believe *Hulusthul TV* will be an entertaining show."

He has also directed the television shows, *Don* and *Vagabond*.



PHOTO: STAR



TV WATCH

Television serial 'Chhayabibi' will be aired on Boishakhi Television at 9:20 pm tonight. Written and directed by Sajjad Hossain Dudul, it stars Siddiqur Rahman and Monira Mithu among others.

PHOTO: COURTESY