

‘Juggling teaching and acting isn’t easy’: CHANDNI ON HER COMEBACK

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

“My fans still encourage me to return to acting more regularly, but my commitments as a dance teacher at an English-medium school limit my time.”

Actress Mehbooba Mahnoor Chandni, known for her acclaimed performances in films like *Dukhai*, *Lalsalu*, and *Joyjatra*, is returning to the small screen after a long break. The National Film Award-winning actress enjoyed massive success through television dramas while working. She recently completed shooting for the drama *Tumi Ami O Se*, directed by Azizul Hakim and written by his wife, Zeenat Hakim.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Chandni shared that the compelling story of the drama alongside her respect for Azizul and Zeenat Hakim motivated her comeback. “They are wonderful people, and highly organised when it comes to their profession. When they offered me the script, I immediately agreed,” she said.

In this upcoming project, Chandni has been paired opposite her longtime friend, actor Shajal Noor. Reflecting on their reunion, she added, “We share a wonderful bond, so working together again was enjoyable.”

When asked if she misses her busy shooting schedule from her heydays, Chandni admitted, “Of course I miss it! We were like one big family, and the audience’s love meant everything.” She added, “My fans still encourage me to return to

acting more regularly, but my commitments as a dance teacher at an English-medium school limit my time.”

“I haven’t quit acting, but I need good scripts to return,” she explained. “I prefer projects that offer meaningful storytelling, regardless of whether they’re for TV or OTT platforms.”

Chandni, who began her career as a dancer, has been actively teaching dancing for several years. “I find teaching to be incredibly rewarding. It brings me great joy to see my students express respect and admiration for my background in the industry,” she stated.

Despite her current focus on teaching, Chandni expressed her desire to continue dancing throughout her life, describing it as her true passion.



PHOTOS:
SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



Xefer surprises fans with new song ‘Teer’

Yesterday, Xefer Rahman unveiled her brand-new track **Teer** on her YouTube channel. In addition to lending her voice, Xefer also composed the melody and co-wrote the lyrics alongside lyricist Adib Kabir.

Teer, presenting Xefer in a fresh new look, bold performance and impassioned vocals sparked intrigue from her fans worldwide. The video and lyrics, glamorised with earthy tones, explores the theme of confronting and overcoming fear.

Adib Kabir was also responsible for the music arrangement. The music video’s concept and creative direction were curated by Xefer herself, while Partho Sheikh directed the visuals under the Daekho Studios’ banner.



‘Mukto Surer Chhondo’ marks Int’l Dance Day at Shilpakala

To mark International Dance Day yesterday, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy is in the middle of hosting a two-day festival titled **Mukto Surer Chhondo** at the National Theatre Hall.

The event began yesterday at 5pm with an inaugural ceremony featuring filmmaker and cultural affairs adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki as the chief guest. The second day festivities are scheduled for today.

The ceremony began with a welcome

speech by Mehjabeen Rahman, while Mohammad Wares Hossain served as the chair of the ceremony. Highlights of the programme featured a symbolic balloon release and a celebratory procession.

Performances by top troupes including Bhongima, Bhabna, Tapasya, Nrityalok, Colours of Hill, Naim Khan Dance Company, and Shilpakala Academy dancers are scheduled for the two evenings.

ART EXHIBITION

‘Miniscope 2’ returns to prove less is more



PHOTOS: AISHWARYA RAIHAN

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Dwip Gallery in Lalmatia opened its doors to the second exhibition of its kind, **Miniscope 2**, on April 26. Flaunting creative gateways for diverse artists from both Bangladesh and India, it is currently hosting miniature and endearing artworks.

Notably, during autumn last year, the Dwip gallery authorities issued a call for visual art submissions to both professional and non-professional artists, and the response was overwhelming. Eventually, 56 artists from Bangladesh and West Bengal were selected, and a collection of 116 artworks from them now adorn the gallery walls.

From ink work to acrylic, sculptures to photography, and watercolour to etching, Dwip is showcasing an array of imaginative artworks by said selected artists. The best aspect about **Miniscope 2** is that the artists were able to skillfully portray their thought process into a smaller volume specified by the gallery, which paved the way for a larger collection of art pieces to be accommodated within the gallery walls.

Upon entering the first room, Sumana Akter’s **Punojonnmo** series caught my eye. The humanoid trees in white on green backdrops made me gape at them curiously. Some minimalist artworks in black and white,



including Farzana Ahmed Urmi’s **We Are Needed** series, gives weight to the legendary architect Mies Van der Rohe’s quote, “Less is more”. A Asan created dry pastel paintings, **Read the Dark**, with unique animal forms, which rather intrigued me.

The narrow corridor bore Anindita Datta Banti’s stunning and vibrant **Flower Composition** series, a set of acrylic paintings. Salma Zakia Bristy’s mixed-media abstract

paintings look unique with real, antique jewelry attached to them. They somehow reminded me of Bangla novels written during British rule. A set of black backdrops held golden coloured metal work by Rezaul Karim Rezon, conveying the essence of the ancient craftwork of this sub-continent. Shibananda Adhikary Biplab’s **Images of Innocence II** has an endearing white baby bird, which gave me a serotonin boost.

In the innermost room, on the dusk blue wall hung Ashang Mong’s **Endless Poetry**, reminding me scenes from seas and forests. Showrab Gosh’s **Intangible Sentiment** is a tiny yet powerfully thought-provoking piece, with delicate lines, strokes, and a bright red-orange background. Khurshid Jahan’s **Echoes of the Earth** in mixed media is a series that transported me to the world of fairy forests.

In short, the variety of artworks and their mediums, not to mention the proficiency of the artists, left me mesmerised. **Miniscope 2** is proof that small art pieces are just as capable of filling our souls as large-scale artwork is. Through this exhibition, Dwip has created a wonderful platform for rising artists while also creating networking opportunities for younger art enthusiasts.

Miniscope 2 will be run at Dwip Gallery till May 6.

Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia joins Cannes jury

Acclaimed Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia is set to return to the Cannes Film Festival this year — this time as a member of the main competition jury.

She has joined a distinguished panel led by French actor Juliette Binoche, alongside Halle Berry, Alba Rohrwacher, Leïla Slimani, Dieudo Hamadi, Hong Sangsoo, Carlos Reygadas, and Jeremy Strong.

Kapadia, a Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) alumna, previously won Cannes’ L’Oeil d’or in 2021 for *A Night of Knowing Nothing* and the 2024 Grand Prix for her debut fiction feature *All We Imagine as Light*.

She joins a rare group of Indians to serve on the Cannes jury, following Mrinal Sen, Mira Nair, Shekhar Kapur, and others.

