character. "In the previous years, anyone could become a member of the BFAA but now we take interviews and the candidate must take an exam to become a member of the BFAA."

Rahman believes that digitalisation can lead to the rebirth of the industry. He also says that 10 to 12 years ago, people from lower income brackets formed the major part of the audience. Thus, most films were produced keeping them in mind. "Profit hungry cinema hall owners and distributers would only seek out commercial films which had crude

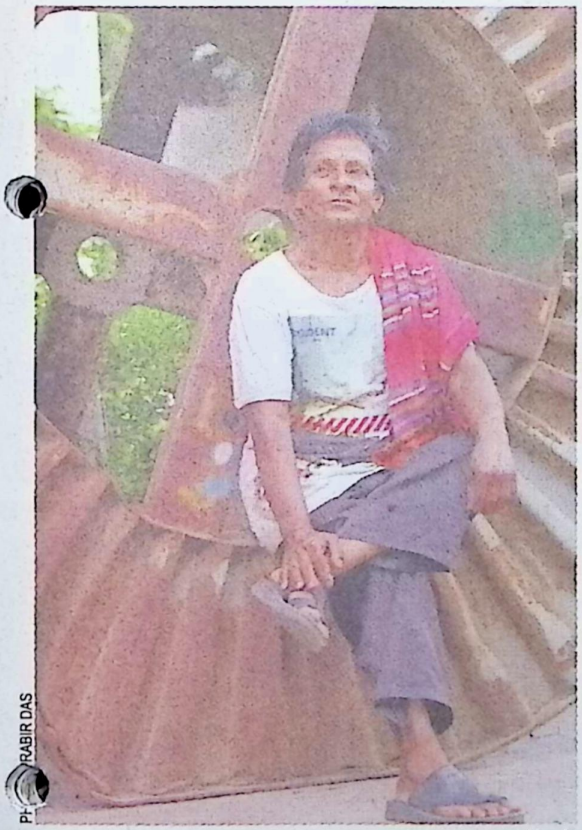


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Nasir

song and dance sequences and unnecessary action scenes. As a result, only a specific class of people went to the theatre. This pattern of operation was not profitable for those who considered films as their passion. Things, however, have changed over the years, and the current lot of artistes seems to be learning their lessons from their predecessors."

Those who have good connections with the government bodies can easily get grants from the government to make films, alleges Ripon Shikder. "The young generation of actors and filmmakers should have better access in this regard. Most people blame the story and dialogues for the sorry state of affairs of the film industry. But apart from the story, there is also a scarcity of good junior artistes in Bangladesh. Some people are doing this job because they say their parents and grandparents did the same. They don't have any clue about acting, and they don't have any problems getting roles because they have the right connections. I believe that the situation needs to be changed in order for our films to change."

During our visit we have made several attempts to speak to the female junior artistes at the BFDC. However, they have refused to share their experiences with us. Upon further investigation, we learnt that they are wary of journalists as they think they might be misquoted or negative things about them might



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be printed in the newspapers. One of the female junior artistes tells us on condition of anonymity that they have to suffer humiliation as many newspapers print false information about them or misquote them without even letting them know. She further adds that despite the pain and humiliation most female junior artistes prefer to stick to the industry for their love of films. She requests us to write positive things about them, urging us to motivate readers to go to the theatre to watch films. "The more people visit theaters to watch films, the more our earnings will increase. Besides, there is no greater joy than watching movies on the big screen," she insists. ■