



Zeroing in on ZERO DEGREE

One of the most hyped films of this year - Zero Degree - was released yesterday. Anyone who has seen the trailer knows that this movie is a break from the typical flicks made in our country, that it is an ambitious and a good quality project. With a refreshingly brilliant storyline and a fantastic team making it possible, this thriller is a must-see.

The movie has been directed by the renowned TV drama director Animesh Aich. The highly celebrated Mahfuz Ahmed took two responsibilities: he is the lead actor as well as the producer. The beautiful and talented Joya Ahsan is the lead actress. Also starring alongside them are Dilruba Yasmeen Ruhee and Iftekhar Zaib, among others.

Star Showbiz had recently invited them to its office, where they shared their experiences of working in the movie and the hopes and expectations they now have from it.

The conversation flowed to the condition of the overall movie industry in Bangladesh. Ideas and insights flew about. Indeed, there was a time in our country where going to the cinema hall was a favourite pastime - a thing you would do with your family and friends quite often. But this culture is almost non-existent now.

We want this trend to return, the way it was a couple of decades ago. Instead of complaining about the quality of our movies, let's appreciate that there are a handful of them that's actually great.

And now, Star Showbiz presents you some of the key people involved in Zero Degree.

ANIMESH AICH

I believe that the audience will enjoy watching Zero Degree because of its unique storyline. It's vastly different from numerous other productions made in our country. Of course, all directors say the same thing. Nevertheless, I like to think that this movie is indeed a very distinctive one. The star cast and their fabulous acting, the entire setting, theme and background of the movie will make it stand out in the crowd.

MAHFUZ AHMED

When it comes to TV dramas and shows, our director Animesh Aich is a highly reputed figure - tested, established and renowned. As Animesh narrated the story, I just wanted to be a part of it. He then proposed me to take up the leading role, as well as becoming a producer of this film. And I very happily accepted both the offers. That was the start.

I am glad to say that as a producer I have given

Animesh his full independence. Indeed, we did discuss about the decisions made, such as the star casting, but I can say today that there has been no decision made without the nod of the director. If a producer does not give the director the liberty, then how can the producer expect a good output?

JOYA AHSAN

When I was working in this film, I never felt that I was working with a brand new team. There was a comfort zone from the very beginning, since I had already

various limitations. The vision that a director has for a movie - or the picture he paints to the actors when narrating the story at the initial stage - gets ruined because of circumstances. But Mahfuz, being an actor himself, understands the struggles an actor goes through for a movie and the dreams and desires a director cultivates for the movie. I think this knowledge and awareness of the matter has led his production to be very liberal and compassionate.

The audience will love the movie, I think, for two reasons: the content and the making. These two aspects have been strong enough to make the movie alluring for the audience. But I must say that we are not good judges regarding the popularity of this film: we were all directly involved in making it and so we cannot see it from the viewpoint of an outsider or a third party. But I am very optimistic about it. Now it's up to the audience to judge it.

RUHEE

You know, there are movies that are timeless or classic. Many of the films from the 1970s, '80s and '90s are still watched with the same enthusiasm. I believe that five years from now, people will treat Zero Degree in that manner. The characters of the story are very interesting and have their own individuality. The character I played demanded a lot out of me. I found the whole experience very challenging, and getting the opportunity to work with such big names have been a privilege.

To the audience, I just want to say that you will not be disappointed: unlike what we often see, the story is fresh and not copied from any other movie.

ZAIB

This is my first movie. I have been modelling for a few years. I am lucky that they have taken me in such a high profile film. Zero degree is associated with big names and renowned artists. Being able to work with them has been a huge achievement for me. This project is a turning point for me, and I hope people will love this film.

Zero Degree may well be such a movie. But it is up to you to decide. But first let's at least go to the cinema halls and watch it!

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Interviewed by Rafi Hossain
Narrated by Mehnaj Kabir and M H Haider

