

A CHAT WITH AREF SYED

So let's start with the basics, why acting?

I've never gotten that before, but basically it's something I was always passionate about. Watching the TV productions of Humayun Ahmed's work in my childhood, led to a big turning point and I always had wishful thoughts of being an actor. I studied engineering and worked as an investment banker at Lehman Brothers back in the states, but after I decided to come back, I chose to take on the opportunity to train formally in acting from Stella Adler Studio of Acting.

pursue what I loved and enjoyed. **So you have experience as an actor in the US. How does the industry there differ from what we have here?**

Things are very organized back in the states. Everyone has a specific job description and all the scheduling is done months ahead, so the whole production process is well coordinated. Here on the other hand, although my knowledge is limited as I have done only one film so far, the organization is a bit difficult. Finding venues is also another



How was your family's reaction to the move to acting from investment banking and marketing?

They were a bit shocked and worried, but they did not discourage me from what I wanted to do. Since I was done with my basic education and had a job experience, they were okay with me pursuing acting as long as I didn't waste my time. My father was always a big morale booster as he never restricted me in terms of what I wanted to do, he taught me to be practical and safe but also to

issue from a logistical point of view, as there aren't many purpose-built facilities here for plays and theatre productions. However, the passion and the heart behind creative productions in Bangladesh are unmatched. Although the western processes are more organized, they tend to be more mechanical, whereas out here it is more intimate and with passionate individuals in a family environment.

Who do you see as your inspiration or role model?

I don't really follow anyone like that as I feel it is a large responsibility to express something through a creative medium like acting. Following someone, I believe, hinders the creative process. However, I do admire the works of Paul Giamatti, Javier Bardem, Kate Winslet, Christian Bale, Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp, etc. In our country there are legends like Abul Hayat sir, whom I deeply admire.

How was the experience in "Anil Bagchi'r Ekdin"?

It was very challenging. To bring out the lead character in my first movie, working with a visionary director like Morshed Bhai, taking responsibility of such a role from a novel by Humayun Ahmed, dubbing accurately, was all a very challenging and exciting experience. I was afraid that Morshed Bhai was not saying anything after my takes for the first week, but the others assured me that as long as he does not do retakes, he is happy. He actually complemented me once after the day's shoot, and in addition to having the opportunity to perform beside such established names in the industry, I am truly grateful to Morshed Bhai.

So what are you doing at the moment or what do you have coming up for the audience?

We are in talks with some ventures and some are in the scripting stage, so I can only confirm once the decision has been taken. I want to develop my versatility as an actor by playing various roles in various genres, especially those with strong stories as it is the main focus of a production. I don't believe in commercial and non commercial films, and limiting an actor's roles and work spectrum is the death of an artist and I don't plan on doing it.

By **Mobaiminul Islam**



FLASH REVIEW

THE X-FILES

What else is new?

The X-Files franchise was one of those few rare sci-fi shows on TV back in the day that managed to glue the whole family down for a watch and always left viewers questioning what they knew about their world and beyond. However, if you think about it now, it wouldn't have been that difficult to intrigue audiences back then because the internet hadn't yet taken over and so, to achieve that sense of wonderment was easy. Now though the story is very different. We see and we know so much and more information can be had in an instant. In this day and age, can the new X-Files still deliver? That was the question I had while I was

waiting for the pilot episode to start. However all confusion ended the moment it began, and I was happy to see that by the end of it, I was returned to the state I was always left in when the original episodes used to end. It amazed me as to how they have managed to tie-in modern elements into their old cases and brought the entire X-Files straight into the 21st century. The amazing twist at the end was simply so good, I had to tune in for the next two episodes. If you are a X-Files fan and haven't seen it yet, please do, because you are missing out.

Reviewed By **Intisab Shabriyar**

