

"Aynabaji" shows a lighter side in first song teaser

A CORRESPONDENT

Amitabh Reza Chowdhury's upcoming film "Aynabaji" has drawn a fair share of attention, particularly with its first trailer. Now that we have caught a glimpse the first song of the film, it is a total change of pace.

The song, titled "Alu Peyajer Kabbo", is a stark contrast to the gritty, tense trailer of the film. A budding romance between the characters of Nabila and Chanchal Chowdhury (who plays the titular role) is brought out in a heartwarming visual, against the backdrop of a kitchen market. Written by Rajib Ashraf, arguably one of the most underrated lyricists, arranged by Arnob and sung by the instantly-relatable Shaan (from India), the song sets up a 'boy meets girl and is instantly smitten' scenario. The cinematography is spot on, and the small dialogue exchanges within the song add to the video greatly.

Based on a story by Gousul Alam Shaon (who also has an acting role), the film casts Partha Barua alongside Nabila and Chanchal, and is the story of a gifted actor who slips in and out of personas at will. Produced by Content Matters and presented by Half Stop Down, the film is slated for a March 25 release.



"Noisshobdo Joddha" on ATN Bangla

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking International Mother Language Day, ATN News will broadcast special single-episode drama of the week, "Noisshobdo Joddha". Written by Shourjo Dipto Surjo and directed by Surjo and Hasan Shikdar, the play casts Dilara Zaman, Aruna Biswas, Nazia Haque Orsha, Mrinal Dutta, Ramiz Raju, and a special guest appearance by Language Movement veteran Dr. Jashim Uddin Ahmed.

Women-centric films should be more viable

... Shabana Azmi

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

There has been a long-running debate whether Bollywood is biased towards its male stars when it comes to payment of fees. There is a persistent grievance that females do not command as high a price tag as the males, raising the question: is there a discrimination here?

Actress-social activist Shabana Azmi feels male stars in Bollywood should consider taking fee cuts to reduce the pressure of box office expectations and play secondary character to actresses in women-centric movies.

Azmi said as many actresses are happy to be playing second fiddle to a hero, the same gesture should be reciprocated to make women-oriented cinema more viable.

"I think for women-centric films to become even more viable and be able to expand their budget, it's time the big male stars also once in a while work in a role that is secondary as compared to the girl. This is something we need to encourage," Azmi told the media. "I think it'll lead to a healthy atmosphere," she added.

Azmi, 65, who last year worked in Aishwarya Rai Bachchan-starrer "Jazbaa" and will be next seen with Sonam Kapoor in "Neerja", believes the actresses today are making brave choices in their roles.

"The girls are particularly making brave choices. It is absolutely wonderful. Look at the unconventional roles done by Vidya Balan, Deepika Padukone, Priyanka Chopra and Kangana Ranawat. They are willing to make the sacrifice that was required," the veteran actress said.

Azmi, who has worked with critically-feted directors like Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal and Aparna Sen, said women are "willing" to take a cut in their pay cheque too if required.

"Now what is happening is that when you work in a film which doesn't have a big mainstream hero, then you have to have to take a cut in your pay cheque. And they're willing to do that. And that's very good," she said.

On Bollywood's focus on box office figures and increasing trend towards touching or crossing the 'Rs 100 crore club', Azmi said that chasing box-office success can be pressurizing for an actor but is something which can be controlled if male stars lower their remuneration.

"Box office is definitely a pressure. But it is not artificial because it depends on the budget. Not all films need to make 100cr for them to be successful. It really is in proportion to the budget of the film. If an actor is going to charge the moon, then he better guarantee that he is going to return that money."

Citing an example of filmmaker-actor Raj Kapoor, Azmi said an actor lowering his fees is in the best interest of the film. "Look at directors like Raj Kapoor in the past. If they made a film which didn't meet the box office expectations then in the next film they took a huge cut from the distributor. Because you have to guard the health of your career, and industry," she said.



JOSS STONE arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grammy and Brit Award-winning English diva Joss Stone is all set to sway the Dhaka audience with her performance tomorrow. The soul sensation will headline LiveSquare Entertainment's event Pop Republic at Naboratri Hall of International Convention City Bashundhara in the capital. The artist is arriving in Dhaka today.

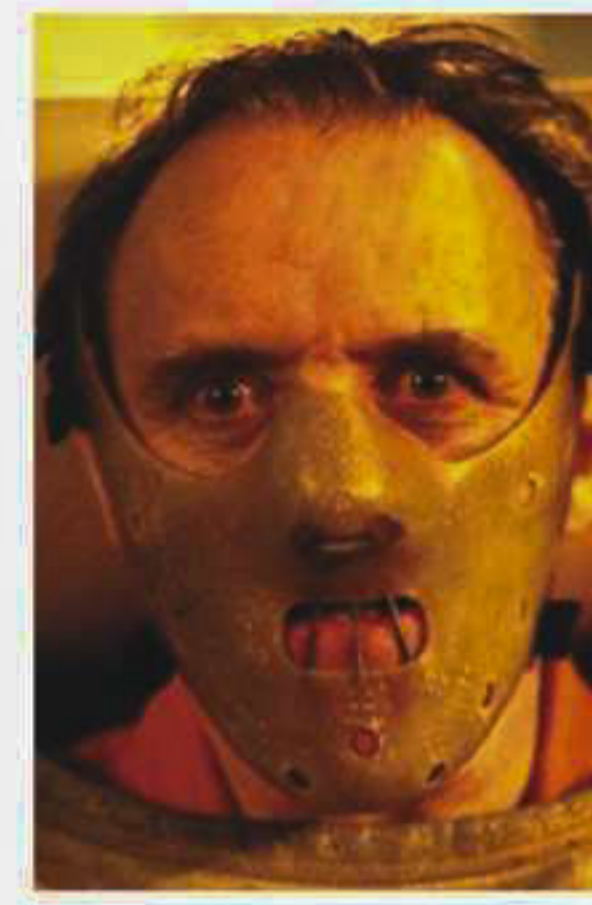
In addition, Bangladeshi stars Arnob, Jon Kabir, Rafa, Elita Karim, Armeen Musa and Minar will join stone in tomorrow's performance.

Tickets for the event are being sold on Pop Republic's website, and a number of physical outlets including Platter, Nawab Chatga, Chittagong Bull, Café Guhaa, Cilantro, Dhaka Republic, Yellow Submarine Café, Veni Vidi Vici, Café Thirty3, and Hakka Dhaka: Auckland Centre.

The Daily Star is a partner of the event.



IT'S TRUE!



In "The Silence Of The Lambs", Sir Anthony Hopkins gave a timeless performance as one of film's most iconic villains ever, Hannibal Lecter. But it was originally Gene Hackman who was so interested in playing Hannibal Lecter, he not only bought the rights to Thomas Harris' novel, but he wanted to direct the film. Hackman randomly dropped out of production for one of the most doting reasons you're ever likely to hear: because his daughter said so.

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY in talks to play Catherine the Great

Historical epics once used to be all the rage in Hollywood, spurred by the success of "Braveheart" and "The Last of the Mohicans" and spawning further films like "The Patriot and Gladiator". The genre has cooled as of late, but it could be revived in the form of "Catherine the Great", which has Barbra Streisand looking to make her filmmaking comeback and now Keira Knightley in talks to star as the Russian leader.

According to The Wrap, the "Anna Karenina" star is currently in negotiations to take on the titular role in the film, which boasts a screenplay by Kristina Lauren Anderson that landed at the very top of 2014's Black List of Hollywood's best unproduced screenplays.

Born Sophia Augusta Fredericka, Catherine the Great was the longest ruling female leader of Russia, sitting atop the throne from 1762 to 1796, during which time she revitalised Russia as a world power and presided over the Russian Enlightenment.

The film will focus on the life of younger Catherine, who was trapped in an abusive marriage to Tsar Peter III, whose death put Catherine atop the throne in 1762. This is a major project for Streisand, who hasn't directed a narrative feature film since 1996's "The Mirror Has Two Faces", but whose 1983 directorial debut "Yentl" landed 5 Oscar nominations and one win, and announced her as a serious filmmaking talent.

Gil Netter ("Life of Pi") is producing the film, which now instantly becomes one of the higher profile projects in development in Hollywood. Knightley is a terrific actress when put to good use, and while she's no stranger to costume dramas, it could be interesting to see her take on the life of this historical giant, with Streisand's involvement making this a curious project indeed. It's unclear how quickly this will get off the ground, but Knightley is next set to shoot the star-studded "Collateral Beauty" alongside Will Smith, Kate Winslet, and Helen Mirren.

Source: Collider