

RINA BROWN

More than another film

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

After many hurdles, Shameem Akhtar's "Rina Brown" is almost ready for screening. The director's comeback, 13 years after her last film, has been a worthwhile wait as "Rina Brown" is much more than a fictional love story during wartime.



Shameem Akhtar (L); A still from the film.



A period piece just like her other films, Shameem Akhtar explores new depths by departing from the patterns followed in her previous works. "I wanted to explore the human reaction towards circumstances, and how they are mobilized to fight and be willing to die for a common cause," the director explained. Set against the backdrop of the Liberation War, the story centers on the romance between an Anglo-Christian young woman and a Bengali man, and their budding romance over conversations about Bengali literary works. The relationship is doomed as the war looms close and forces them to choose identity relations. "Raised in a different culture," Shameem Akhtar explained, "Rina Brown is pervaded by a sense of rootlessness, and I wanted to explore her space within the new nation defined by a strong cultural

identity." The director uses flashbacks to intertwine the past and present, by using a colour grading process where the differences in time periods are hardly discernable. Through this Shameem Akhtar hopes viewers, just like the characters on screen, rouse themselves to understand the relationship between our lives and the historical events that brought them about. "I wanted the realisation to be gradual," she said, "much like our natural response to events around us. For that I wanted the past to look just as colourful as the present." Despite the obstacles faced during the making of the film, including not raising funds and being able to solely cast seasoned actors, Shameem Akhtar feels this has enriched the overall experience. Describing the newcomers in the film she

said, "Some of these people have never been filmed before, and they have brought fresh perspectives to their characters." Shameem Akhtar rises to the challenge by seeking to change the cinematic culture of Bangladesh. So far in Bangladesh, films depicting rural settings have been more commercially viable. "Rina Brown" takes a hard turn by portraying ordinary, urbane lives which she hopes will cater to a different group of viewers. "Cinema used to be our only source of pleasure apart from books, and now we lack good films; films that have nice, crisp stories to tell and that is what I hoped to achieve," said the filmmaker. She adds further that this is a film meant to be studied, as it is steeped in history. This leaves much to explore for the viewers, making this a film that will stay with us long after we will have watched it.

TV WATCH



THREE SISTERS on Banglavisision

A CORRESPONDENT
Banglavisision will air a new drama series "Three Sisters" every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:15pm, starting today. The story revolves around three girls from three different districts, whose lives intertwine as

their struggles in the capital gets eventful. Written by Ashutosh Shujon along with Sheikh Koreshin and directed by Ashutosh Shujon, the drama series has an elaborate cast featuring Abul Hayat, Niloy, Moushumi Hamid, Tania Hossain, Tushti, Marzuk Russel, Tawfif, Shamima Nanzin and others.

Ranga Shokal on Maasranga

A CORRESPONDENT

A special episode of "Ranga Shokal" will air live at 7am today featuring eminent journalist Syed Badrul Ahsan. Syed Badrul Ahsan will reminisce on the personality of the late Syed Fahim Munaim.

The autobiographical show featuring noted personalities has been airing every day since the inception of Maasranga TV, where guests speak about their childhood, upbringing, personal and professional life.



REMEMBERING Fahim Munaim our Tipu bhai

DR. CHANCHAL KHAN

Reading the online version of the Daily Star is how I often begin my day. There was a picture of Fahim Munaim, Tipu bhai, from one of his Editor's Guest, a Maasranga TV episode in today's morning version under the heading of his passing away. It took me not a few seconds, but a few minutes to comprehend the meaning of passing away, that struck to me as an unknown phrase, never heard before. Ironically, I saw him last at a funeral in Gulshan Azad Mosque. I was meaning to see him for a while and the date for our meeting was fixed for next week. That will not happen now.

Unlike many of his counterparts in similar media outfits, Fahim Munaim stood out with his impeccable English, great personality, attention to perfection in selecting his attire, and his wholesome 'gentlemanship' attitude. His personality differed with others in patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving with his mates he interacted with. As Subarna Mostafa wrote in her tribute to Tipu bhai, there was not a single occasion when he would not walk us down and see us off, right up to our cars.

There are so many beautiful memories to recall in a span of slightly over a decade I had known him. I remember he requested me to bring some medicines from Kolkata not too long ago which was delivered to his office with a receipt amounting Rupees two thousand six hundred. The receipt was the precondition, or else there would be no medicine to be brought. A few days later, his Secretary handed me the equivalent Bangladesh Taka, with a small thank you note from Tipu bhai.

The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre last year screened my documentary on Tagore's Gitanjali (Timeless Gitanjali) and hosted my performance of songs also. It was a Friday evening. Tipu bhai was there at the front row. He said to me at the end, "...if it was not your programme, perhaps I would have not come, because I do not generally like to go out of home on Fridays. I just relax upstairs on Fridays. I try not to come down. It is usually my day, my family day". What else could make me happier that evening?

Last time when we had a bit of a chat over a coffee, I with all my greed and rapaciousness said to him "Tipu bhai, when you are away or unable to do your talk show with foreign guests, I am here to fill in the chair". He had a big laugh! "Who will sing Rabindra Sangeet for us then? I know your diplomatic and international background.... but you can't have both! In any case, it's called Editor's Guests. You are not the Editor". We both had a good laugh. I in turn said, "If you had continued your Rabindra Sangeet pursuit with Sadi bhai (Sadi Mohammad) who was your guru at one point, you would have done both by now. We are all multi-skilled, aren't we?"

We have lost Fahim Munaim, our Tipu bhai from this lifetime, but have not lost him forever. Our hearts are full of wonderful memories that would keep him alive amid us.

The writer is a development practitioner and a Tagore singer.

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