

Farooki reveals first look of SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Variety publishes 'exclusive' image of single-take hostage drama

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's unveiled the first glimpse into his secretive project "Shonibar Bikel" (English title "Saturday Afternoon") on Wednesday, in the form of an image given 'exclusively' to international film trade magazine Variety.

The Variety report also says the film 'takes its cue from the brutal terrorist attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka which took place on a quiet Saturday afternoon and left more than 20 people dead,' although the director in a Facebook post sharing the news said the film was a hostage drama indeed but "it doesn't reconstruct any real events."

The report also confirmed that the film is a single-take (or one-shot) film, something Farooki had mentioned to The Daily Star last month, but requested to keep it 'off the record'.

"Our challenge was not to let the audience ever feel that they are watching a one-shot film," the director told The Daily Star. "It was a very difficult process and we had to go through many hurdles but the audience will not see any of it."

The Bangladesh-Germany joint production which is said to be in English and Bangla, went on floors last December with Palestinian actor Eyad Hourani, Indian actor Parambrata Chatterjee and Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Zahid Hasan, Iresh Zaker, Mamunur Rashid, Nader Chowdhury, Intekhab Dinar, Gousul Alam Shaon and others from Bangladesh in the cast. Principal photography was completed in 17 days under heavy wraps. Farooki had told The Daily Star that the film "will feature characters from a number of nationalities, and is a thriller where the lives of several people collide."



The film, which carries a \$500,000 budget, is being produced by Abdul Aziz for Jaaz Multimedia and Farooki for Chabial from Bangladesh, and Anna Katchko of Tandem Productions (Germany) is serving as co-producer. Farooki also got a heavyweight crew for the film, including Berlinale-winning Kazakh cinematographer Aziz Zhabakiyev and veteran Russian cameraman Valerii Petrov as the steadicam operator.

Farooki had first revealed plans for this film at the 2016 Busan International Film Festival (while serving as jury for short films) where he had particularly said he would be making a one-shot film on the tragic Holey Artisan attack that took place in Dhaka on July 1, 2016. The film

was then titled to be "Holy Bakery", but Farooki subsequently never clearly addressed whether "Saturday Afternoon" was that same project. When asked the reason, he said "Of late, we have seen that the audience and media are getting a little confused about films inspired from true events and documentaries; a fiction story doesn't have the liability to tell facts, and we changed the name to avoid fanning this confusion."

This film, which doesn't have a sales agent or release date yet, is also set to put Farooki's 'Identity' trilogy in motion. The second part of that film, titled "No Land's Man", already has funding from India's Film Bazaar and the Asia Pacific Screen Academy.

Int'l Mother Language Day solemnly observed in Nepal

The Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal observed the "Immortal Shaheed Day (Amar Ekushey)" and the "International Mother Language Day" on February 21 with two programmes with due solemnity and respect, says a press release.

The day's programme began with the hoisting of the national flag at half mast at the Chancery by Bangladesh's Ambassador to Nepal Mashfee Binte Shams in the morning. This was followed by placing floral wreaths on the Shaheed Minar. The messages of the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and State Minister for Foreign Affairs were read out during the solemn affair. MP and Chairman on Parliamentary Standing Committee of Ministry of Public Administration H N Ashequr Rahman attended the morning programme and delivered a speech on the significance of the day.

A cultural programme followed with performances of Bangla patriotic songs by noted Bangladeshi artists Bizon Chandra Mistry and Jhuma Khandaker. Performance by Nepal Bhasa Parishad in which renowned Nepali poets recited poems in different Nepalese dialects was next. A special Nepali choral song was rendered by Bizon Chandra Mistry, Jhuma Khandaker and Nepali artiste Kishore Kumar Sharma Sedai. Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams concluded the programme with a vote of thanks.

The day's programme was attended by numerous dignitaries.



PHOTO: STAR

Mim joins Jeet in "Sultan"

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Flying high at the peak of her career, Bidya Sinha Mim's recently-released "Ami Neta Hobo" has been performing well at the national box office. Things have taken an even more exciting turn for the actor, who is now teaming up with popular Kolkata actor Jeet in a new film venture titled "Sultan".

Mim is scheduled to take off for West Bengal on February 27, and begin shooting the following day. Mim is preparing for a sterner role of a lawyer, regarding which she said, "I have never played a lawyer before, and the audience will find something very new in the film."

Having the chance to appear alongside Jeet as a co-star is also a significant bump in her career. "This is a big achievement for me, and I have seen many of his films. I have high hopes about this journey," she added.

"Sultan" is jointly produced by Bangladesh and India, by Jaaz Multimedia and Jeetz Filmworks.

Meanwhile, the actor has been visiting cinema halls screening "Ami Neta Hobo", which was positively received by viewers. "I always saw huge crowds gathering to watch the film, which made me very happy," she said.

Mim informed The Daily Star that she will stay in Kolkata long enough to complete the first lot of filming.

BSA celebrates Int'l Mother Language Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shilpakla Academy (BSA) arranged a programme to celebrate the International Mother Language Day at Central Shaheed Minar on February 21.

The event started off with placing wreaths at the altar of Shaheed Minar to pay homage to the martyrs of Language Movement. A one minute silence was also observed. Chief guest Asaduzzaman Noor, cultural affairs minister and Liaquat Ali Lucky, DG of BSA spoke at the

programme, while a number of Bangladeshi and foreign artists took part in a cultural programme that set off with the rendition of National Anthem and Bhashar Gaan "Amar Bhai-er Roktey Rangano".

Representatives from the embassies of the Republic of the Philippines, Nepal, Spain and India recited poems at the event.

Danish ambassador Mikael Hemniti Winther; Deputy French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Poncet; Mae Watanabe from Japanese Embassy; Yuhaeng Lee, Minjun Kim and Jiwon

Shin from the embassy of the Republic of Korea; Mahbod Mansuri, Mehdi Rahimi, Milad Khezdana Mehr, Mohammad Khezdana, Amin Fakhraei, Omid Fakhraei, Sasansoleimani and Pedram Farahnaki from Iran Cultural Centre and artistes of Bangladesh Sangskritik Dal performed songs at the programme.

Staff from the embassy of the Republic of Indonesia and students of Shanto Mariam CRI Confucius Classroom presented dance at the event.



A large audience enjoyed the cultural programme.



Nargis Fakhri set to make comeback with "Amavas"

Model-turned actress Nargis Fakhri made a splash with her debut film "Rockstar" opposite Ranbir Kapoor, and went on to have a foothold in Bollywood for a few years, before falling off the radar. The US-born actress is now reportedly making a comeback, with "Amavas".

The actress has already begun work on her first ever horror flick, with the first picture from the sets of the film released where she is seen with director Bhushan Patel and co-star Sachiin Joshi.

The film has gone on floors in London for a start to finish schedule of about 35 days long, according to Times of India.

Its director Bhushan Patel has made a reputation with horror films such as "Ragini MMS 2", "Alone" and "1920 Evil Returns" to his credit. "Amavas" is being produced by Viiking Media and Entertainment in association with Simply West UK and Thoth Ventures. It is slated to release later this year.

After "Rockstar" which earned her a Filmfare nomination for best debut, Fakhri appeared in a variety of films -- including political thriller "Madras Café", comedies "Main Tera Hero" and Housefull 3" and sports drama "Azhar". Her last big screen appearance in a role of substance was "Banjo" opposite Riteish Deshmukh, in 2016.

Source: TOI

Handwriting competition for children at M'singh

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Marking Language Martyrs Day and International Mother Language Day, Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Sangrahashala (art gallery) in Mymensingh organised a handwriting competition for schoolchildren at its premises on Wednesday.

Children of different educational institutions of Mymensingh town and outside also took part in a drawing competition. Some 200 children from first grade to tenth grade participated in the competition in four groups.

Mukul Datta, deputy keeper of the art gallery, inaugurated the competition. Artiste Badal

Chakraborty and District Shishu Academy officer Mehdi Zaman were present, among others.

Marking the occasion, several socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions including Bangladesh Agricultural University, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Udichi Shilpi Goshthi and Sandipon Sangskritik Sangstha also organised elaborate programmes.

The programmes included a discussion and cultural show.

Mymensingh Press Club organised a discussion at its auditorium Tuesday evening with Md Nowab Ali in the chair. The programme was followed by a cultural show.



Students participate in the handwriting competition.

PHOTO: STA