

The Real TASKREEN

COVER STORY

Talented young actor, Taskeen Rahman has already managed to win the hearts of the audience with only three of his films. Brought into stardom with 'Dhaka Attack', Taskeen has wowed the crowd with his acting prowess and undeniable charisma. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, he spills the beans on his personal and work life.



Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we have with us, for the second time, Taskeen Rahman. He needs no introduction as he has acquired considerable fame during his stay in Dhaka. What is the reason, according to you, behind the reluctance of celebrities to talk openly during interviews such as this?

Taskeen Rahman: Personally, I think that there are two reasons. Firstly, there are some conventional questions that the interviewers ask repeatedly that neither the celebrities, nor the viewers want to hear. Secondly, celebrities have a habit to play it safe, by not disclosing too much information about their personal lives.

Rafi: What are your expectations regarding your films which have been released recently?

Taskeen: Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz's, *Jodi Ekdin* received positive responses and reviews. The director himself is very happy. So far, we're very happy and hopeful with it. The film contains all the elements of a family film – emotions, love, friendships, betrayal – a complete package of entertainment. We tried to portray all the aspects of what makes us sentient human beings. It's a realistic story; the audience can relate to it.

Rafi: What is the secret behind your appeal, despite not being the main character?

Taskeen: I've never 'acted' in front of the camera; I become the character I'm playing. I have a personality switch. When I'm done playing the character, it's completely out of my system. I believe that the audience like me because, I not only prepare myself for the camera, but I also psychologically prepare myself for the character as well. For example, if my character is antisocial, I will isolate myself to be just like him. I just don't play the character; I live him. While on screen, I try to give it my all to bring the character to life. Perhaps, my dedication and devotion are what pull the audience to me.

Rafi: Is your character in the film an antagonistic one?

Taskeen: He is perceived as one in the beginning, but everything becomes clear in the end. A person can be a good guy during the day and a killer at night. But, he will still be the same person. I was able to portray the transition between the two dimensions in this film.

Rafi: What kind of offers for films are you receiving now, and how do you manage them, since you don't live here?

Taskeen: Producers face a little difficulty

in keeping up with my travelling schedule. However, whenever I'm in town, the news somehow spreads. The people with whom I work, they know when I come and go. In fact, I've been in this country since December of last year, and plan to stay here for a while. I have had quite a lot of offers, but I'm only signing up with those that I can connect with.

Rafi: Are you working on any project at the moment?

Taskeen: The shooting for a new film, titled *Mission Extreme* will begin very soon. I'm mentally preparing myself for the character as it is unlike anything that I've previously done. The most interesting thing about the character is that he is open to interpretation. We're aiming for the audience to question themselves at the end of the film. I will work one month straight for this, then probably start shooting for another



film. I haven't decided yet.

Rafi: Can you talk about your films which have already been released?

Taskeen: *Jodi Ekdin* is my third film which has been released, *Dhaka Attack* being the first. I had also acted in the joint production film, *Sultan: The Saviour*, with Bidya Sinha Mim and Jeet. I had a relatively short screen time, but working alongside the talented artists and directors was a great experience. I had a long one-on-one fighting sequence with Jeet, and it was exceptional. I have also acted in another film, *Boyfriend*, which will be released soon. It is the first film where I act as the lead.

Rafi: What are your expectations regarding 'Boyfriend'?

Taskeen: I thoroughly enjoyed myself during the filming, but, with conventional films such as these, I can't quite relate to them. Honestly, there's

room for improvement, and I sometimes asked myself whether it was too late to quit or not. However, the storyline is very good and there are many twists and turns. Still, I don't think I'll be acting in films of this genre in the future.

Rafi: If you start getting many offers for films of this genre, would you still refuse?

Taskeen: Honestly speaking, I would, unless the structure of the films we make changes, along with time management. I personally, struggle considerably with time management as I have to fly from another country. When I'm told that the shooting period will be a month, but it stretches farther, I have to answer to the team of another project. Another thing is, the marketing scheme for *Boyfriend* was subpar, if I'm being honest. The songs were released a long time ago, and I was thoroughly critiqued for the first look of the film.

The reviews were horrible.

Rafi: What do you think is the present condition of Bangladeshi cinema?

Taskeen: It is a very crucial time for the Bangladeshi film industry. That being said, it's quite wobbly as well. I don't let that demotivate me. Tahsan bhai once told me a story of a man who went to sell shoes in a village, but said that there was no market for shoes there as no one wore them. Another man went to sell shoes and said that there was a good market for shoes as nobody wore them. It finally depends on our perspective. My philosophy is, we must invest our money in films which have potential and can compete with the global standard of cinema. We should influence the demand of films; not the other way around. We have to meet international standards as the audience's mindset is expanding.

Rafi: Did you initially think that 'Dhaka

Attack' would be a hit?

Taskeen: There was a 50:50 chance because I was told that a cop drama would not do well here, but I knew that the plot, the cast and the production were top-notch. Arifin, Mahi and I, we gave it our all for the film. The truth is, if we give our audience something new and out of the box, they'll like it. I had a feeling that it would go places, but had no idea then that my character would garner so much attention.

Rafi: How do you choose your films?

Taskeen: This profession is a risky business. I don't want to be a sellout. I had to politely decline some offers as I couldn't connect with the scripts. It doesn't matter how big the budget is, who the director is, where he has to go for filming; if the storyline isn't up to the mark, I won't take it.

Rafi: What is your main motivation to keep working?

Taskeen: I'm doing projects very selectively. I don't act for the fame or the money; although money is a factor. The passion and dedication is important. My supporters sometimes tell me that they want to act to become famous. And that's not how it's supposed to be. One must act for the art. If it doesn't work out, that's alright. At least you will have given your 100%. Also, never let anyone demoralise you. In modern society, hate is very prevalent. So, we have to stay focused on our work.

Rafi: It's true that you have a bigger female following. Has this affected your personal life?

Taskeen: I feel as if the person they want and look up to is not me, but an idea of me. They see my characters and fall for that version of me, and that isn't the real me. In this profession, it takes time to trust either party. You always have to be on the edge. If I build a friendship with someone, it may prove to be a dangerous gamble.

Rafi: What do you look for in a person if you are to connect with them?

Taskeen: I have a very simple answer to that. I want them to treat me like a human – not like a celebrity. They shouldn't approach me with an ulterior motive. I want people who I can connect with mentally.

Rafi: Thank you for your time, Taskeen. It was great having you with us. Perhaps, you will have found your soulmate the next time you're here.

Transcribed By Amina Hossain

