

Siam Ahmed has high hopes for ‘Bishwo Shundori’

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Popular actor Siam Ahmed is spending busy days on the sets of “Damal”. His film “Bishwo Shundori” released yesterday, and the actor is looking forward to multiple releases in the upcoming months. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the dashing star talks about his upcoming ventures and more.

Your film “Bishwo Shundori” released yesterday. How is the response?

“Bishwo Shundori” is a family film. However, I was worried that the audience might not prefer to visit cinema halls during the pandemic, but many have turned up and appreciated it. Even though the audience’s reaction is not within our control, I wholeheartedly wish that the audience continues to laud the film in theatres.

Can you tell us a bit about the movie’s plot?

This film narrates a story about love and patriotism. The whole crew has worked very hard for this film to turn

out the way it has. The story is amazing, and I hope all my fans enjoy my performance.

Do you think releasing such a high-budget film during this pandemic involves was risky?

Of course it’s risky! We should all be proud of our producer for taking such a big risk. We all also have to promote the film for his efforts to succeed. Otherwise, others may feel discouraged to release such productions – which might even make the entertainment industry dormant again.

Are you content with your performance in “Bishwo Shundori”?

Honestly, the audience who should answer this question. Any criticism from the audience will only make me a better actor.

What else are you currently busy with?

I am currently shooting for “Damal” in Saidpur. It is very cold out here and I am enjoying this experience a lot. I want to keep entertaining my fans and wish to keep delivering memorable performances on screen.



A still from ‘Rupsha Nodir Baankey’.

“A film should have a positive impact on the society”

-Khairul Alam Sabuj

SHARMIN JOYA

Although noted actor Khairul Alam Sabuj started out his career on the stage, his popularity primarily grew through television.

Besides being an actor, he is a director, screenwriter, writer, translator and singer.

He was honoured with the Bangla Academy Award 2020 for his contribution in literary translation.

He is quite selective about his roles in films.

Most recently, Sabuj played the role of the protagonist in celebrated director Tanvir Mokammel’s “Rupsha Nodir Baankey”. The film was released yesterday.

“I am immensely confident about this project, as I believe that besides being entertaining, a film should have a positive impact on the society,” shares Sabuj. “This film conveys a social message, and portrays stories of people who are important in our region.” The actor previously collaborated with Naamir Mokammel on “Nodir Naamir Modhumoti” (1996). The protagonist of “Rupsha



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nodir Baankey”, Manab Ratan Mukhopadhyay, resembles a leftist leader, who dedicated his life to social causes. Interestingly, Tausif Sadman Turjo, Zahid Hossain Shovon and Sabuj play the role of the protagonist at different stages of his life.

“Manab Ratan represents one of those leaders who brought about great changes through his sacrifices and struggles,” Sabuj shares. “We have heard of and even seen

people like him in our lives. Such people are often forgotten, but we need to know about them.”

He further explains that the story of the film is timeless. “In a society, there are two types of people— those who accept everything and remain silent, and those who think about the greater good and raise their voices against societal problems,” explains the artist. “This film beautifully illustrates that as people, we must

think about our approaches.”

Sabuj adds that Tanvir Mokammel is an expert at making period films. “I have known Tanvir for a long time. He was my junior at the Department of English, University of Dhaka,” he mentions. “I believe ‘Rupsha Nodir Baankey’ is his best work till date.”

The film was the last project of renowned cinematographer Mahfuzur Rahman Khan. “He was one of the most passionate people that I had ever come across,” says an emotional Sabuj. “It was an amazing experience working with him. He was a progressive artist, who truly loved his work. It is unfortunate that he left us before the release of the film.”

Sabuj has also been busy with writing television screenplays. “I am planning to remake my old television projects, which today’s audience are not familiar with,” he shares. One of those projects, “Atmoja”, already aired on Bangladesh Television this January. “I acted in and directed the original. Ahsan Habib Nasim played my role in the remake,” concludes Sabuj.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Bishworang’s colourful Victory Day with renowned artists

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Renowned artists Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Farida Zaman, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Rokeya Sultana and Mohammad Eunus have made outstanding contributions to the art scene of Bangladesh. This year, popular fashion house Bishworang has collaborated with them for their *Bijoy Dibosh* (Victory Day) collection. The vibrant and bright colours of Bishworang’s designs bring out the festive aspect of the occasion, as we celebrate our *Bijoy Dibosh* on December 16.

“These artists are my teachers. They represent our country to the world, through their work,” shares Biplob Saha, the owner of Bishworang and a former student of the Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka (DU). “This was my way of paying my respect to my teachers and also to my beloved country.”

The versatility, splendour and creativity of these artists inspire generations of art enthusiasts.

“We wanted to participate in this project, as Biplob is a very dear student of ours and the brand that he has built over the years represents the traditions and heritage of Bangladesh,” says Mohammad Eunus. “As we approach 50 years of our independence, I have been reflecting on the colours of our flag and its symbol. In these troubling times, we must keep the true essence of our liberation alive in our hearts.”

Mohammad Eunus has been depicting abstract, semi-abstract and pure-abstract works for over four decades. The painter has many national and international awards to his credit, including the Grand Award in Japan and an honourable mention award in Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh.

The pandemic has allowed Mohammad Eunus to spend more time at home with his



(From left) Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Farida Zaman, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Rokeya Sultana and Mohammad Eunus.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BISHWORANG

art. “I’ve been painting, and participating in online exhibitions throughout the year,” he adds.

Ekushey Padak-winning artist Farida Zaman’s series, “Sufia”, captures the intrinsic characteristics of rural women. She is an honorary professor at the Department of Drawing and Painting, FFA, DU.

Rokeya Sultana’s series, “Madonna”, represents the everyday woman. For her outstanding contributions to different forms of art, she has received many awards and accolades worldwide. She is a professor at the Department of Printmaking, FFA, DU.

Kanak Chanpa Chakma has won national and international awards, and is renowned for her paintings depicting the lives of Bangladeshi ethnic minorities, focusing on the lives of women.

These three artists have encouraged generations of women through their explorations of womanhood on their canvases.

“*Bijoy Dibosh* is a joyous occasion, and each year, our country celebrates the vibrant spirit of the day through grand events,” expresses Kanak Chanpa Chakma. “But this

year, we will have to celebrate on a limited scale, as the dangers of the coronavirus continues to worry us all.”

Jamal Uddin Ahmed is a professor at the Department of Drawing and Painting, FFA, DU. He is known for his artwork series on pigeons, horses, boats, gypsies, flood victims, fishermen, marine life and the mystic troubadours of Bangladesh. He received the Ekushey Padak in 2019, for his contribution to fine arts.

“We will spend this year’s *Bijoy Dibosh* at home and the festivities will continue online,” says Jamal Uddin Ahmed. He further adds that modelling for the special collection of Bishworang was an amazing experience.

Keeping the essence of *Bijoy Dibosh* in mind, Biplob Saha reflects on the importance of culture and heritage in inspiring future generations. “As a fashion house, it is our responsibility to represent our flag and our country through our designs,” he shares. “We aim to inspire the next generations to appreciate the spirit of our Liberation War and independence.”

“To jump higher, you have to pause for a bit” – Shuvo

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Khan Moidul Islam Shuvo, also known as Drockstar Shuvo by many fans, has been consistently delivering hit songs for the last two decades. The renowned vocalist, who is known for songs like “Nitol Paye”, is still hustling on amidst the pandemic. We talk to the frontman for Fuad and Friends and Shuvo Jatra about his current projects, future plans and more.

How have you coped up with the pandemic?

Even though it hasn’t been easy, I have tried my best to stay busy during the ongoing Covid-19 phase. I have released acoustic arrangements of 3 new songs and 2 old songs from my YouTube channel, for which I have played all the instruments myself. I like to think of these 5 songs as a digital ‘album’.

However, I did not have access to my best gears during the recording – it was done without my midi keyboard and a basic Indian Givson guitar. Even though I thought that my midi keyboard broke, I had actually forgotten to plug it in correctly during the recording sessions!

Is it difficult for you to manage a full-time job and music simultaneously?

Not at all, to be honest. I love working at Asiatic. Even after a tiring workday, when I hit the first note in a practice session, all the fatigue vanishes from my body! You can say that I love what I do and do what I love!

You are well-known for the consistency of your voice. Do you have any special secrets

to spare with upcoming vocalists?

The key is to constantly keep singing. You’ll notice that if you don’t sing for a month, your voice will take a significantly long time to reach its optimal state. Warm ups are also very important, as hitting high notes without warming up your voice can hinder or permanently damage it. There are many warm up lessons on YouTube that anyone can access, I would strongly recommend following one of your choosing.

The music industry has to adapt to the lack of shows. How do you see the industry going forward?

I will say that even though I miss doing shows, alternative methods of interaction and earning are coming up – which is essential for the survival of the industry.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

There are apps in development, including one from my own workplace, that will ease the process of streaming online shows. All in all, I am hopeful for the future.

What is your ultimate destination as a musician?

I just want to keep on singing; there is not ultimate “goal” for me. I don’t want to compete with others, I just do what is best for me. There will be times that I will be super-active in the industry and others when I’m barely visible – and that’s okay. To jump higher, you have to pause for a bit – this is something that I believe.