

GRAPE VINE

## Shuvoo's current endeavours

Arifin Shuvoo's first web series, titled *Contract*, is expected to be released on March 18, 2021. The teaser for the series has received significant praise, alongside the cast which includes Arifin Shuvoo, Chanchal Chowdhury, Shyamal Mawla and Rafiath Rashid Mithila, among others. The script for the first season of the six-episode series has been written by Mohamad Nazim Uddin, and was created by Tanim Noor and Krishnendu Chattopadhyay, under ZEE5. Arifin Shuvo is currently in Mumbai shooting for the biopic *Bangabandhu*, where he is playing the role of Bangabandhu. The film is being directed by renowned Indian director Shyam Benegal.



Shreya Shomoyeeta

## BIJORI RETURNS



After taking a long break, actor Bijori Barkatullah has returned and is working on two shows. One is *Baba Thake Bashay* for *Duronto TV* which is targeted towards children. The other show is for *BTV* called *Ekhane Keu Thake Na*, directed by Animesh Aich. She will also be performing a stage show on March 22 at the Shilpakala Academy. When asked about her work, Bijori said, "I have not been working as much as before, and after a long time, I am returning with two dramas. I am working on them because I loved the unique stories and the characters."

Shreya Shomoyeeta



To preserve Ayub Bachchu's songs and his used guitars, initiatives are currently being taken to create a 3D museum in his honour. Earlier, the artist's website was created under the state's initiative. Following that, this digital museum will be created with songs and memorabilia of Ayub Bachchu. A meeting regarding this was held recently at the copyright office which was attended by Registrar Zafar Raja Chowdhury, Ayub Bachchu's wife Ferdous Akhter Chandana, Abdullah Masood, lyricist Kabir Bakul, Bappi Khan, Angel Shafiq, Tanvir Tareq and Sajjad Hossain. Alongside them, Niaz Ahmed Anshu and Shahid Mahmud Jangi were also present virtually.

Shreya Shomoyeeta

COVER STORY

# ON MOMENTS AND MEMORIES

Versatile actors Sarah Zaker and Iresh Zaker have achieved a lot throughout each of their respective careers. In this special interview, the mother-son duo shares their feelings about the late respected screen legend Aly Zaker and what each of them thinks of the other's career.

**Rafi Hossain:** Today, we have two very special guests, Sarah Zaker and Iresh Zaker. Since the passing of Aly Zaker last year, it has been a very sad time for the industry. I must ask you Iresh, how are you handling it, and how are you coping with the fact that Aly Zaker is no more?

**Iresh Zaker:** My father's death affected us all, and no matter how well we do cope, there are times when it's difficult to deal with things without him by our sides. I'm somewhat of a private person, so I rarely post things about how much I miss him on social media. I think that different people grieve in different ways. My father would always be there for us even if we never told him, and without him here, there are days when I feel lost and alone. But, I must add that even though he is not here, my mother is here and she is always looking out for her children, and I am really grateful for that.

**Rafi:** Iresh, now that you are a father, do you understand your father better?

**Iresh:** Definitely. After becoming a father myself, I started to see both my mother and father in a different light. But, when we lost my father, I started seeing him in another way. We knew for the last year of his life that he did not have too long left. He suffered from terminal cancer, and we knew he was not coming back from it. In that time, I started to see him in a way that really shaped the relationship that I have with my child. And when the COVID-19 pandemic started, I spent a lot of time together with my daughter and my father. We formed a very special bond during that time.

**Rafi:** Sarah bhabi, you got to see such an enigmatic personality from up close. You were there with him through all the successes and hardships. Now that he is gone, have you found yourself rediscovering him as a person, and how has it been for you without him?

**Sarah Zaker:** After my husband passed away, I subconsciously kept on doing some things which



I used to do when he was with us. He was always very fond of pens, and would always keep a lot of pens with him. He used ink pens which would dry if not cleaned and refilled. So, when he passed away, I continued to have someone clean and refill those pens like we did when he was alive. I think that if I keep things the way we did when he was alive, then in a way it is like he is still with us. I also made sure that we kept his pill box filled and kept beside the bed even after he was gone.

**Iresh:** Then my daughter actually ate some pills from that box.

**Sarah:** That was a very horrible experience for me. One day, when I was checking the pill box, I saw that it was opened and a pill was missing. I called the person who I had told to organise the box, and he said that he had filled everything. So, when I realised that my granddaughter, Meha, had actually taken the pill, I broke down. My daughter-in-law, Meem, had entrusted me and left Meha with me, and I let her take a medicine from that box. I was so worried to tell her what had happened. It was very hard on me.

**Rafi:** Aly Zaker was a person I always considered to be larger than life. With that being said, did he have anything that he wanted to do, but unfortunately passed away before he could?

**Iresh:** When you say larger than life, we always talk about the roles he did in stage plays like Galileo.



But, he never got to play those kinds of roles in cinema. Even before he got cancer, he would always say that he wished he got to do something like what Marlon Brando did in *Godfather*: play a larger-than-life character in a movie.

**Sarah:** He really wanted to do *King Lear*, but never got around to doing it. He had this attitude where he always wanted to do more. He never wanted to have a role that was like his swansong. I once accidentally told him that Galileo was his swansong, and he immediately said that he would do more and that it was definitely not his swansong. I think that's why when he neared his end, he was very depressed. He wouldn't tell his children about it,



but I could understand it.

**Rafi:** Iresh, you joined acting relatively late in your life. Were you not that interested in it when you were younger?

**Iresh:** I was interested, but when I was in school and later in university, I was involved in a lot of extracurricular activities alongside my studies. I used to see how hard my parents had to work to sustain a career in acting, so it did not seem very possible to me at the time. At 18, I went abroad for my studies and even had a job.

**Sarah:** I helped him out when he started. I must give credit to Ratan Paul for this, as he helped out a lot. Iresh started off by working in television, and to compare his journey to mine would be very different. He enjoyed working on television series, but when I thought of doing a series, I realised that I had to spend a lot of time working on the same series. So, I chose not to do that. I thought that since I am already established on stage plays, I'm happy to stay with that. My sister thinks that since Iresh loved acting so much, he decided to pursue acting in a way where he could establish himself as an actor without people thinking that he made it so far because we are his parents. He pursued acting even when we told him that it might not be a wise career move for him.

**Rafi:** You both might disagree with me on this, but I think that Sarah bhabi did not do as many roles

as she should have throughout her career. Do you sometimes wish that you performed more?

**Iresh:** Far from disagreeing with you, I completely agree with you on this, Rafi bhai. I think that throughout her career, my mother has been a very underutilised actor. Even now, when she wants to do something, she will probably decide against it because she doesn't want to find the time for it. Another reason I think that she did not have many roles is that the personality my mother has intimates most male directors in Bangladesh. So, when these directors are intimidated, they feel hesitant to cast her. But, I think that my mother has many great roles ahead of her. We will have to write roles for powerful women in visual media, and I think that she will be perfect for a role like that. I did not do too many roles where I acted alongside her, but in the ones I did, I saw that the directors were too intimidated to direct her. So, I think that if a good director works with her, then she can do some amazing work onscreen.

**Sarah:** I have been approached to do a few roles, and even though I am not quite ready to do them now, I think that in the near future, I will definitely be interested in doing more good roles. So, if anyone writes a role with me in mind, then I will definitely be interested in doing it.

**Rafi:** Iresh, both your parents have always been heavily involved with theatre. So, would you consider doing theatre regularly in the future?

**Iresh:** I did do a theatre performance back in 2019. When I did *The Inspector Calls*, I think the weight of my parental heritage weighed me down in a way. And since that made me nervous, I think that my acting in that play was not good enough. But, I still have a desire to give good performances in theatre. There was a point where theatre really intimidated me because of what both my parents have achieved there. However, I must add that performing onstage is a very rewarding feeling.

**Sarah:** The thing is, Iresh is a very good actor when it comes to television. For the close-up mediums, he is a fantastic actor, but for a stage performance, he is not theatrical enough.

**Iresh:** I agree. My father learnt to be very theatrical onstage, but when playing a much calmer role, he would also execute it perfectly. His acting was very versatile. Intelligent actors can adapt to the role they are playing, and my father always did.

**Rafi:** Do you have any final message for the readers?

**Iresh:** I will ask the readers to pray for us, so that both my mother and I can do better roles and give something back to all of you.

**Sarah:** I want everyone to love our country, and to work for the country. I think that no matter which generation you are in, loving your country should be a constant factor. If we love our country enough, we can help our country move ahead.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and TV series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



## BLOODLANDS

*Bloodlands* is a crime-drama TV series, originally aired on *BBC One* on February 21, 2021. The show was created and written by Chris Brandon, directed by Pete Travis, produced by Christopher Hall under the banner of *HTM Television*, and stars James Nesbitt, Lorcan Cranitch and Lisa Dwan, among others. The storyline follows a Northern Irish police officer as he connects a suicide note with a twenty-year-old cold case.

## Come True

*Come True* is a sci-fi horror film, following a teenager as she partakes in a sleep study that turns awry when she realises the true power of her dreams as she reaches the nightmarish depths of her mind. The film was directed and written by Anthony Scott Burns, produced by Steven Hoban, Mark Smith and Brent Kawchuk under the banners of *Copperheart Entertainment* and *Angel Entertainment*, and stars Landon Liboiron, Skylar Radzion and Julia Sarah, among others. It was initially released on August 30, 2020 and internationally released on March 12, 2021.



## PARADISE PD

*Paradise PD* is an animated sitcom show, created by Waco O'Guin and Roger Black, produced by Rocky Russo, Jeremy Sosenko, Amy Pocha and Seth Cohen under the banners of *Damn! Show Productions*, *Bento Box Entertainment* and *Odenkirk Provisiero Entertainment*, distributed by *Netflix Streaming Services*, and stars the voices of Dana Snyder, Cedric Yarbrough and David Herman, among others. The plotline follows underperforming and incompetent police officers of the police department in a small town where crime is rampant. It was originally released on August 31, 2018 on *Netflix*.

Amina Hossain