



Chanchal Chowdhury



Mosharraf Karim



Afran Nisho

Sumaiya Shimu makes a comeback

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Sumaiya Shimu, a well-known television actor and model, has been involved in acting for more than two decades. She has captivated the mass audience with her charming acting prowess. After a break of almost three years, the television star recently made a comeback in the acting world. On a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the actor shares her recent plans.

Was there any particular reason you took a break for more than three years?

There was no specific reason behind this break. The ongoing pandemic took away a lot of time and even before the pandemic, I was not getting any good offers and decided not to take up just about anything. Several people even thought I was abroad and because of that miscommunication, a significant gap was created.

How are you feeling about coming back?

I am ecstatic to be back. Even after spending years not working, I felt the same while standing in front of the camera. The feeling, the people, and the experience remain the same. To be back in a familiar setting, among familiar faces, is an indescribable feeling.

How much did you miss acting?

I missed acting, being in front of the camera a lot. Though I was away from work, my mind was wandering among the familiar crowd. Whenever I saw a co-artist's work on television, I was reminded of my own journey. This was a place of love for me for so many years, it's hard not to miss the rush and the thrill of acting. Being in front of the camera is the best place for me to be.

Will you continue working regularly?

I definitely want to work regularly, but I would need everyone's help with that as well. There are several new directors and faces in the industry now, I'm not acquainted with all of them. I want to get to know them and work with them.

Though I want to be a regular, I won't be working on too many projects as before. I plan to work on selective projects from now on.

How are you currently spending time at home?

I am spending a wonderful time at home. I keep myself busy with books and watching TV. I spend a significant amount of time gardening, it is my favorite hobby. I have several verandah spaces in my home and I buy a lot of plants. Most of my time at home goes to taking care of the plants.

I also have a deep passion for traveling in my free time. Be it in the country or abroad, I love traveling a lot. I visited Singapore just a few days before the pandemic hit. I visit several places inside the country whenever I get a chance, but now, due to the pandemic, I'm not going anywhere.

What are your aspirations regarding acting?

I always want to involve myself in good, thoughtful productions. That aspiration remains the same. I want to work on projects that will make people remember me for a lifetime.



PHOTOS: STAR

A toned down Eid season for television?

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

As Eid-ul-Azha is just around the corner, TV buffs and families are planning to spend the Eid holidays all curled up in front of the television. However, a strict lockdown at the time of the industry's peak working hours for Eid productions has led to impediments for cast and crew members, resulting in a rather low-key Eid season.

Many popular actors decided not to act in Eid specials this year, after seeing the recent increase in Covid-19 cases and deaths.

Mosharraf Karim is known to be a part of 25 to 30 television projects during Eid. However, he will be featured in fewer projects than usual on this year's Eid-ul-Azha, owing to the pandemic.

Zahid Hasan has starred in and directed many Eid television projects in his career. Under these unprecedented circumstances, he will be seen in just around eight Eid special shows.

Chanchal Chowdhury has captivated viewers for years with his brilliance and versatility on the theatre stage, television, and silver screen. "This is an unusual Eid for us. We will not be releasing as many Eid shows as we generally do, since we are battling a health crisis," says the actor. "Nonetheless, I am happy with the work that I was able to do." Chowdhury will star in an eight-episode Eid special series titled, *Mogol Family*. He is also set to appear in OTT platform Chorki's anthology series,



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

Unoloukik, among other projects.

Apurba, one of the most prolific artistes of the country, is known to star in ten to twelve tele-fictions during Eid. Fans of the actor will be glad to know that he has many Eid releases lined up this time too. "Eid is a time of celebration, and we wish to celebrate through good work on television. We have put sincere efforts into presenting brilliant stories for our audiences," he says.

The ever hardworking Afran Nisho will star in Mizanur Rahman Aryan's *Hello Shunchhen?*, alongside Tanjin Tisha. Aryan also wrote the screenplay for the project, with a story by young writer Rashat Rahman Zico. *Hello Shunchhen* will be released on CMV's YouTube channel on Eid-ul-Azha. Nisho is also gearing up for the release of Shihab Shaheen's series, *Morichika*, on Chorki.

Mehzabien is known to be one of the busiest artistes, especially during the Eid season. She is set to star in the Eid special tele-fiction, *Mr and Mrs Chapabaaaz Unlimited*, among other projects. Popular actor Shajal, on the other hand, has only worked on five to six Eid specials this time.

"I am usually very busy around the time of Eid. But this time, things have been different, to say the least. Since the start of the lockdown, I have not gone out to shoot at all," shares noted actor Fazlur Rahman Babu. "Prabir Roy's *Baba Tomake Bhalobashi* was the last project I worked on, before the lockdown was enforced."

Although Covid-19 and its restrictions have been taking a heavy toll on television shows, one hopes that the forthcoming Eid will not be entirely dull for viewers.

Translated by Shababa Iqbal



Mehazabien Chowdhury

PHOTOS: STAR

NASIR UDDIN KHAN

on his standout performance in 'Mohanagar'

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Born to Monu Meah Shordar and Ambia Khatun, Nasir Uddin Khan's interest in acting had started from his school days, initially at St Mary's School and later at Ispahani Public School and College. He started his journey with theatre and slowly made his way first into television followed by films and finally managed to earn positive criticisms for his role in web series "Taqdeer".

His recent release "Mohanagar", directed by Ashfaq Nipun, was deeply appreciated by the critics and audience alike. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, Nasir Uddin Khan shares his journey, his experience from being a part of "Mohanagar" and more.

You had started your journey with theatre in your hometown Chattogram. Can you tell us a bit about how you stepped into the world of acting? My passion with acting had grown from my very first school play back when I was in the third grade. I still remember how my father's eyes sparkled with joy when he saw me on the stage. He had even taken me to a studio to take a special photo on our way back home. Following this passion, I decided to join the popular local theatre troupe Tirkok Natyagoshthi in 1995. I have spent 20 long years in theatre and it helped me shape up my skills. Being a chartered accountant by profession, I only used to



A snippet from 'Mohanagar'.

practice acting as a hobby but in 2015, I chose to turn all in and pursue my dream of becoming an actor.

You seem to have experienced a lot of struggles in reaching where you are today. How were your initial days in Dhaka?

After coming into this city in 2016, I had to just sit back and wait for any sort of work for over five to six months. I managed to bag small roles in a few single-episode tele-fictions, among which "Gushti Gushti Kilakili", a television drama in the local dialect of Chattogram, and "Bideshi Bou" managed to help me grab the attention of directors. Towards the end of 2016, I managed to land a small role in Tauquir Ahmed's "Haldaa" and was cast as the lead in Syeda Nihar Banu's "Nona Pani". I was directed back towards the television with an episode named "Phul Phutano Khela" directed by Krishnendu Chatopadhyay from the anthological original series

Aynabaji (2017). With time, I managed to land the lead role in Shukama Shahed Dhemman's tele-fiction "Mahut". This is how my career has been over the years – the graph often reaching the bottom of the paper and again reviving, reaching towards the centre and then the top, despite several resisting drawbacks, disappointments and failures.

You have managed to earn praises for your character 'Bashar' in "Mohanagar" both from the audience and the critics. How did you come across this role?

Director Ashfaq Nipun had seen my work before and he had reached out to me with the character of Bashar – a carefree and bold character who is the least concerned with the bureaucratic hierarchy in politics or the society. The depth of Bashar's character, his careless attitude, the jolliness and the range of this small yet powerful role is what inspired me to

embrace this role with open arms.

How was your experience of working with the star-studded cast and crew of "Mohanagar"?

Both Ashfaq Nipun and I shared the same high school, and I had met him before during our school reunion but this was the first time I had the privilege to work with him. Ashfaq used to give us the script only 30-40 minutes prior to the shooting but the way he used to express the character we ought to project on camera was phenomenal.

To be more specific, the shooting for my character could have ended within just a couple of full day shoots, however, he welcomed me to stay on the set and enjoy the place for 15 days. It seemed like I was in a complete picnic mode. Later I realised he was trying to bring in the carefree attitude within my being so that the character looks real to the viewers. By his grace, I had become a method actor

even without the slightest awareness of the process. Also, I am older than him but after almost every shot, he used to appreciate my performance by touching my cheeks just as a father caresses his child to show affection and appreciation. Working with him has been a very enjoyable and unique experience indeed.

What else are you currently looking forward to?

I have already worked in 10 films, including Taneem Rahman Angshu's "No Dorai", A Amitabh Reza Chowdhury's "Rickshaw Girl", Mezbaur Rahman Shumon's "Hawaa", Nurul Alam Atique's "Manusher Bagaan" and Raihan Rafi's "Damal". Currently, I am looking forward to a few short films and web projects. Taqdeer marked my OTT debut and then "Mohanagar" came along my way. Both the releases, especially "Mohanagar", have managed to turn my career around. I look forward to more such endeavors which I enjoy playing as much as the audience enjoys on screen.

