



Sohana Saba in 'Boli'.

‘Aarya came at the right time’

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

From becoming the first Indian woman to win the title of Miss Universe at the age of 18 to raising two daughters single-handedly and entertaining viewers with her versatile acting performances, Sushmita Sen has surely come a long way in her life.

The last two years must be really special for Sushmita, as she made a solid comeback in acting with the web show “Aarya”, which was nominated for the prestigious International Emmy Awards in the Best Drama Series category.

According to Sushmita, Ram Madhvani’s directorial changed her life for the better. She feels that prior to “Aarya”, she faced a challenging five-year period, and the project came as a reward at the end of it. “[Aarya] came at the right time, not just on a professional level,” she told Indian media.

She also said that showcasing the relationship of a mother and of a woman who can hold the family together, even if the family belongs to the underworld and Drug Mafia, has been a worthy experience.

“I think Aarya changed my life on many levels. It was an exciting and lovely series as an actor to be a part of. I think it was an all-round experience which has changed my life for the better, for sure,” she added.

The teaser for the second season of “Aarya” was released recently.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

It took me 2 months to transform into ‘Anarkali’: Sohana Saba

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Prominent actress Sohana Saba has been creating waves across social media with her new bold and strong avatar in Hoichoi’s web-series, “Boli”.

The actress’ signature kohl line eyes paired with colourful lips, low-cut blouses and blunt speeches made her the ideal star to portray the ‘Anarkali’ of Chheradia Dwip.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, Sohana Saba opens up about her challenging role in “Boli”, her chemistry with Chanchal Chowdhury, and more.

How did you prepare for your role in “Boli”?

Prior to shooting, all of the actors had to take 2 months of preparation to enact the look and traits of their characters.

All of the characters had different looks and the costumes were beautifully designed by Bijoya. Good Company’s Sania, Robi and Director Shankha, along with my inputs, helped to shape up Anarkali on the screen.

What was it like portraying Anarkali in the web-series?

I play the role of a *Maasi* or the leader of a brothel. Anarkali has endured struggles and hardships like the young girls in her chambers but she is bold enough to be vocal against the sexism persistent in the island.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOHANA SABA

In order to portray ‘Anarkali’, I had to go through the same emotional drive as her. My delivery pattern and body language were different, so I had to work hard to portray the role with precision.

How would you describe your chemistry with Chanchal

Chowdhury in the series?

The audiences will be able to judge our chemistry better on the screen. In 2006, we worked together in tele-fiction “Cindrella”. From that day till now, all the works that we have done has been interesting including our chemistry in “Boli”.

What was your most challenging sequence in Boli?

There is a special sequence in “Boli” which is my last scene in the series. I don’t want to reveal anything about that sequence as I want it to remain as a surprise for the audiences.

We shot for the sequence in the beginning and it was the first ever shot for “Boli”. Everybody around me were worried whether I would be able to do this scene.

It was the most challenging part but I was determined to go through with the sequence. The shot was not shown in the trailer, but I am sure that when the audiences will see it they will surely appreciate it.

What are your upcoming Indian projects?

I am currently awaiting the release of my movie “Epar Opar”, alongside Indian actor Sourav Chattopadhyay. I have also signed about 2-3 films Indian films

There are news that the actress is going to soon work with Prosenjit Chatterjee in an Indo-Bangladeshi joint venture. The actress is also reportedly been signed in for the main cast of Aruna Biswas’s directorial project ‘Oshombhob’



SERIES REVIEW

A story about the painful reality of South Korea’s military men

ZAREEN NAWAR

“D.P.”, the South Korean, webtoon-based series released on Netflix, is a fresh take on the kind of absurd realism which is revered in the Oscar-winning movie, “Parasite”. With that being said, the similarity between the two ends there. “D.P.” is arguably one of the most critically acclaimed K-dramas this year, and for very good reasons.

It stars notable South Korean actors like Koo Kyo-hwa, Jung Hae-In, and Cho Hyun Chul. The show is primarily about two characters being appointed spots in the military under the ‘D.P. unit’, also known as Deserter Pursuit Unit, when it comes time for them to complete their duration of Conscription, or compulsory military service. Cho Hyun Chul plays the part of deserter Cho Suk-Bong.

Over the years, the questionable situations or stories associated with Conscription have had to lessen due to increasing revolt towards the atrocious acts of bullying. Jun-hee Han, the director and writer of the series, claims that several plot points of the series were inspired by real-life events while a recurrent South Korean Army Lieutenant General claimed that the incidents are a thing of the past.

According to two South Korean YouTubers from DKDKTV, who are done with their military services, only the first episode felt relatable while the remaining five episodes seemed exaggerated.

The series covers grueling stories of men deserting their post due to being bullied by their seniors. The newcomers in the military are seen enduring harrowing acts simply because their seniors feel like

entertaining themselves. The acts include variations of sexual assault, humiliation, and futile beating.

The juniors are thus left to feel despondent. The D.P. officers, however, are exempt from staying within the base since they have to travel through the country because of their methods of locating and then arresting deserters, who feel miserably desperate enough to flee. Deserter Cho Suk-Bong is gnawed at by his seniors to the point of intolerance.

Suk Bong becomes unhinged mentally and in his thirst for revenge he also transforms into a murderer. He eventually becomes the flagbearer of bullying gone wrong.

“D.P.” explores masculinity from several angles, and the arrangement of the show keeps audiences engaged, given that they can handle gore. The few stories that make up the season are full-fledged and poignant. The settings are meticulously picked in view of the military base, while the rest of the ‘real world’ authentically displays the livelihood of the working class in South Korea.

The genre of the dark absurd realism is also surprisingly and adequately sprinkled with quirky and witty comedy. Kyo-hwa emanates necessary comedic skills as the humorous officer and Hae-In is superb as the brooding yet thoughtful officer everyone feels at ease with.

All in all, “D.P.” is a must watch for fans of K-dramas, as it successfully sets itself apart from most shows.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: nawarzareen@gmail.com.

From ‘Mrittika Maya’ to ‘Nonajoler Kabbo’

Titas Zia talks about his journey

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

National Film Award-winning actor Titas Zia got his start in school plays. Growing up with his dream, he enrolled as a B A student in Theatre at the Department of Theatre and Music of University of Dhaka.

The stage became his muse, as he fed on the tragic epiphany of fate with Israfil Shaheen’s adaptation of “Macbeth”, displayed the beauty of simplicity in the Syed Jamil Ahmed directorial “Rizwan”, and portrayed the facets of envy in “Irsha”, a play directed by Rajib Chandra Das.

His silver screen debut with the role of Boishakh in Gazi Rakayet’s “Mrittika Maya” (The Earthen Love) earned him his first National Film Award as Best Actor in a Leading Role in 2013. His second film, “Nonajoler Kabbo” (The Salt in Our Waters), where he plays Rudro, was released recently.

The Daily Star had a phone conversation with the actor while he was taking a stroll on a snowy evening in Moscow to talk about his journey, and more.

“Rudra and I are very different from each other”, mentions Titas,



PHOTO: COURTESY

who is currently pursuing his PhD in Bangladesh Contemporary Theatre at Russian Institute of Theatre Arts – GITIS in Russian Federation. “Our artistic journey might seem parallel but our characters are very much in contrast, which empowered me to take up the role when the director, Rezwan Shahriar Sumit, approached me for ‘Nonajoler Kabbo’.”

The film depicts the struggles of fishermen due to climate change, the inner conflicts of a young sculptor, and the platonic bond between the

characters, Tuni and Rudro. “We wanted to show that a man and a woman can share a relationship that is not romantic,” shares Titas.

Exploring the academic side of acting while struggling to find his way up in the industry, Titas feels acting is not about behaving as a character, but rather, it is about building up the resilience to get into the character’s psyche.

“Being able to feel a character’s psychological state, journey, and becoming is key to my acting method for any role,” adds Titas. “I believe our work defines us, and I always react physically when playing a role.”

“Nonajoler Kabbo” premiered in the 64th BFI London Film Festival and in the 25th Busan International Film Festival. Furthermore, the movie has been selected for the ‘Official Selection Category’ in the 31st Singapore International Film Festival, 38th Torino International Film Festival, and the Kolkata International Film Festival 2021.

“I believe ‘Nonajoler Kabbo’ is an artwork. I hope the audience appreciates this creation when they visit theatres,” concludes Titas.



Titas Zia in ‘Nona Joler Kabbo’.