



Shohel Mondol in 'Boli'.

I gained 6 kilos to portray Rustom: SHOHEL MONDOL

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Shohel Mondol is an actor who passionately showcases his talent on the stage and screen. In Hoichoi's "Boli", directed by Shankha Dasgupta, he plays the protagonist, Rustom. In a heart-to-heart conversation, Shohel spoke about his journey of becoming the character, his love for new challenges, and more.

For "Boli", Shohel had to come out of his comfort zone to look physically fit and convincing in the role of a boxing champion. The story of the web series, however, takes sharp twists and turns in a spaghetti western fashion in Cheradia Dwip, a lawless land where power prevails. Spaghetti western is a broad subgenre of Western films produced in Europe, which emerged in the mid-1960s.

"I trained with fight director Edward F Gomes to develop the physique for Rustom. I gained six kilos in 12 days. Eating four to five times a day and following a diet rich in protein and fruits



were definitely not in my regular routine. Eating became a challenge," laughed Shohel. Furthermore, he went through six to seven hours of combat training and script rehearsals, before he focused on character development.

"I wanted to give this project my all. It has been an incredible learning process. I trained for boxing, fighting, and arms handling. All the actors involved were

given training, and we did our own stunts," he shared. "The locals swarmed in to watch the fight scenes. It might sound naïve, but it felt good because we grew up with the fantasy and curiosity of watching a shoot, and looking for the hero."

Rustom, Shohel's character, is raised by a single mother, played by Kazi Rokhsana Ruma. The respect Rustom has for women gives this rough and tough man his

humanity. Shohel shared that he had a great time working with his co-stars on "Boli", which was shot across Kuakata, Barisal, and Manikganj.

While Chanchal Chowdhury and Shohel played friends in Hoichoi's hit series, "Iaqdeer", in "Boli", they are playing rivals.

Talking about his childhood hero Clint Eastwood, Shohel said he never wanted to imitate anyone's style. "Boli has a spaghetti western flavour to it, but its world is unique. It would be wrong to say I was inspired by Clint Eastwood for this role, but perhaps I could call it a tribute to him."

Currently, Shohel is working on a handful of projects, including one with director Kaushik Sankar Das. He also recently garnered attention for a power drink commercial. Shohel hopes that his two films, Indranil Roychowdhury's "Mayar Jonjal" and Mejbaur Rahman Sumon's "Hawa" will be released early next year.

'I tried to seem more glamorous, a little dumb to work with big heroes'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Noted Indian actress Taapsee Pannu recently revealed that in her initial days in the industry, she was told to work with big names, look and behave a certain way in order to reach the top. Taapsee featured in several Telugu and few Tamil films before she made her way to Bollywood. The actress said she made sure not to repeat her mistakes once she started featuring in Hindi films.

She told Cosmopolitan India in an interview, "In the beginning, I was told that the only way to become a star was to work in big-ticket films, alongside big heroes, and that's what took you to the top. That pretty much meant you had to look ultra-glam, be the diva... look a certain way, and be a certain way. And as I told you, I clearly didn't fit in. So in the beginning, I tried really hard to change myself, and to seem more glamorous and a little dumb because, apparently, looking good equals not having a brain."

The actress made her Bollywood debut with 2013 film "Chashme Baddoor". She quickly realised that out-of-the-box films and being relatable worked better for her, than seeming aspirational. "I learnt this lesson while working on films in the South, so when I switched to Bollywood, I knew that I would not repeat my mistakes," she said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

FILM REVIEW

Abhishek Bachchan fails to match Saswata Chatterjee's brilliance



PHOTO: COLLECTED

ALBUM REVIEW

'30' is a beautiful tale of heartbreak and self-love

FABHA NOSHIN

Singer-songwriter Adele released her newest album "30" on November 19, six years after releasing her previous album, "25". The song has already reached no 1 spot on the Billboard Global Charts while Rolling Stone named it her best album yet.

The main narrative around "30" is Adele's divorce with Simon Konecki and the resulting impact on her and those around her. The lead single "Easy On Me" showcases unexpected story about love- what it means to be betrayed, to rebuild yourself, and to try to love again.

"Easy On Me" reminds me of why I fell in love with Adele and classic pop songs in the first place. It is the kind of record that is like a fine wine, the more you listen to it the better it gets.

Adele has said in an interview that "This album is an attempt to explain her divorce to her son Angelo and that is why this album is very personal to her, it is her way of coping with the situation". From the conversation between mother and son on "My Little Love" to an honest to God track on "All Night Parking", these changes do not drastically alter Adele's voice but accentuate the emotions beautifully across the whole album.

When I first heard "Cry Your Heart Out", which is a song about feelings of depression, confusion and, ones' mental well-being, it brought tears to my eyes as all the emotions from the yesteryears came back.

In school, I was bullied many times for the way I look. I spent my formative years alone and in an atmosphere of shame because of the stigma around my vitiligo.

I hope that people would really "Go Easy On" those who are dealing with traumas and struggling with their life. "Hold On" is another track of this album that I really love, it talks about finding the light at the end of the tunnel, and features self-accepting and joyous instrumentals throughout the entire song. The final song, "Love Is A Game" is a perfect conclusion to "30" as this song heavily focused on Adele's self-reflection and acceptance.

"30" is something that can either grow or shrink on you. While listening to the album, you would either want to hug or tell her to get over the divorce and move on with her life.

I enjoyed "Easy On Me" and "Oh My God" the most because, these songs showcases what I have been feeling for a while now, which I can barely put into words. This is clearly one of her best works as it gives my soul the chill it needs to carry on.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

One of the most striking characters in Indian filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh's 2012 film, "Kahaani", was the inconspicuous, deadly hitman, Bob Biswas.

Saswata Chatterjee played Bob as a mild-mannered man with a smiling face, who would pull out his gun and shoot his victim with cold blooded menace.

The sinister contract killer, with only eight to nine minutes of screen time in "Kaahani" created such an impact that a spin-off for him soon came to be, with Abhishek Bachchan taking on the role this time. The film was recently released on ZEE5.

"Bob Biswas" starts as the main character wakes up from an eight-year coma with amnesia, after miraculously surviving an accident. Amidst readjusting to his life with his wife and children, Bob also has to face the dilemma of being rehired by criminal bosses to carry out killings.

We get four subplots in the movie — an illicit drug enterprise centred on a pill named Blue, two corrupt cops, a



Abhishek Bachchan in and as 'Bob Biswas'

young woman preparing for a medical entrance exam, and of course Bob's journey— which we know will intersect at some point.

Sujoy Ghosh's daughter, Diya Annapurna Ghosh, does a credible job as a debutante director for the film.

However, the spin-off fails to replicate the chilling effect that the original assassin had on the audience.

Sujoy, who has written the film, carves an intriguing premise, but the storytelling and unfolding of the narrative are underwhelming. A

fascinating character like Bob deserved a meatier and more thrill-packed plotline, which "Kahaani" had in abundance to its credit.

In terms of acting, Abhishek Bachchan plays a more subdued version of what the character was in "Kahaani". Although he builds Bob from scratch, his acting misses the viciousness which was brilliantly showcased by Saswata Chatterjee.

Chitrangada Singh as Bob Biswas's wife, Mary, mesmerises the audiences her simplicity and beauty. Parin Bandopadhyay as Kali Da and Pabitra Rabha as the Chinese joint cook Dhonu steal every scene they are in.

There are certain instances where you are left questioning as to why certain plot points were shown. Matters like why Bob Biswas went into a coma for eight years, why Mary's first husband was killed, how she ended up getting married to Bob Biswas, or the entire 'Blue' drugs angle, do not get logical endings.

All in all, "Bob Biswas" is engaging with some great performances. However, it is not as mysterious and as thrilling as "Kahaani" was.



Renowned rockstars share the stage Bangladesh Band Music Fans' Community's (BMMFC) 7th anniversary. The event was held at the National Theatre Hall at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Dozens of renowned were present at the event, including the likes of Aurthohin, Artcell, Nemesis, Powersurge, Avoidrafa, Mechanix and Sonar Bangla Circus.

PHOTO: TASIN ZULKARNAIN