



Ilias Kanchan



Nipun



Misha Sawdagor



Zayed Khan

Two elections today, two different scenarios

Film Artiste Association and Actors' Equity to elect leaders today

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The premises of BFDC and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy are brimming with election festivities, as both Actors' Equity and Bangladesh Film Artiste Association are gearing up for their respective elections.

The Bangladesh Film Artiste Association, as always, is mired with controversy and mud-slinging, as the participants are in a constant tussle for supremacy. This election has 428 voters, and much talk has been about the 184 artists who were excluded from voting.

Banners and posters of both panels -- Ilias Kanchan-Nipun and Misha-Zayed, are posted all over the walls of BFDC.

Misha Sawdagor and Zayed Khan, working as president and general secretary respectively, had held an iron grip over the association for the last four years, which Ilias Kanchan and Nipun's team are eager to change.

Dhallywood celebrities enjoying pleasantries with the party members, asking for vote and blessings from the artists and crewmembers of the film fraternity.

The surge of overwhelming crowds, eager to catch a glimpse of their favourite artiste, have been crowding the premises on a regular basis, causing serious jeopardy to Covid protocols. Actress Anjana, a candidate of the elections, to get annoyed and drive back from the premises.

Another controversy rose with the popularity of an electoral song titled "Note Diye Vote Kinar Din Shesh" created by the Ilias Kanchan-Nipun panel, pushed all the wrong buttons of their opponents.

An anonymous artiste also claimed that both the parties are throwing a lot of money to win the election.

Both the panels have also pledged a number of promises to win the election. Misha-Zayed pledged accommodations for landless artistes, while Ilias Kanchan-Nipun promised the welfare of the artistes at all costs.

A lot of energy and vitality, which will bring positive changes in the organisation.

Many television artistes are visiting various shooting houses in Uttara and media offices in Moghbazar, to ask for votes.

Two-time general secretary, Ahsan Habib Nasim, will



Moushumi Hamid

Ahsan Habib Nasim

Rawnak Hasan

A different scenario can be seen in the Actors' Equity election campaign.

This is the first time that no senior artistes will be participating nor will there be any panels in the election. 48 candidates will take part, and among them, 21 will be elected. The candidates have been strictly asked to not do election campaign through posters. However, they can ask for votes through social media.

Noted thespian, director and playwright, Mamunur Rashid, is quite positive about the newcomers. He believes that the youth have

be running Hossain Nipu.

Rawnak Hasan and Kabir Tutul are contesting for the post of general secretary. Apart from them, popular artistes including Tania Ahmed, Anisur Rahman Milon, Mousumi Hamid, Sazu Khadem, Shamima Tusty, Urmila Srabanti Kar, Pran Roy, and Azad Abul Kalam will be taking part in the election.

Regardless of whoever wins, the artistes pledged to work side-by-side with their competitors for the betterment of a languishing industry.

Kaushik Sankar Das to make OTT debut with '9 April'

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Kaushik Sankar Das' debut web series "9 April", starring Shohel Rana, Zakia Bari Mamo, Tama Mirza, and Tropa Mazumdar, is set to release on Binge soon. The Binge original production is co-produced by Red Pad Studios.



Written by Hasnat Matin, the 6-episode murder mystery revolves around themes of human psyche and crime.

"Rather than making it a murder hunt, we decided to look beyond the crime itself," shares Kaushik. "Through this production, I look to present it outside the stereotypical structure of a crime thriller, blending the psyche of each character associated with the murder."

"9 April" is set to release by the end of this month on the Binge app.

Madhuri Dixit's 'The Fame Game' out on Feb 25

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Madhuri Dixit is set to play Bollywood star Anamika Anand in her debut web series, "The Fame Game", produced by Dharmatic Entertainment.



The show will focus on the truth about Anamika's life, behind the curtain of fame and stardom. It brings together Sri Rao as the showrunner and writer and Bejoy Nambiar and Karishma Kohli as directors.

The family drama also stars Sanjay Kapoor, Manav Kaul, Lakshvir Saran, Suhāsini Muley, and Muskaan Jafari.

"The Fame Game" will be out on Netflix on February 25.

COUNTRYWIDE

Good price makes molasses farmers happy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Farmers in different upazilas of Jhenidah are earning a good profit as selling of molasses, produced from date juice, on peak this winter.

Sale of molasses starts in November and continues till the middle of March, both farmers said, adding that they earn some additional profit in every winter as it their peak season and the item has demand all the year round.

After meeting personal demand most of the farmers sell the rest molasses to the buyers at local markets and earn extra money.

Traders said molasses, produced in six upazilas of the district, are being sold to wholesalers at different markets in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet and many other districts across the country.

According to Jhenidah Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), there are around 4,32,000 date trees all the upazilas of the district.

The district produces around 1,000 tonnes of molasses every year, and each kilogram of the item costs Tk 200 to Tk 250.

The number of date trees is declining every year as timber traders and brick kiln owners are alluring the farmers to sell their date trees.

Abdur Rahman of Raghunathpur in Kaliganj upazila said he has 70 date trees. He sold molasses worth Tk 70,000 last year and expects to earn more this year.

Dr Md Ashrafuzzaman Jahid, associate professor of Department of Nutrition and Food Technology at Jashore University of Science and Technology, said molasses contains small amount of B vitamins and minerals like calcium, zinc and phosphorus.

Deputy Director (DD) at Jhenidah DAE Asgar Ali said although many farmers, lured by the timber traders, sold their date a few years back, they managed to convince them not to sell the trees.



Farmers selling earthen pots of date molasses in Jhenidah's Kaliganj Bazar. PHOTO: STAR

The 'Aziz Company'

SHYKH SERAJ

I have always said, "Before investing in agriculture, one must know where and why he is investing." Without foreseeing the success or challenges there is always a risk ahead. The time has changed and it's quite different now. Before taking any commercial agricultural initiative many aspects need to be thoroughly verified. The risk of loss is higher if you invest, without having a clear conception and consequences about the production cost, selling price and how the market would behave and respond.

Aziz, a farmer from Tangail's Ghatail upazila, is quite aware of this. You have already seen and read a lot about him from my agricultural TV show Hridoye Mati O Manush (Soil & People in Heart) and my newspaper articles. People of his locality, however, know him as Aziz Company. Through his diverse agricultural activities, he has become a 'company' himself. But, leaving all his achievements behind, he feels more comfortable introducing himself as a farmer. He loves it when someone calls

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak. At Channel i, he is the founder director. He is also director and host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



him, Chasha Aziz (Farmer Aziz). He understands the soil better than many farmers because he experienced and went through a lot. Back in 2006, he received the Channel i Krishi Padak (Channel i Agriculture Award). Chasha Aziz is now the most respected and regarded farmer in the country and everyone praises him for his innovative farming strategies. Aziz is one of the pioneer farmers to have started the venture long back. His lemon, malta, tang, passion fruit orchards are mind-blowing and still moves on, creating spaces for new crops. He has no fascination for wealth and neither cares about the glamour. His attraction is only



Chasha Aziz shows oranges in his orchard at Shaliabocho village in Tangail's Ghatail upazila. PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

towards the soil, farming and farmers. He still lives in the house he built 20 years back.

Aziz, who has a very keen observations about orange orchards, has come up with a new message for the entrepreneurs this time. According to him, nursery traders in the country are trying to sell different varieties of saplings now. He thinks it's important to know whether those are suitable for our soil or not as variety selection is important before any commercial cultivation. Aziz conducted his experiment in almost all the varieties of oranges and maltas available in different nurseries across the country. He said Mandarin and Darjeeling varieties of orange cannot be profitable if one tries to grow those commercially in our country. Leaves of these varieties dry up very quickly and there are different kinds of diseases as well. He said these varieties got burnt, but not because of the heat of the sun. I talked with Dr Mehedi Masood, project director of Year Round Fruit Production for Nutrition Improvement Project, and he said three insects, aphids, whiteflies and scale insects attack the orange and consequently we see a lot of honeydew

secretion. Since honeydew is sweet, it causes fungal infections. As a result, black spots appear on the orange. He said a 14-foot tree needs 53 litres of water daily while a medium-sized tree requires at least 25 litres of water.

During the Covid-19 pandemic last year, I saw Aziz, engaged in producing new high-value crops relying on technology. He has done plums, oranges and many other fruits amid the spread of the deadly disease. He, however, suffered a lot in papaya cultivation. He planted 2,500 papaya saplings and 5,000 chilli saplings, which he brought from Rangpur. Papaya came on in about 25 percent of the trees, but the rest did not survive. The condition of the chilli saplings was more worsen. Aziz said reliance on nursery should be reduced and the nurseries should also be held accountable for their services. As always, Aziz is giving more importance in organic farming. Aziz distributes his oranges, malta and many other fruits among the locals and he is famous for doing this. He also invites all the farmers in his region to have lunch with him on the first day of the year. Moreover, he gives them saplings of different fruits and vegetables as gift during their

departure.

Aziz has always regretted that the farmer has no school. He sees television, newspapers and social media as farmers' school. He is now working to bring hilly pineapple at his rooftop. Aziz believes there will be ups and downs in every sector, but a farmer has to move forward with crop diversity. This has been proved in Aziz's case and I am probably the best witness of his risky agricultural ventures with new crops. He is constantly experimenting new crops and technologies, before finally inventing something. But, whatever he does, he does for the people, soil and for the farmers.

Today, people from different professions, from students to homemakers, are investing in agriculture. Comparatively, educated young entrepreneurs are doing well as internet is their source of information. I have seen many examples of success, but the thing that Aziz showed is, planting the right variety is necessary as the soil must be suitable for a particular variety. All the crops might not grow on the same soil. If new entrepreneurs are deceived, it will affect the farming sector.