

We speak the same language, WE ARE ONE

Prosenjit Chatterjee

A heart-to-heart with ‘Bumba da’

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SHARMIN JOYA

There are few people who follow Bengali films, and do not love its omnipresent poster-boy, who is lovingly known as ‘Bumba Da’. In Prosenjit Chatterjee’s illustrious career of 24 years, he became one of the most revered faces in Bengali cinema, notwithstanding language or border.

The eminent actor was last seen in “Kakababur Prottyaborton”, which released in Bangladesh on February 4. Because of the SAFTA agreement, the film was released on the same day in India and Bangladesh.

The ever-energetic ‘Bumba Da’, who is excited by the prospect of film industries on both sides of the border collaborating, talks to The Daily Star about his career, views and more.

How do you feel about reprising the role of ‘Kakababu’, especially after the film released in both countries through your efforts?

I have always tried to create a bridge amongst us, and I am glad that we have successfully done this. Our generation have dealt with great obstacles; the next generation must come forward to strengthen the bond.

I believe that if we cooperate, we can create films like “Bahubali”, or any other wonderful productions from the Tamil and Telugu industries.

We heard that you approached Srijit Mukherjee to direct the series, while having solicited the rights from Sunil Gangopadhyay.

Usually, directors happen to choose the artistes.

However, in this case, the opposite happened. In fact, Srijit was not convinced to take up this project at all!

How much effort did you put in to actually look like the character?

I went through physical and psychological



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

transformations simultaneously, while preparing for the role. For six months, I walked with the help of a crutch, I even wore customised shoes with heels of two different sizes. To be honest, my body language completely changed after playing the role.

Those who read Sunil Da’s ‘Kakababu’, know that the character is quite witty and humorous. From top to bottom, I internalised all his quirks and habits.

In many interviews, you mentioned that you want to work in films that cater to children. Do you know how they are receiving “Kakababur Prottyaborton”? Parents used to introduce me to their kids as “Prosenjit uncle”. However, I wanted to break that barrier and bring myself into a place where this generation can directly relate to me.

Children’s films are rarely made in our

region. “Kakababu” is for audiences of all ages.

Now, kids come up to me and say “Kakababu, where is your crutch?” It amuses me greatly!

You only appeared in one film made by a Bangladeshi director, Benazir Ahmed’s ‘Priyo Shotru’ in 1995. Whom do you want to work with in the future?

It absolutely depends on the offer. Mostofa Sarwar Farooki is one of my most favourite directors, and unfortunately, I could not give him my schedule twice. One of the projects was his “Doob”.

I have directed some projects in BFDC – Alamgir *saheb* and Razzak *saheb* know how much I adore them.

I am in touch with many talented directors from Bangladesh. If I get an offer for a good project, I will definitely take it up.

You had tweeted praises for ‘Mohanagar’, directed by Ashfaq Nipun, after it aired on Hoichoi. Do you regularly watch Bangladeshi content?

I even contacted Ashfaq Nipun and congratulated him, after watching his brilliant series.

I follow and admire contemporary Bangladeshi works a lot.

I have particularly become addicted to the OTT platform ‘Chorki’, they are simply amazing. I wholeheartedly congratulate them for their initiative; I eagerly await their new productions.

I cannot differentiate between two Bengals. I am equally loved as ‘Bumba Da’ in Bangladesh as well. I am so proud of Bangladeshi artistes for exploring their talents in the international arena. Since we speak same language, I consider us as one.

When will you make your OTT debut?

I have already completed “Stardust”, directed by Vikram Motwane. This is a huge project, which will be released in an Indian OTT platform very soon.

There was a time when Bangladeshi films prospered, and Tollywood remake many of them. Now, Tollywood, as an industry, has prospered greatly.

Even 15 years ago, people would laugh at our films. We did lot of joint ventures and remakes at that time. If we are united in our efforts, we can uplift both our film industries to greater heights.



Kajol to return with “Salaam Venky”

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The shooting for the Kajol starrer “Salaam Venky” has begun recently. The actress took to her Instagram, announcing the kick-start of her first schedule for the production.

Her Instagram post reads: Today, we begin the journey of a story that needed to be told, a path that had to be taken and a life that had to be celebrated. We cannot wait to share this unbelievably true story of #SalaamVenky with you.

Directed by actor-turned-director Revathy, “Salaam Venky” recites the story of a mother battling difficult circumstances. The film is based on a true story with characters inspired by real-life instances.

Sting sells career catalogue

Eminent British singer-songwriter Sting has sold his career music catalogue to Universal Music Publishing Group (UMPG).

The company confirmed the news, on Thursday.

All of Sting’s solo works, as well as those when he was with rock band The Police, now belongs to UMPG.

However, the financial details of the deal were undisclosed.

“It is absolutely essential to me that my career’s body of work have a home where it is valued and respected – not only to connect with longtime fans in new ways but also to introduce my songs to new audiences, musicians and generations,” Sting said in a statement.

Sting’s band, The Police, released five studio albums between 1978 and 1983.

He has released more than a dozen studio albums. His latest record, “The Bridge”, was released in November.

He is the recipient of three BRIT Awards, including one for Outstanding Contribution to Music, Billboard Magazine’s Century Award, a Golden Globe and Emmy Award. Sting is also a four-time Oscar nominee.

Where is Mahiya Mahi?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The web series ‘Driver’, starring Mahiya Mahi and Mosharraf Karim, was released yesterday. Although director Iftekhar Chowdhury and other crewmembers of the film were busy promoting ‘Driver’, Mahi was nowhere to be found.

Filmmakers Mostafizur Rahman Manik and Raju Chowdhury have also publicly stated that they tried to contact the actress for two new projects, albeit unsuccessfully.

Mahi has worked in Manik’s in “Jannat”, “Ananda Ashru”, “Jao Pakhi Bolo Taare” and “Ashirbad”.

The Daily Star also tried to call the actress, who did not respond to calls or texts.



‘SHOSHURBARI ZINDABAD 2’ is a blessing for our cinema

APU BISWAS

“A good film always demands the big screen. Only cinema halls can fully quench the thirst for those who want to enjoy an authentic cinematic experience,” she says.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Celebrated actress Apu Biswas is set to return to the silver screen with “Shoshurbari Zindabad 2”. The film will be released tomorrow, in 30 cinema halls nationwide.

We caught up with the actress to know more about her experience and recent endeavours.

She spoke about having a new film to look forward to, after a long break.

“A good film always demands the big screen. Only cinema halls can fully quench the thirst for those who want to enjoy an authentic cinematic experience,” she says. “I am very hopeful that ‘Shoshurbari Zindabad 2’ will leave behind an entertained audience. I request my fans to come and visit the theatres, as our existence and efforts are defined by their presence.”

The film will have a premiere in the USA. “I believe this has not just strengthened the ground for “Shoshurbari Zindabad 2”, but has come as a blessing for the industry as a whole,” says Apu. “We are finally gaining ground in the international scenario,

and hope that this is followed by more groundbreaking productions”.

She also shared her views on the recent Bangladesh Film Artists’ elections, which have been mired in controversy. “At the end of the day, our spectators want to see us on screens. The way that everyone responded to the elections, is indeed very positive from my perspective,” says the actress.

“I wish they kept supporting us in the same manner when our films release as well. Drawing audiences back to the theatres should be our prime focus.”

She is also in talks for some projects on OTT platforms. “I want to explore this new territory. For me, acting is primary, and the medium will always come in second. However, I am critical when it comes to picking roles. I will not compromise on my standards. OTT platforms have emerged as a promise and I am optimistic about their future,” she concludes.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED