

Shahosh

A courageous effort or squandered potential?



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SHARMIN JOYA

Nazia Haque Orsha and Mustafizur Noor Imran starrer "Shahosh" depicts a story of the locals of Bagerhat. The Sazzad Khan directorial highlights how an urban girl, who becomes a victim of rape, fights for justice and in her journey, her closed ones abandon her. The plot is blended with political conflicts and inter-gang rivalry of the locals.

The film was allegedly subject to controversy for containing inappropriate language and content, and on the first draft, was declared as 'not eligible for display' by the Bangladesh Film Censor Board. Even after receiving a clearance certificate upon alteration, the director decided to release the uncut version of the project on Chorki.

Orsha, who is a brilliant performer, portrayed Nila in this film, a rape victim who faces various hurdles and social stigma, when she decides to speak up.

"Those who have misrepresented the film, quoting it 'inappropriate', have only proved them languish," says the actress. "I initially had this argument with the director and team, that this film is not for the big screens, as our audience is not yet prepared for such kind of storytelling," shares Orsha. "We have a multiplex-based audience, and if we were to present an 'uncut' version of the film, I genuinely believe that OTT was the right place."



The actress informs that the story of the film has been compiled from real-life incidents. "There is a scene where Nila gives a victim impact statement to the lawyer. I went through some real case files, which shattered me as a human being. Nonetheless, reading those gave me some much-needed context."

Mostafizur Noor Imran, who earned critical acclaim for playing Moloy in Ashfaq Nipun's "Mohanagar" has been proving his acting prowess through his stellar performances. The actor, who is seen as Raihan, Nila's husband, holds a powerful philosophy of bringing change through art.

"Our censor board still runs the 1963 act, and I have doubts whether they have any knowledge of world cinema. It has been a long time since we held the film industry hostage," asserts the actor. "There is no needless violence, bloodshed, obscenity in this movie. Neither was there any hidden commentary against the state." He appreciates the team for coming up with a real story showcasing courage.

The director says that he will leave the judgement to the audience. "It is not possible that a project will be liked by all," he says. "However, the response and reviews we are getting is primarily positive. People are appreciating our effort to be courageous," concludes the Sazzad, who told The Daily Star that they will arrange special screenings after Eid.

The team deserves praise for the research, efforts and scrutiny that they went through. For all that to be squandered because of 'rumours' of obscenity would be a real shame.

Léa Seydoux to star in 'Dune: Part II'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Léa Seydoux will be playing Lady Margot Fenring, an ally to Paul Atride (Timothée Chalamet) in "Dune: Part II". All of the original characters are set to reprise their roles in the film.

New additions to the film include Florence Pugh as Princess Irulan, Christopher Walken as Emperor Shaddam IV, and Austin Butler in the role of House of Harkonnen's heir, Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen. The first movie, "Dune", received a total of 10 Oscar nominations and bagged six awards at the Academy Awards. The movie made USD 400 million worldwide at the box office.

Two films added to government grants list



Dipankar Dipon

Zakir Hossain Raju

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On June 15, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting published the list of films which received grants from the government in the fiscal year of 2021-22.

A total of 19 feature films received government grants. A week later, on June 21, it was announced that two more films would be added to the existing list. The movies are being produced by the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC).

One of the films, titled "Akash Juddho" (based on the Liberation war) will be directed by Dipankar Dipon, and received BDT 75 lakh in grants. The other film, "Chador" which is directed by Zakir Hossain Raju, received BDT 70 lakh.

According to reports, BFDC had separately applied for the government grant through the ministry. After almost 35 years, BFDC will be producing a film, previously they had produced "Golapi Ekhon Train".

COUNTRYWIDE

Robot Chishti

A MAGICAL REALITY

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A twelve-grader student has invented a robot surprising everyone in the village. Ahsan Habib, 18, of Kaliganj upazila in Lalmonirhat has named it 'Chishti'.

He has been successful to assemble the robot after eight months of efforts. He has engineered it to perfection spending Tk one lakh.

Ahsan Habib, the son of late Maju Mia of Sundrahabi village in the upazila, is a student of Kaliganj Govt Karim Uddin Public College. Despite being a student of humanities department, he has a scientific bent of mind, locals said.

Chishti is able to ambulate and can answer to questions. It can also carry light weight.

Ahsan Habib also made a small robot in 2017 while studying at Tusbhandar RMMP Govt Boys' High School. He won the first prize

in the district by displaying it in the science fair.

Habib said that he has been obsessed with tinkering with technical staff since his school days. He has gathered the technical know-how of making robot watching videos on YouTube.

However, his success didn't come in a single day as he had to taste failure on a number of occasions. He finally succeeded in making a robot in 2017.

He also said his progress on the project was halted in the middle and he resumed his mission robot Chishti in October last year.

"I haven't fully prepared the robot yet. There is more work to be done. I'm trying my level best," he said.

Habib said that the robot he made is similar to the structure of human body and it can answer to questions fluently.

Once it sees a person, it can remember the person and keep a log of people's images and words.

"My robot can shake hands and make gestures," he said. "If I give government support, I will be able to build more advanced robots. Financial instability is my main obstacle," he said.

Habib, the youngest of three siblings, had plunged in financial constraints since his father's death. He started providing tuition to pay for his studies and research.

Locals including school teacher Ashraf Hossain gathered to see the magical invention of Ahsan. They were seen interacting with the robot.

"We are happy and proud that our village boy has made such a robot," Ashraf said adding that they hope Ahsan will continue his research to create a more advanced robot.



Ahsan Habib of Sundrahabi village in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila has invented a robot. Robot Chishti can reply to questions, shake hand and ambulate. PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Businesses get loan repayment relief

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The borrowers must clear 60 percent of their unpaid loans in the July-September quarter and 80 percent in the fourth quarter of 2022 if they don't want to be classified as defaulters.

For cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), borrowers must pay 25 percent of the payable loans in the April-June quarter, 30 percent in the second quarter and 40 percent in the last quarter of the year to avoid falling into the defaulter category.

Only the term loans, which carry a repayment period of more than a year, will qualify for the fresh relaxed classification

treatment, said the notice.

In the flood-hit areas identified by the disaster management and relief ministry, borrower-farmers will not be declared as defaulters even if they fail to pay any instalment between April and December.

CMSME borrowers in the affected areas will have to clear 25 percent of the unpaid loans for the nine-month period.

The working capital loans due as of April 1 this year can be repaid by December. Such loans are taken to finance a company's day-to-day operations.

The unpaid portion of the loans, payable in the nine-month period, will

be added to the next year's loans and the instalment sizes would be adjusted accordingly, the BB said.

Banks can't impose any penal interest or fee on the beneficiaries for the April-December period.

The loans that were unclassified as of April 1 this year will only be eligible for the new relaxed repayment facility.

The borrowers who enjoyed the BB's relaxed facility in 2019 could also get the deferral support.

The BB, however, didn't say whether banks would be allowed to show their unrealised interests against the loans enjoying the deferral support as income and how much funds

lenders must keep aside in the form of provision to cover loan losses.

Instructions to this effect will be given later, said the notice.

Borrowers in Bangladesh enjoyed a full year payment holiday throughout 2020 because of the pandemic and could avoid slipping into the defaulter category by paying 15 percent of the instalments payable for 2021.

The central bank discontinued the support from the beginning of this year as virus infections fell, paving the way for the economy to rebound strongly, before coming under pressure after the Russian-Ukraine war.

1,135 new Covid cases recorded

FROM PAGE 2

The overall positivity rate stood at 13.75 percent, and the death rate was 1.49 percent.

The country's total caseload was 1,959,209 and the fatalities were 29,134.

Some 8,536 samples were tested across the country during the 24-hour period.

At least 122 Covid patients recovered during the time, bringing the total number of recoveries to

19,06,105. The recovery rate was 97.29 percent, said the DGHS in a release.

The deceased, Shamsur Rahman, was the associate professor and head of the paediatric surgery department at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. He died from Covid on Monday.

It was confirmed on Tuesday that the physician, who was hospitalised with Covid symptoms, died from coronavirus after testing

samples collected from his body.

Meanwhile, a team of researchers of Jashore University of Science and Technology on Tuesday detected a sub-variant named BA.4/5 through a partial (spike protein) genome sequence of samples collected from two infected people in Jashore, said a university press release.

According to the release, the two male patients are

aged 44 and 79. One of them received Covid booster shot, while another was vaccinated with two doses.

One of them is undergoing treatment at a hospital and the other at home. They are showing some mild symptoms, including fever, sore throat and cough.

The research team added that this new sub-variant has a mutation similar to Omicron in the spike protein.

Govt won't implement phase-2

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Press, a Japanese news agency.

Japan International Cooperation Agency was supposed to finance phase 2. It was ready to fund it even after its commitment at the G7 summit, saying it's an "ongoing" project. But 120 organisations from 25 countries and green campaigners working against fossil fuel urged all

stakeholders to stop the expansion of Matarbari project.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, said they have already made a plan to build an LNG-based power plant instead of the coal-based one.

"We have already scrapped Matarbari

phase-2 project. We plan to build an LNG-based power plant there. It will be linked with an LNG [Liquefied Natural Gas] terminal."

Replying to a query, he said, "We will start it [LNG-based plant] after completion of Matarbari phase-1."

Work of the 1,200MW Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Project began in fiscal

2013-14. The cost was initially estimated at Tk 35,984 crore for phase 1.

Last November, the cost was raised by 44.1 percent to Tk 51,854.9 crore. Of the amount, JICA is providing Tk 43,921 crore.

Sources in Power Division said more than 70 percent work of phase-1 has been completed. It is expected to go into operation in January 2024.