

Sunerah spills the tea on her upcoming projects

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ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR
After taking the audience by storm with her impeccable performance in “No Dorai”, National Award-winning actress Sunerah Binte Kamal is all set to return to the silver screen with “Antarjal”. The actress also received a lot of praise for her recent performance in the Abrar Athar directorial segment from the Chorki original anthology “Ei Muhurte”.

We caught up with Sunerah to learn more about her upcoming projects.

How was your experience with “Ei Muhurte”?

It was quite an enjoyable experience, and the entire team is very happy with the outcome of the project. However, to adhere to certain norms and standards, we had to make little alterations to the production, prior to its release.

Nevertheless, the production has garnered both positive and negative criticism thus far, and I welcome everyone to share their opinions about it.

I believe that criticism motivates an artiste to work harder and grow as performers. That is why I am always open to any form of criticism that is constructive, that can help me become an even better actress.

You have also finished shooting for the web film “Shuklopokkho”, where you will be seen alongside Khairul Basar and Ziaul Roshan. Give us some details about this Vicky Zahed directorial.

“Shuklopokkho” is a romantic thriller where the audience will be able to experience a fresh chemistry between the cast.

I usually look forward to feature films where we have a lot of time for shooting. However, web films do not provide the same amount of time due to the limited production budget.

Other than the hectic shooting experience, and all the insect bites I received while shooting in Bhawal National Park in Gazipur, this production has been quite memorable for me, as I met and worked with new people and was able to enjoy the experience of getting to know them.

When can the audience expect “Antarjal” to release?

We have not finished shooting for this production yet. However, we hope to wrap up soon, so that we can bring it to the theatres by this year.

Your film “Moshari” has garnered much international attention, winning the Best Short Award in the Asia International Competition and the second Oscar Qualifying Award at the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia. Are you planning to release it in Bangladesh anytime soon?

As soon as we are done with the international festivals, we will bring it to Bangladesh for our local audience. The film has achieved a lot, not just locally but also internationally, so we definitely look forward to the audiences’ reaction for this project.

What are you plans for Eid?

I will be in Korea between June 8 and 15 for the premiere of “Moshari” at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival. As I will be at the festival, I will not be able to celebrate Eid with my family and friends this time. However, I will make sure the arrangements are in place for my family to have a wonderful Eid, even while I am missing them from Korea.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SUNERAH BINTE KAMAL



Suriya is first Tamil actor to join Oscar committee

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Tamil actor Suriya has been invited to join the Academy’s Class of 2022. This has come after the international success of his recent films “Sooraraipottru” and “Jai Bhim”. Suriya is the first South Indian actor to be invited to the Oscar committee.

Kajol is the only other Indian actor/actress to be invited aside from Suriya. Another notable addition to the list is filmmaker Reema Kagti.



NEWS

Giant fossil of ancient kangaroo

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was discovered.

The squat and muscular Nombé lived in a diverse montane rainforest with thick undergrowth and a closed canopy where it adapted and evolved to eat tough leaves from trees and shrubs using its thick jaw bone and strong chewing muscles.

“The New Guinean fauna is fascinating, but very few Australians have much of an idea of what’s actually there,” Isaac Kerr,

a palaeontology PhD candidate from Flinders, said in a statement.

“There are several species of large, long-nosed, worm-eating echidna that are still around today, many different wallaby and possum species that we don’t get in Australia, and more still in the fossil record,” he explained.

Based on the study, scientists suspect many species may have evolved from an ancient form of kangaroo located in New

Guinea in the late Miocene epoch about 5 to 8 million years ago.

The islands of New Guinea and mainland Australia were connected by a “land-bridge” at the time due to lower sea levels, as opposed to currently being separated by the flooded Torres Strait.

This bridge allowed early Australian mammals, including various giant, extinct ones, to move into the rainforests of New Guinea, said scientists.

REUTERS, Colombo

Doctors and bankers were among hundreds of Sri Lankans who marched yesterday to demand the government resolve a severe fuel shortage at the heart of the Indian Ocean island’s worst economic crisis in decades or step down.

Weeks of street demonstrations against cascading woes such as power cuts and shortages of food and medicine brought a change in government last month after nine people were killed and about 300 injured in protests.

Left with just enough fuel for about a week and fresh shipments at least two weeks away, the government restricted supplies on Tuesday to essential services, such as trains, buses and the health sector, for two weeks.

The prime minister’s office said in a statement a government-

ordered petrol shipment would arrive on July 22, while Lanka IOC LIOC.CM, a unit of Indian Oil Corporation IOC.NS, is expecting a shipment of petrol and diesel around July 13.

“The government is also attempting to secure fuel shipments at an early date. However, until those are confirmed, the details would not be released,” the statement said.

Doctors, nurses and medical staff say that despite being designated essential workers, they struggle to find enough fuel to get to work.

“This is an impossible situation, the government has to give us a solution,” H.M. Mediawatta, secretary of one of Sri Lanka’s largest nursing unions, the All Island Nurses Union, told reporters.

A march to the president’s

house by a trade union of bankers, teachers, and the self-employed was stopped by riot police who had thrown up barricades to guard the area.

“Things have become unbearable for the common man,” said an official of a teachers’ union. “We want this government to go home.”

More than 100 medical staff of the national hospital in Colombo marched to the prime minister’s office calling for the government to ensure fresh supplies of fuel and medicines.

Public health inspectors and other health service workers were also on strike yesterday.

The South Asian nation’s most serious economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1948 comes after Covid-19 battered the tourism-reliant economy and slashed remittances from overseas

workers.

Rising oil prices, populist tax cuts and a seven-month ban on the import of chemical fertilisers last year that devastated agriculture have compounded the troubles.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said the World Bank had agreed to restructure 17 projects it is funding in Sri Lanka. Similar support extended earlier had been used to buy fuel and medicine.

“More World Bank assistance will follow after negotiations with the IMF are finalised,” he said on Twitter.

An International Monetary Fund team is in Colombo for talks on a bailout package of as much as \$3 billion. Sri Lanka hopes to reach a staff-level agreement by today, but even so, it is unlikely to bring immediate funds.

Petrobangla has to return

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In 2019, a portion of the tariff paid by the consumers was being kept for this fund and the government has regulations where the money could be spent.

According to the GDF regulations of 2012, the money could only be spent by lending it

for gas exploration and development works related to production increase.

Mentioning it, the BERC wrote to the Petrobangla several times asking for return of the money but to no avail.

Monday’s verdict said reports on projects undertaken with money

from the GDF, the project progress and their benefits should be sent to the BERC every six months.

It also asked for monthly reports on the gas production and costs, import and costs, taxes and VAT paid by the Petrobangla.

After rice, vegetables

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In the kitchen market near the Shewrapara bus stand, a vegetable seller named Mamun, popularly called “Vegetable Mamun”, said his customers are coping with the rising prices by buying everything in fewer amounts.

“Very few people are buying a whole kilogram of vegetables now.”

His is the only shop in the vicinity that is stocking up on tomatoes.

Being a winter vegetable, tomatoes are now sold at Tk 250 per kg.

Mamun’s shop has a measly five kgs of it. He says those are for his “richer customers”.

“Tomatoes will be out of market in a few days,” he added.

If vegetables are out of reach, fish is even more so. As “ghers” or aquaculture projects have been washed away by the floods, the farmed fish supply in the market has dwindled.

This has put pressure on the existing supply of fish, including the river- or sea-caught varieties.

Not a single type of fish can be found for less than Tk 500 per kg – putting this essential protein out of the reach of those whose wallets are stretched thin.

The story does not end.

There are fears that these prices will increase further as a fuel price hike is on the books.

Economists fear this would have a clear effect on market prices due to a rise in transport costs.

Woman dies

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At one stage of the altercation, they tied Laily’s hands and feet and set her on fire, injuring her critically, said the OC.

Locals rescued Laily and rushed her to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Doctors there referred her to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka.

Greece picks up 172 migrants

AFP, Athens

Greek coastguards said yesterday 172 migrants had been picked up from a wooden fishing vessel that was struggling in heavy seas as it sought to reach Italy.

Poor governance cutting efficiency

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Good governance will also reduce the cost of public service and maximise productive use of limited resources, while also promoting competitiveness and inclusive growth, he said.

But Bangladesh is still lagging in competitiveness indicators, he said, citing Global Competitiveness Index 2019. Bangladesh ranked 114 out of 141 countries in infrastructure, 108 in quality of road infrastructure, and 117 in road connectivity, shows the index.

Citing CPD’s National Budget Analysis for 2022-23 fiscal year, he said the implementation period for 1,243 projects is 4.6 years on average, for 258 projects over six years and for 39 projects 10 to 15 years.

Citing different documents from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), he highlighted several challenges in project implementation.

They include weak feasibility studies, coordination failure, and frequent changes of project directors. Many projects also face setbacks over delays in land acquisition, as the authorities often seek the district administration’s approval for land acquisition only after starting the project.

Noting that the share of public investment in GDP has gone up from under 6 percent to over 8 percent in the last 10 years, he said, “There is therefore a need for a comprehensive framework for ensuring

good governance in PIP implementation in Bangladesh.”

Speaking at the dialogue, the planning minister expressed his frustration that project directors are often unavailable at project sites. “This has become a national problem.”

Project directors and other key persons at division, district and upazila levels often cannot be found at their work stations despite prime minister’s clear directives, he said.

At a programme on Sunday, the minister, who himself was a career bureaucrat before joining politics, said some bureaucrats were keeping local representatives – who seek allocations for rural development – on a tight leash.

Referring to this comment, he said, “We have some rules and regulations that are no longer necessary. Unnecessary, irrelevant, and sometimes they are unjust,” he said.

He added that the British and Pakistan governments enacted those rules and regulations to serve their interest, but they are still in force.

Speaking about project management, lawmaker Enamul Haque stressed the need for consultation with all the stakeholders, which he said was missing in many cases.

Abdus Shahid, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on estimates, said timely implementation was vital for the people to reap the benefit of the projects.

Rizwan Rahman,

president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said investment for infrastructures has indeed increased, but it’s still not enough.

He said Public-Private Partnership (PPP) was a good option for infrastructure development, for which there should have a national roadmap.

M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, advised against hurriedly done feasibility study, which creates problems at the later stage of the project.

CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun emphasised on assessing the environmental impacts alongside the economic impacts before taking up any project.