

Shakib Khan making a return

SHARMIN JOYA

Dhallywood “King” Shakib Khan has received a government grant of BDT 65 Lakhs for his co-produced film “Maya”. The actor is residing in the USA, and has received a green card recently. The “Golui” actor will come to Bangladesh to celebrate Eid-ul-Adha with his family and peers.

In a candid conversation over Whatsapp, the actor shared about his upcoming projects, and thoughts about the Bangladeshi film fraternity.

Congratulations on receiving the government grant. How important is it for mainstream films to get funds?

Thank you! Government grants are indeed a great support for making big-budgeted films, and I am glad that “Maya”, despite having a commercial script, was considered for the fund. I feel that those

who are regularly making films should be provided support. It can help the industry produce quality commercial films. In order to revive the industry, we should make more films that are entertaining.

Tell us about “Maya”.

“Maya” is one of my dream projects, I cannot disclose the details just yet. We are working on the pre-production, and plan to begin the shoots by the end of this year. Puja Chery will be in the lead cast with me. I can assure you that it will be a one-of-a-kind film.

When do you plan to come back to Bangladesh?

I will be here in a few days! Before I begin working on another film titled “Rajkumar”, I need to recharge myself by eating Eid special ‘deshi’ food, and I will celebrate the festival with my

family.

If people thought I’ll just sit in the USA, they have another thing coming. I am not retiring any time soon!

In the post-covid era, the film industry is struggling to revive. At the same time, hall owners are suffering from not being able to run shows due to lack of audience.

Films like “KGF2”, “Pushpa”, “Spiderman: No Way Home”, and “No Time to Die” are all fully commercial movies. They are the greatest examples of how industries were revived in the post-pandemic world. I am not saying we are not making good films, but within our limitations we must try to focus on the audience’s choices.

In two decades of your career, this is the first Eid without any of your films getting released. How are your fans reacting to that?

I will eventually return with something big; my fans have to wait for some time. Also, there are some wonderful films queued for release this year.

What is your take on the politics surrounding the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC)?

The BFDC is not a place for politics, we have a specialised field for politics. It is a place for creativity. You will never see the such laughable activities of associations in any other film industry in the world – where people see more drama in real life, than on the screens. No wonder that our artistes have moved on from the place, and shoot elsewhere.

You were also a part of the association at one point.

Yes, I was a two-time president. When I realised that these associations are not benefitting the fraternity in any way, I detached myself from all of these activities.



“Maya is one of my dream projects, I cannot disclose the details just yet. We are working on the pre-production, and plan to begin the shoots by the end of this year.”



PHOTOS: TAKEN FROM FACEBOOK

Cameron Diaz comes out of retirement for Netflix movie

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Cameron Diaz is finally coming out of retirement, after almost eight years, to star opposite Jamie Foxx in the Netflix action-comedy movie “Back in Action.” Shooting for the film will begin in 2023.

The actress announced the news on her Instagram story, stating that Jamie Foxx had been the one to convince her to come out of retirement.

Both Foxx and Diaz have worked together in the past on movies such as “Any Given Sunday” and the remake of “Annie”.



‘Vikram’ to hit OTT on July 8

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Kamal Haasan starrer “Vikram”, which has grossed over Rs 400 crore at the box-office, will be released on Disney+ Hotstar on July 8. This means that the hit movie will be coming to OTT after only 35 days of its theatrical release.

The film follows Vikram, played by Kamal Haasan, a former agent who is trying to avenge the death of his son—an undercover officer in the narcotics bureau. Many fans have called the movie a masterpiece, and have expressed disappointment that it will not get a longer theatre-only run.

‘Some sick people are using my name to extort money’: Shabnur

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Actress Shabnur recently took to Facebook to complain about the various fake profiles, pages and groups who have been asking for money using her name. These pages have been extorting money by asking her fans and followers to contribute to the flood victims in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

The “Chandni Ratey” actress posted a warning on her Facebook account, telling her fans to be careful about such scammers.



NEWS

CTTC to start deradicalising militants

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to the CTTC to provide counselling to extremist prisoners in jails,” he told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

The CTTC of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in August last year had applied to the ministry for the permission.

Initially, psychologists and religious clerics will be appointed at the Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, Kashimpur High Security Jail, Chattogram Central Jail and two other prisons in the country’s north, including one in Bogura, Asaduzzaman said.

He said the initiative has been taken in those jails where militants are imprisoned.

The initiative will be carried out under a Tk 350 crore project titled “Construction of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Prevention Centre of Bangladesh Police”.

“We have taken the initiative so that militants already arrested never return to the path of militancy,” said Md Mahfuzul Islam, deputy commissioner of the CTTC unit and also the deputy director of the project.

He said preparation of an action plan for appointment of experts is at final

stage. A team of teachers from the departments of psychology and international relations of Dhaka University are devising the action plan under the supervision of the Centre for Genocide Studies, he added.

Mahfuzul said this project will end in June 2024 and they may apply for an extension after assessing the results and militancy situation after two years.

Security analyst Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman (retd) sees the move as a good one. He, however, observed that deradicalisation of militants in jail is a complicated process.

Accommodation crisis remains a major problem as militants cannot be segregated from other inmates in overcrowded prisons.

“Also, deradicalised militants need to be rehabilitated. If that cannot be done properly, there may be a possibility of their relapse,” Muniruzzaman told this newspaper on Tuesday.

The CTTC chief said under the project they will rehabilitate 20 militants this fiscal year, providing each of them Tk 1 lakh so that they can earn their living and get themselves reintegrated into society.

He said they will also monitor their activities.

Abdulla Al Noman, now in his mid-20s, can be a perfect example of how a less radicalised militant can become more radicalised in prison.

Noman, who used to share and “like” radical contents on social media, was arrested in 2018. During his 15 months behind bars, he met some militants who made him a key militant leader, said CTTC officials.

Coming out of jail on bail, he got in touch with the then Neo JMB chief Abu Mohammad. As per Abu’s instructions, Noman learnt to make improvised explosive devices (IED) and also planted an IED in a police box in the capital’s Paltan on July 24, 2020, the officials added.

He was arrested again on November 5 last year.

PIECEMEAL INITIATIVES According to security experts, the authorities need to adopt a seamless “hard and soft” approach towards tackling militancy. Although hard response like intervention by law enforcers saw persistent success, soft response like socio-political campaigns against militancy was never pursued fully.

Such half-hearted anti-militancy socio-political

campaigns, initiatives to deradicalise militants and create awareness among people about militancy always left open scope for the rise of militancy, they added.

Over the last one-and-a-half decades, socio-political campaigns gained momentum after a major terrorist attack. But it fizzled out until another attack was perpetrated, experts said.

Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman (retd) said the country needs to adopt a national strategic policy on fighting militancy.

“To fight terrorism, we need to adopt a ‘whole of society’ approach,” he said.

Anti-militancy campaigns were conducted by different stakeholders since the Holey Artisan cafe attack, but they were never followed up later.

Take, for instance, CTTC training.

The CTTC unit under the project started providing training to different stakeholders, including police, Rab, Ansar, jail staffers, BGB, madrasas, security guards, students, teachers, duffadars, local elected representatives, journalists, civil society members, imams and muazzins.

The unit has so

far trained different stakeholders in 48 districts in the last two years.

After the training, the trainers were expected to deliver speeches and monitor whether the trainees learnt it. The imams and muazzins were supposed to deliver anti-militancy sermons during prayers.

But the CTTC officials never monitored whether the instructions were followed properly or not, said officials and trainees.

Asked about delivering sermons regularly from mosques, Md Bojlor Rashid, deputy director (administration) of Bangladesh Islamic Foundation, told The Daily Star yesterday that it might not be done regularly as devotees would not listen to similar sermons repeatedly.

About the initiatives, Bojlor said they have provided training to all mosque imams on extremism issues and asked them to deliver anti-militancy sermons.

He further claimed that they monitor whether such sermons are delivered from mosques.

However, visiting a number of mosques in the capital recently, these correspondents did not find any imam giving sermons on extremism issues.

a Savar college teacher and the humiliation of Swapan.

Utpal Kumar Sarkar, 35, a lecturer of Haji Yunus Ali School and College in Savar, was beaten to death by a student recently.

In Rangpur city, students of different colleges yesterday formed human chains to protest the attacks against the teachers.

(Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.)

Prime accused

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after arresting Jitu from Gazipur’s Sreepur area on Wednesday.

Jitu, a class-10 student of Haji Yunus Ali School and College in Ashulia, bludgeoned teacher Utpal Kumar Sarker with a cricket stump on June 25, he said.

“He used to smoke in front of everyone on the school premises, tease students, come to school without uniform and ride a motorcycle recklessly,” the official added.

The deceased teacher was the chairman of the disciplinary committee of the school and used to motivate and guide students at different times on various issues.

A few days before the

incident, Utpal warned Jitu about being intimate with a girl on the college compound. Jitu got angry over the warning and planned to attack him, said Rab.

Jitu then brought a cricket stump to the school on June 25 and attacked Utpal when he was standing in a corner of the playground during a cricket tournament, Rab added.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed Jitu on a five-day remand. No lawyer represented him at that time.

On Wednesday, his father Ujjal Hossain was also put on a five-day remand in the case.

Meanwhile, protests continued in Savar, demanding a quick trial of

Jitu to ensure justice for the victim.

Around 10:30am, hundreds of teachers and students from various institutions held a human chain near Savar Upazila Parishad Gate on Dhaka-Aricha Highway.

This paper had earlier refrained from naming the student as his age was mentioned as 16 in the first information report.

However, it is publishing his name and photo as his age was revealed to be over 19 on Wednesday.

At the press conference yesterday, Rab also cited his birth certificate and registration documents for the Junior Dakhil exam, saying Jitu was more than 19 years old.

Yunus Centre responds

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unfolding at the same time as the World Bank was talking about stopping Padma Bridge funding over corruption allegations.

“Mixing these two independent stories into one story took it to a different path. Honourable PM is saying that the World Bank money was stopped because Professor Yunus was desperate to have his job back, and that he conspired with Hillary Clinton to put pressure on the World Bank.”

Professor Yunus made his position clear when it was mentioned for the first time that he brought pressure on the World Bank to stop the Padma Bridge funding, according to the statement.

“The people of the country are overjoyed with the completion of the Padma Bridge today. I congratulate the prime minister and all the people of the country for this historic achievement,” he was quoted as saying in the statement.

“This story propagates that Professor Yunus used his ‘enormous influence’ to stop the financing for Padma Bridge because he was holding a grudge against the prime minister, that maybe Professor Yunus did not pressurise the World Bank directly, but he did so through his friend Hillary Clinton. In other words, he must have some sort of connection with World Bank’s cancellation of the agreement. PM also

mentions that the editor of a famous newspaper went all the way to meet the president of the World Bank to persuade him to stop the financing.

“The tough world of international decision-making does not depend on the whims of two friends or the visit of a newspaper editor.

“However ‘important’ a person Professor Yunus may be, whatever number of ‘influential friends’ he may have, a three-billion dollar project cannot be stopped just because he allegedly wants it cancelled.”

The nine-page statement also refuted the allegation that Yunus wanted to remain as the managing director of Grameen Bank.

China’s Mars probe

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impact craters, the south pole ice sheet, and the cliffs and ridges of the Valles Marineris canyons – one of

the largest canyons in our solar system.

The images were taken by the probe’s orbiter, which circled Mars 1,344

times, capturing images of the planet from every angle, while the rover explored the surface, CNSA said.

Insecurity grips his family

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when the incident occurred, adding that a probe is ongoing to identify those involved.

Habibur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Narail, and Prabir Kumar Roy, superintendent of police, were reportedly present during the incident.

Contacted, they both said they “did not see whether the garland of shoes was put around the teacher’s neck and just wanted to avoid any

violence”.

Some left-leaning political parties yesterday met the Narail DC office and demanded a judicial investigation.

Locals and police said Rahul Dev Roy, a student of Mirzapur United Degree College, made a Facebook post praising Nupur Sharma, BJP’s suspended spokesperson who made remarks hurting “religious sentiments”.

When he went to the

college on June 18, other students and locals started verbally attacking him.

At one stage, he took shelter in teacher Swapan’s room. The demonstrators then alleged Swapan was trying to protect Rahul.

Later, a team of Narail Sadar police rushed to the spot to take Rahul to the station. But the protesters demanded immediate punishment.

At one stage, they clashed with police,

injuring at least 10.

In the afternoon, the DC and the SP went there to quell the chaos.

When police, along with Rahul and Swapan, were heading towards the police station, the protesters intercepted them and put garlands of shoes around Rahul and Swapan, said locals.

In another development, rights body ARTICLE 19 expressed deep shock and concern over the murder of