



I was in 'Poran' promotions, but Pori was always first priority

SHARIFUL RAZZ

SHARMIN JOYA

Sariful Islam Razz earned a place for himself as one of the rising stars of the silver screen, ever since his debut in "Ice-Cream". Raihan Rafi directorial "Poran", featuring Razz, Bidya Sinha Mim, and Yash Rohan hit theatres this Eid and has already achieved 'houseful' status across many cinema halls.

The actor's next film, "Hawa", is set for release later this month.

Razz posted several pictures and videos from Star Cineplex and Purobi cinema hall. Excited fans were taking selfies with the "Poran" team. Razz could not stop smiling as fans raved about his villainous performance in the movie.

On speaking with The Daily Star, the actor became nostalgic when remembering how Covid halted the release of their film.

"We worked on 'Poran' before the pandemic had hit, and in these three years, we were somehow connected with the team, working on the post-productions and other activities regarding the project," says the actor.

The "Networker Baire" actor loves spending time with his wife, renowned actress Pori Moni. The couple are expecting their first child to arrive very soon.

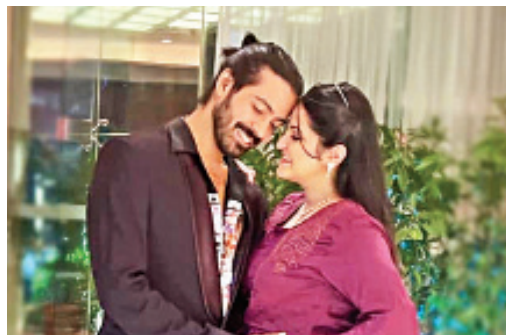
"I am trying to give my entire attention to Pori and our unborn child, we are excited for the arrival of our baby," says Razz. The couple also appeared in a fun segment on "Eid Ananda Mela" which aired on BTV.

"Since childhood, we would look forward to BTV Eid programmes,

so it was a great honour to be a part of the show," says Razz. "We enjoyed shooting for the programme, and Afran Nisho was a fantastic host."

Razz also shared that he is elated with back-to-back release of his projects in recent years. "Pori is my lucky charm, so is our child," says an emotional Razz.

"For 'Hawa', we stayed in Saint Martin's for 2 months, and every day at 3 in the morning, we would start getting ready for the shoot. We would shoot for the entire day until evening, in the middle of the sea," asserts the actor, who



"I promised I'll take you to see Poran, I can't even get tickets to my own film because it's houseful," wrote Razz in a fun post on Facebook.

plays the role of an engine operator in the film.

"During that time, we got stuck in the severe cyclone storm Bulbul, hence there was a scarcity of food and supplies on the island."

He adds that they had to borrow food from the locals. "It was a unique experience working with Mejbaur Rahman Sumon, along with sharing the screen with an actor like Chanchal Chowdhury. I am emotionally connected with the entire team of this project."

Razz celebrated Eid with his family, but had his hands full with promoting "Poran" in Dhaka and Mymensingh.

"Pori is my first priority, I tried to be in all the promotions within my limitations."

The actor is a part of a few other upcoming projects, which are in the works. He is waiting for the release of "Damal" and "Rokto Joba", while the shootings for "Kajol Rekha" and "Dewaler Desh" are yet to be completed.

Number of movie halls showing 'Poran' increased due to demand

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Raihan Rafi directorial "Poran", which is based on true events, was released during Eid-ul-Azha. Both the production team and the actors were very active in terms of promoting the movie before its release.

Even after the release of "Poran", the team behind the film have remained as active as ever. The team has been visiting cinema halls in various locations to gauge audience reactions. While "Poran" was initially released in 11 halls on Sunday, July 10, the movie will be made available in even more cinema halls starting July 15. This information was provided by the film's distributors.

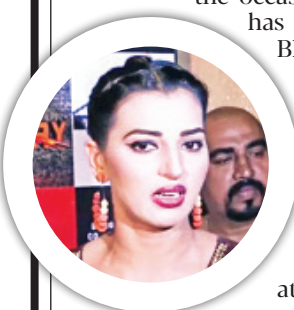


Barsha responds to criticism about 'Din: The Day'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ananta Jalil and Barsha's "Din: The Day" was released in 107 cinema halls across the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. The movie has received criticism regarding its BDT 100 crore budget. However, Barsha feels that hate mongers are trying to ruin their success by personally attacking them on social media.

Visiting Madhumita Hall on Tuesday, Barsha told reporters, "I am shocked that some people are deliberately attacking us and spreading negativity. They are trying to bring up our personal lives. We tried making a good movie for the Bangladeshi audience, yet some people seem hell bent on spreading fake news."



COUNTRYWIDE

Sudden Jamuna erosion makes many homeless



Sudden erosion by the Jamuna river has washed away many homesteads at Mazzan village in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila a few days back.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Sudden erosion by the Jamuna river has devoured several homesteads and vast farmlands within a few hours at Mazzan village in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila last week, creating panic among the villagers.

"As I came to know that sudden erosion by the Jamuna started eroding a portion the riverbank in our village, I rushed to my house, but unfortunately couldn't save anything," Rafikul Islam of Mazzan village said.

"When I reached home, I saw it was already on the verge of being eroded, but I didn't dare to go inside," Rafikul said, adding that I lost my homestead, cultivable land and a happy family within few minutes last Friday.

"Two of my four children were playing at the courtyard when my house was devouring. I somehow managed to save my kids, nothing else as the entire house washed away into the river in front of my eyes," another erosion-hit victim Rozina Khatun said.

"Now me and my four children are living in a roadside makeshift shanty, but I have nothing to feed my family as all our food grains, stocked at the house, also went into the river last week," Rozina further said.

Affected villagers said due to the sudden erosion at least 13 houses went into river while another 20 to 25 shifted to other places in last one week.

Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB) Executive Engineer Shafikul Islam said due to geographical state of the Jamuna erosion is a common catastrophe in Sirajganj during flood.

WDB has already took up a mega project of Tk 600 crore to protect 6.5 kilometre portion of the flood protection embankment in a bid to save Enayetpur, Shahzadpur and Belkuchi upazilas from further erosion, the WDB engineer said.

According to Sirajganj district administration so far around 974 homesteads, at different villages in five upazilas of the district, devoured in the Jamuna during the ongoing flood and the affected villagers need urgent rehabilitation.

Bangladeshi

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During Shazmila's treatment, Kolkata Police had facilitated a "green corridor" (traffic-free streets) for quick supply of 11 units of blood from a blood bank.

Doctors said she died due to excessive internal bleeding following the accident on Sunday. Shirin is currently under treatment at the same hospital.

Two of Shazmila's brothers – one is an officer in the Bangladesh army, the other an IT professional – have been in Kolkata since the accident.

Webb Telescope

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James Webb Space Telescope marks "the dawn of a new era in astronomy", Nasa said.

"The first images from the world's largest and most powerful space telescope will demonstrate Webb at its full power, ready to begin its mission to unfold the infrared universe," the space agency added.

Rishi Sunak tops

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candidate with the fewest votes each time, to whittle the field down to a final two by July 21. The new leader will then be chosen from those two by the 200,000 Conservative party members in the country at large, and be announced on Sept. 5.

While Sunak might be the most popular contender with his colleagues, a YouGov poll of nearly 900 party members found Mordaunt was the favourite, beating any of the others in a run-off. She had a huge lead over Sunak, who fared badly against almost all his rivals, and is now the bookmakers' favourite.

Whoever wins will face a daunting in-tray while having to rebuild public trust bruised by a series of scandals involving Johnson, from the breaking of Covid-19 lockdown rules to appointing a lawmaker to government despite having been told of allegations of sexual misconduct.

Britain's economy is facing rocketing inflation, high debt, and low growth, leaving people grappling with the tightest squeeze on their finances in decades. All this is set against the backdrop of an energy crunch exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, which has sent fuel prices soaring.

Many digital services

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For example, on June 7, the surveyors could not get access to SID Meeting Manager, a meeting notification web application of the Statistics and Informatics Division launched in 2018.

The review of data showed many services are no longer operational because skilled manpower was not developed through training before the completion of the projects.

One such project is the e-Government Project developed by the ICT division and planning division for the digitalisation of the government office activities to ensure accountability and transparency.

The report found the project, whose implementation period was from 2016 to 2021, is not sustainable. The project is yet to be fully completed and there is a dearth of skilled manpower in running the online platform.

But the National e-Government Procurement (e-GP) portal owned and operated by the CPTU to facilitate procurement activities by the public agencies is turning out to be beneficial for its targeted users.

The portal, which has seen more than 25.6 lakh visitors so far, seemed complicated at first but now feels intuitive, according to the service recipients.

However, in the case of tender submission in the service, the system becomes slow. Moreover, the design of the service needs to be further improved; the user interface needs to be simplified and there is a need for adequate bandwidth.

Though e-passport has brought convenience to many, some are struggling to request one due to servers often being down and slow progress in the process.

Despite digitalisation, the users said they still suffer from corruption and irregularities in the passport offices.

They are also not happy with the online MRP service of the Department of Immigration & Passports due to slower delivery and ineptness of staff in providing digital services, the report said.

The users said the server of e-dockets and land mutation website is very slow and, on many occasions, their tax filing shows unpaid even after the balance is transferred.

Besides, middlemen in the land offices discourage people from taking services online and disseminating fake information, the report said.

The portal to request for no-objection certificate for multi-story buildings needs upgrading and correction as people are not getting the service despite filling in the information properly.

Those hoping to avail the e-trade licence, a digital service of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), are often met with demands for bribes from the employees of the city corporation office, the report said. Otherwise, they make excuses to not provide the service requested online.

Besides, there is a problem with the server and the application form arrives 2-3 days after application. The service recipients said the quality of service needs to be improved and that there should be monitoring.

Since 2013, the government has given scholarships and grants to 1,089 individuals or organisations in the ICT sector for innovative/research activities. But there are no mobile numbers or emails of the grant recipients, the report said.

It is necessary to verify whether all the innovative projects for which the grants were given have actually been completed and whether their objectives have been achieved.

If the projects' objectives are not met, a huge amount of money would have been wasted, the report said.

It takes a while for Hajj pilgrims to get a no-objection letter and confirmation SMS after filling in details on the website. Many get it at the eleventh hour, according to the study.

With the view to monitoring the prices of essentials, the DSCC has introduced a digital price chart at the entrance of all kitchen markets, which all sellers must stick to.

But, according to sellers, no such board can be found. Instead, they write down the prices manually as they wish, the report found.

Russia, Ukraine

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Russia's invasion and sea blockade of Ukraine has stalled exports, leaving dozens of ships stranded and more than 20 million tonnes of grain stuck in silos at Odesa.

Bangladesh

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after the US imposed sanctions against Rapid Action Battalion and seven of its current and former officials. This has strained, to some extent, the US-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

Imran is a career foreign service officer from the 1986 batch of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Foreign Affairs cadre. He has served extensively in various capacities both at the foreign ministry and Bangladesh missions abroad such as Jeddah, Bonn, Berlin and Ottawa.

Mustafizur is a career foreign service officer from the 11th batch of BCS Foreign Affairs cadre. He has served in Bangladesh missions in Paris, New York, Geneva, Kolkata, and Singapore.

Twitter sues Elon

FROM PAGE 12

After weeks of threats, Musk last week pulled the plug on the deal, accusing Twitter of "misleading" statements about the number of fake accounts, according to a letter from his lawyers included in a US securities filing.

Taka again loses

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to rising import payments and declining remittance.

Import payments have gone up since the end of last year because of the rising prices of commodities in the global market.

Between July and May of the last fiscal, imports went up by 39 percent year-on-year to \$75.40 billion, while exports grew 33 percent to \$44.58 billion.

This resulted in a record trade deficit – the gap between exports and imports – of \$30.81 billion, up 48.8 percent year-on-year.

Remittance, the cheapest source of foreign currencies for Bangladesh, fell 15 percent year-on-year to \$21.03 billion in 2021-22.

The country's foreign exchange reserves dropped below \$40 billion on Tuesday after the Bangladesh Bank cleared the import payments to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

The country settled import payments worth \$1.99 billion with the ACU last week, which dropped the reserves to \$39.80 billion for the first time in nearly two years.

The reserve was \$46.15 billion in December last year.

The central bank injected \$97 million into the market yesterday to keep the market stable, Md Serajul Islam, spokesperson for the Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star.