

Kaiser: Afran Nisho's most stellar performance to date?

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Afran Nisho starrer "Kaiser" has been the talk of the town since its release on July 8. Released on Hoichoi, the series follows the tale of Kaiser Chowdhury, homicide detective who works in the Detective Branch.

Featuring a star-studded cast of Reekita Nondine Shimu, Mostafizur Noor Imran, Imtiaz Barshon, Shatabdi Wadud, among others.

The show starts off with a mysterious double murder that Kaiser has been assigned to investigate. This is the first case Kaiser has been handed since his suspension, and he seems to be in a sink or swim situation depending on the eventual outcome of the case.

While you'd think that this another crime-thriller/detective story that has been made for OTT—and at times it does stray down that narrative—"Kaiser" is so much more than that. At its heart, the show covers themes of people's insecurities, mental health issues, addiction and the darkness of humanity. The director's ability to portray Dhaka as the dark and mysterious city that we sometimes forget it is, was truly remarkable.

The highlight of the show is definitely Afran Nisho's performance as the titular character. His ability to be the likeable lead character, while also showcasing his own flaws and shortcomings as a father, friend, (ex) husband and detective all come together to make a brilliant performance. At the heart of the character of Kaiser, is his video game addiction which almost cripples his social relationships. However, the show did a great job of portraying video game addiction without it becoming another PSA warning about how video games are bad.

One scene in particular, which features Kaiser, his ex-wife, and two best friends—one of whom is married to Kaiser's ex-wife—where all of them are arguing over petty topics and questioning Kaiser's ability to be a good father, friend and husband is a fantastic scene that showcases the different character dynamics in the show. This scene was apparently captured in just one shot, and



improvised by the actors. Another character that viewers will definitely love is Barrister, played by Imtiaz Barshon. When discussing this show with another colleague, we both noted that the character is almost a Bangladeshi version of Moriarty—Sherlock Holmes' greatest nemesis. Barrister's cool and collected persona, in combination with his ability to eloquently express himself, definitely added an immense value to the show.

"Kaiser" also makes great use of its soundtrack, including songs from Karnival,

Arekta Rock Band, EIDA and Petty Never Grew. In particular, the use of "Control Room" by Karnival was a great addition to the episode where the song is featured. Petty Never Grew's "Pink Song" was also a nice and sweet way of ending the final episode of the show.

Spanning a total of nine episodes, "Kaiser" brings to the table incredible cinematography paired with a performance of a lifetime from Afran Nisho. If you're tired of watching the typical Goyenda series available on OTTs, then "Kaiser" can be that fresh breath of air that you have been looking for.

'Severance' star Adam Scott joins cast of 'Madame Web'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Adam Scott of "Severance" and "Parks and Recreation" fame has now joined the cast of the upcoming "Spider-Man" spin-off "Madame Web". The movie is being directed by S J Clarkson.

In the movie, Dakota Johnson will be starring as Madame Web, a clairvoyant who has the power of telepathy and the ability to see events in the future. The film will act as the origin story for the character, who is most famous for appearing in Marvel comics as an ally of Spider-Man.

The movie will also star Sydney Sweeney, Emma Roberts, Celeste O'Connor and Isabela Merced among many others.



'Lal Moroger Jhuti' visits Toronto Multicultural Film Festival

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Liberation War-based film "Lal Moroger Jhuti", by renowned filmmaker Nurul Alam Atique will be participating in the Toronto Multicultural Film Festival, from July 18 to 23 in Canada.

The movie will be screened at the Cineplex Odeon in Toronto on July 18, under the 'Full Length Fiction Film category' at the festival.

"Lal Moroger Jhuti" was released domestically on December 10 of last year. The film was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh.

The movie stars Laila Hasan, Ahmed Rubel, Ashna Habib Bhabna, Shahjahan Shamrat, Ashish Khandaker and Ashok Byapari, among others.



NEWS

Lawmakers turn lawbreakers

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the MP, said, "All of a sudden, he [Fakhrul] swooped on Abul Kalam and started kicking and punching him on his leg, neck, nose and head repeatedly."

Senior AL leaders also condemn such incidents and admit that the activities of a few errant lawmakers are damaging the party's image.

Abdur Razzaque, AL presidium member and agriculture minister, told this newspaper that the AL is a large political party and many of its MPs are engaged in "different types of activities".

"But we will take stern action if any leader of the party -- be it an MP or anyone, are found engaging in unlawful activities and damaging the party's image," he said.

The senior cabinet member also said, "We will not consider whether the person is an MP or holding a post in the party while taking actions against him/her."

When his attention was drawn to the recent assault of Rajshahi college principal Salim Reza by AL MP Omar Faruk Chowdhury on July 7, Razzaque said, "This is not acceptable at all if anyone -- be it an MP -- violates the law."

After denying the incident at a press conference held by the lawmaker, Salim Reza admitted to a probe committee that the incident did take place at the MP's office.

It generated huge criticism, including from opposition MPs.

Mujibul Haque Chunnun, secretary general of the main opposition in parliament Jatiya Party, said such activities of ruling party MPs are totally objectionable.

"This was nothing but a heinous act. I have no words to criticise ...," said Chunnun.

"MPs are responsible persons. They are the makers of law. How can an MP beat and assault a teacher?" he questioned.

AL leaders and their MPs have been blinded after remaining in power for long stretch, added the JP leader. "They don't care about people ..."

Another incident that got media attention was the one involving Awami League MP Nadira Yasmin Jolly, elected to a reserved seat for women in parliament.

On March 8, the MP in Pabna allegedly threatened to slap the district's women affairs officer because the invitation for an International

Women's Day programme reached her late.

When it comes to beating up people, Awami League MP from Barguna-2 Shawkat Hasanur Rahman Rimon made no discrimination.

Rimon has beaten up a former Chhatra League leader, a government employee, a local youth, and assaulted and hurled abuse at a female lawyer and an activist of Mohila Awami League on different occasions.

Faridpur-4 lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, known as Nixon Chowdhury, hurled abuse in a phone conversation with Jasmin Sultana, Faridpur's Charchadrasan Upazila Nirbahi Officer, and threatened to give "fitting reply" to Atul Sarkar, deputy commissioner of Faridpur.

The MP did this after the assistant commissioner (land) of Bhanga arrested one of his activists for violating the election code of conduct on the day of by-election to chairman post of Charchadrasan Upazila Parishad on October 10, 2020.

Asked about such unruly behaviour of AL MPs, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said such infighting driven unruly behaviour of a section of political leaders including public representatives is nothing new, though the recent incidents indicate an increasing trend of unabashed ruthlessness.

"It must be deeply embarrassing for our political leaders who are struggling to uphold decent, democratic and pro-people values and practices of politics, though [they are becoming] increasingly isolated."

He also said the key issue is the growing reality that political affiliations and positions are treated as a licence for reaping the benefits of a zero-sum game through abuse of power.

"With the increasing monopolisation of the political space, it is about an internal turf-war in which the winner takes all. It goes on unabated because there is hardly any scope of accountability which is ominous for the future of our political parties."

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Tofail Ahmed, a local government expert, said MPs are being informally involved in different matters, which they should never do so as lawmakers.

For example, he said, MPs are intervening in college affairs. People, who are becoming victims of their

unnecessary interventions, raise their voices against them and subsequently face their wrath.

"It's a manifestation of uncultured and intolerant leadership," he said, adding that this kind of leadership cannot tolerate dissenting opinions.

Contacted, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said some incidents are being reported by the media in a wrong way, as opponents give incorrect information to journalists.

He, however, said the whole society has become intolerant and people sharply react even to silly matters. And his party will take organisational actions if any leader, including MPs, gets engaged in unlawful and unjust activities.

SSC exams

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of floods that month, we have decided to hold them in September instead."

About the flood situation in Sylhet, she said, "Some educational institutions there are still facing some problems. We will be able to provide textbooks to the students of the flood-hit districts by July 24."

At least 683 sets of textbooks will be distributed in Sylhet district, and 10,586 books in Sunamganj.

Saying the ministry has been trying to gradually bring the exam schedules to back the first quarter of the year, like during pre-pandemic times, she said, "We will be able to hold SSC exams in February in 2023."

About whether the recent spike in Covid cases may lead to another shutdown of schools, Dipu Moni said the government has no such plans right now.

Wasa pushes for area-wise water tariff

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tariff would be Tk 18.75 per unit. The low-income people would pay Tk 12.5 each unit.

Commercial users will pay Tk 50 per unit but the government organisations would pay at the production cost of Tk 25.

According to Wasa's statistics, 0.8 percent of its customers are from upscale residential areas, 1.3 percent from upper-middle class areas, 4 percent from middle-class areas and 79.4 percent from lower-middle-class areas.

With the new proposal, Wasa will be able to level the production cost and selling cost of water and there would not be any need for subsidy, said Md Tahmidul Islam, the technical adviser of Wasa, at an event styled "Fixing of area-based water price of Dhaka Wasa".

Wasa must increase water tariff rationally, said Md Tazul Islam, the local government, rural development and co-operatives minister, at the event. "People should not

suffer -- Wasa must take that into consideration."

No organisation can sustain on subsidy and the production cost cannot be higher than the selling price. "It also needs to be checked whether the water price is going to be increased due to mismanagement or corruption. Corruption will not be tolerated."

However, it is necessary to supply water at a lower rate to the low-income people than the wealthy, Islam added.

More control feared if data stored locally

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certain types of data locally.

This means no data transfer can happen without the consent of the director general of the digital security agency.

"We want to secure our citizens' data," said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for the ICT Division, who presided over the event.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said, "Data protection is of serious strategic intent. Data sovereignty is at the very centre of the debate. And the localisation of data is important. Moderating content democratically is important."

Huma Khan, senior human rights adviser to the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, raised concerns about a provision in the draft.

The provision would allow the government to direct the DG in charge of this law to take action "in the interest of sovereignty and the integrity of Bangladesh, the security

of the State, friendly relations with foreign states or public order".

She said, "We have seen how such provisions were abused in the case of the Digital Security Act."

Representatives from the business sector voiced concerns about how the provision would affect international business and trade.

Speakers from Mastercard and American Chamber of Commerce commented that the cross-border transfer of financial data is necessary for business.

Nihad Kabir, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said, "We would get lost in the woods about the transfer of data, storage of data, and more."

State Minister Palak said stakeholders have been negotiating and debating with the government, but not with the large tech companies.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said the government is a user of data,

and hence, it cannot be the one to implement this law.

"Implementation has to be done by an independent authority or a commission created by the government."

The aim of the law should be protection and not control, he added.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said, "All the future global developments will require a data protection legislation to ensure the privacy, security and protection of individuals and organisations in the new digital world."

The ICT Division incorporated the feedback of 17 organisations for this draft, and has revised 40 sections of the law, including deleting a provision that previously granted the DG impunity from legal prosecution.

NM Zeaul Alam, senior secretary of ICT Division, M Shahidul Haque, its senior legislative expert, and Tarique M Barkatullah, director of the National Data Centre, were present at the event.

prepare to meet the criteria for possible future GSP+ status."

She said they would also highlight the importance of the forthcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive to the country.

"It will make sure that European companies will not be complicit in violations of labour rights in their supply chains. The government of Bangladesh has all the reasons to speed up the reforms to which it is committed," said Hautala before the visit.

conventions are in place.

Bangladesh currently enjoys the generalised system of preferences (GSP) facility, under which it exports can enter EU duty- and quota-free. The country will be upgraded to GSP-plus once it graduates from least developed country (LDC) status in 2026.

To avail the GSP-plus facility, Bangladesh would start to pay duties on its clothing exports which constitute over 90 percent of its merchandise sold to the EU.

"The European Union is

committed to a partnership with Bangladesh to support the country's socio-economic development. The EU is the most important export market for Bangladesh and ready-made garments represent 83 percent of those exports," Hautala was quoted as saying in the statement.

"Strengthening respect for human rights, freedom of expression and labour rights underpins this cooperation. I look forward to discussions in Dhaka on how Bangladesh can fully comply with the requirements of EBA and best