

# OTT has been a blessing for the film industry

RAIHAN RAFI

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SHARMIN JOYA

Raihan Rafi is certainly making his way to becoming one of the most popular directors of the country, with the success of his blockbuster film “Poran”, and his upcoming “Damal”.

The commercially successful director recently received the Best Scriptwriter (Story) Award at the Blender’s Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards for his web film “Khachar Bhitor Ochin Pakhi”.

“As an independent storyteller, I am honored to receive such recognition for my work”, he told The Daily Star.

“OTT became an important entertainment medium for independent makers like us in recent years. I am thankful to The Daily Star and Ispahani for opening up a platform that also acknowledges those who work behind the camera – such as cinematographers, editors and scriptwriters,” Raihan said.

“I believe that as a pioneer award show in this genre, this initiative will work as an inspiration to the digital content creators and



Raihan Rafi receiving the Best Scriptwriter award at the event.

crews of the mainstream productions as well,” the director added.

Raihan Rafi prefers to write scripts of his own directorial projects, and likes to be involved in the entire production process as well. “As a director, I feel that it is my duty to ensure that the stories I take on are perfectly told. I prefer scripts that have a powerful message to it, and my main concentration lies in perfectly communicating that message to the audience,” Rafi said.

Take “Khachar Bhitor Ochin Pakhi” as an example,” Rafi says, “This movie is very close to my heart. I had decided to bring this story to



life a long time ago. However, I did not go into production until my team and I could find the perfect location, actors and crew to execute the film. As soon as everything matched to our expectations, we shot the film and it became a success,” Rafi added.

The Chorki produced film won two more awards— Best Film in Popular Category, Best Actress in Critics’ Category at the Blender’s Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards.

While receiving the award, the humbly composed storyteller said, “During the pandemic, OTT platforms have produced a multitude of brilliant contents and played a major role in keeping the audiences entertained. With these productions, Bangladeshi content creators could secure their place among audiences, who were previously exposed to international platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime.

“This seems like a milestone for me. We are competing with the best, and we are not losing, but persisting, in this digital ocean,” Rafi said while talking to The Daily Star.

“It is remarkable to see the eagerness of Bangladeshi people to watch our movies on the silver screen. Social media and news media play great roles in making movies successful as

well. As long as people watch our contents and share their views, perspectives on it through social media or word of mouth – I can assure that every good movie will be a successful one,” Rafi said.

Rafi further discussed the importance of OTT platforms and the changes it made in the industry’s overall professionalism, manner in creating content.

“Initially, OTT used to have similar projects as television. However, the manner of production gradually changed as OTT welcomed new storytellers, producers wholeheartedly and it became more professional in terms of dubbing, rehearsing and audition,” added Rafi.

Raihan Rafi’s upcoming film “Damal” is scheduled to hit the theaters on October 28, this year. The movie stars popular actors, Siam Ahmed, Sariful Razz, and Bidya Sinha Mim among others.

Raihan Rafi’s next OTT project is “Nishwas” featuring Tasnia Farin, Intiaz Barshon, Farzana Chhobi and Safa Kabir, among others. The trailer was released recently, and it will stream on Chorki from September 15 onwards. “Nishwas” (breath) is all about life and death,” shares Rafi. “The plot revolves around a hospital, where every breath counts for the people who are suffering,” he concludes.



PHOTO: REUTERS/SIMON DAWSON

## Netflix’s ‘The Crown’ pauses production after the Queen’s death

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Netflix’s Emmy Award-winning drama, “The Crown” has paused the filming of its sixth and final season this Friday, after the death of Queen Elizabeth – who is a central figure on the show.

The streaming service announced that the production was temporarily put on halt “as a mark or respect” for the monarch, who passed away on Thursday, at the age of 96. Netflix also noted that filming will be stopped on the day of the Queen’s funeral.

The coming season of “The Crown” is expected to cover events in the early and mid-1990s, including the divorce between Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

## Teaser for Sunny Leone starrer ‘Oh My Ghost’ released

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bollywood actress Sunny Leone is ready to bring on the heat, with her tempting ‘ghost’ avatar in the Tamil movie “Oh My Ghost” (OMG). The “Baby Doll” actress looks absolutely stunning in the 59 second teaser.

Directed by R Yuvan, the fantasy horror-comedy also stars Satish, Yogi Babu, and Darsha Gupta in pivotal roles. Sunny Leone shared the official teaser of “OMG” on her official Facebook page.

“Are you all ready to get possessed by the hottest ghost ever? Enjoy the ‘Oh My Ghost’ teaser now,” the post read.



# NEWS

## Bangladesh falls short

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said the report, which is published every year since 2008.

The review, which is based on full-year data from 2021, found the budget documents in Bangladesh were not prepared according to internationally accepted principles.

The government’s supreme audit institution reviewed the public accounts, but its reports did not contain substantive findings and were not made publicly available within a reasonable period, it said.

Besides, the supreme audit institution did not meet international standards of independence.

The basic information on natural resource extraction awards was not consistently made publicly available by the Bangladesh government, it

said.

Subsequently, the report called for making basic information about natural resource extraction awards publicly and consistently available and publishing timely audit reports that contain substantive findings, recommendations and narratives.

Bangladesh’s fiscal transparency would be improved by preparing budget documents according to internationally accepted principles and ensuring the supreme audit institution meets international standards of independence and has sufficient resources.

During the review period, the government made significant progress by publishing its end-of-year report within a reasonable period.

It also made its executive budget

proposal and enacted budget widely and easily accessible to the public, including online.

Information in the budget was considered generally reliable.

Budget documents provided a reasonably complete picture of the government’s planned expenditures and revenue streams, including natural resource revenues. Financial allocations to and earnings from state-owned enterprises were included in publicly available budget documents.

Information on debt obligations was publicly available.

The government appeared to follow in practice the criteria and procedures for awarding natural resource extraction contracts and licences as specified in law or regulation.

## Charles III proclaimed King

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aged 96 on Thursday, but the proclamation is the latest step in the setpiece 10-day programme building up to her state funeral.

An emotional Charles set the tone for his reign in a televised address on Friday in which he hailed his “darling mama” for her “unswerving devotion” during her record-breaking seven decades on the throne.

The speech dominated the front pages of Britain’s newspapers on

Saturday, with his heartfelt tribute to his mother headlining the Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Daily Mail and The Sun.

Charles looking pensive as he arrived at Buckingham Palace for the first time as king made the front page image on The Independent, The Guardian and The Times, which also carried the words “God Save the King”.

The new king also named his elder son and heir Prince William, 40, as the new Prince of Wales, while

expressing love for his younger son Harry and daughter-in-law Meghan.

The move means William’s wife Kate assumes the Princess of Wales title once held by his mother and Charles’ ex-wife, the late Princess Diana.

Crowds have massed outside Buckingham Palace both to mourn the queen and to wish Charles well, greeting him with cheers and even kisses when he arrived from Scotland on Friday.

## Unpredictable Pakistan

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and second innings,” a confident Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka had said on Friday.

A way – however challenging it may seem – to offset the toss factor in the final would be to post a big first innings total, followed by early wickets with the new ball. Pakistan will have the upper hand with the ball but Sri Lanka possess batting depth, calculative approach, and composure on their side. If Pakistan are unpredictable, Sri Lanka are assured.

Pakistan’s power-hitting in lower-middle order or their openers could create the difference while Sri Lanka’s spin could aid their side

in neutralising Pakistan’s hitting ability. It would be a battle of nerves and both sides have had good results by recovering from tight situations.

Sri Lanka overcame Bangladesh and then India in tight matches while Pakistan handed defeats to India and Afghanistan, a game where Naseem Shah’s two incredible sixes in the last over as a number 11 showed Pakistan’s unpredictability can pop up from anywhere. On the other hand, Sri Lanka’s stability comes from their dynamic approach in batting.

Where the two sides are similar is that winning this game can revitalise the dwindling morale back home, with cricket being a major boost in society. “One-third of Pakistan

is currently under water,” a press release from the PCB quoted spinner Shadab Khan yesterday, while adding they are hoping for a win to ‘bring lively smiles back on the faces of people affected by the flood.’

Sri Lanka’s economic crisis had seen the Asia Cup moved to UAE and the Lankan skipper said his side has been rejuvenated by wishes of people back home and the team remain eager to give something back to the people.

Both teams have toiled hard under testing conditions so far in the marquee event, and their skills, guile and nerves, above all, will be put to the test again tonight as the Asia Cup 2022 gets its last hurrah to emanate thrills of joy.

## First rest areas for truckers almost ready

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A medium-sized truck (two-axle truck, tanker, and lorry) would have to pay Tk 75 for parking for five hours and Tk 15 for every additional hour, according to the guideline.

If a driver wants to rest there, he or she has to spend Tk 150 for five hours and Tk 25 for every additional hour, it said.

The rest areas would have toilets, restaurants and truck maintenance workshops among other facilities.

WHY REST AREAS?

On June 25, 2018, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a cabinet meeting gave several directives to reduce road crashes, including building rest areas for drivers at regular intervals on highways.

Driving vehicles for a long time without any rest is considered one of the major reasons behind the accidents.

Following her directives, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in 2019 took a project to build four rest areas for trucks at a cost of Tk 226.22 crore.

The four rest areas would be built at Nimshar in Cumilla on Dhaka-Chattoagram highway, Pachila in Sirajganj on Dhaka Rangpur highway, Jagadishpur in Habiganj on Dhaka-Sylhet highway, and Laxmikandar in Magura on Dhaka-Khulna highway.

The project was supposed to be completed within June 2021, but the work is running behind schedule mainly due to a delay in land acquisition, RHD sources said. The fresh deadline is June 2023.

Two of the four rest areas – Nimshar in Cumilla and Pachila in Sirajganj – are almost ready, Project Director Abdullah Al Mamun told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mamun, also the additional chief engineer (technical service wing) of the RHD, said they already floated a tender for hiring service providers.

“We hoped that the two rest areas would be operational within this year.”

He expected that the remaining two would be functional in June next year.

However, RHD sources said there is a space issue in the rest areas. In a rest area, 70 vehicles can be parked, but the rest area has room for only for 24 drivers, they said.

So, the project authorities recently sent a revised proposal to the Road Transport and Highways Division to build a new four-storey building and upgrade the two-storey building to a four-storey one to improve facilities, they said.

If the proposal is approved, the project cost would be around Tk 255 crore, they added.

SERVICE CHARGES

The division approved the guideline for operation and maintenance of the rest areas after the finance ministry gave the go-ahead.

Signed by Fahmida Hoque Khan, deputy secretary of the division, the guideline mentions everything needed for the operation and maintenance of the first such initiative in the country.

According to the guideline, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), with prime mover and three-axle trailers, four-axle trucks, tankers and lorries, would have to pay Tk 150 for parking for five hours and Tk 30 for every additional hour.

For HGVs, with prime mover and two axle trailers, three axle trucks, tankers and lorries, drivers would have to spend Tk 100 for parking for five hours and Tk 20 for every additional hour.

A light vehicle, two-axle trucks with four wheels, would cost Tk 50 to park for five hours and Tk 10 for every additional hour.

A driver or his associate would have to pay Tk 5 for using the toilet and Tk 10 for using bathrooms.

However, a top RHD official said the main challenge of the initiative is to motivate drivers to use the facilities as they are accustomed to parking their vehicles beside roads without paying any money.

“Even transport leaders requested us to provide the service free of cost initially, but it’s not possible because apart from the construction cost, we have operational cost too,” he said, wishing not to be named.

Hossain Ahmed Majumder, acting secretary of Bangladesh Truck Covered-van Owners’ Association, said they opposed the “high charge”.

Drivers would not avail the service unless the charges are kept at an “affordable level,” he told this correspondent yesterday.

## 6 men rape

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The men then gagged her with a strip of cloth and raped her, she said, adding that she recognised three of the men named Bablu, Taleb and Aslam who are from her village.

She added that she lost consciousness at one point.

Her mother said she was going to the town to see her father.

Contacted, Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Thakurgaon Police Station, said the victim was asked to file a case with Baliadangi Police Station.

However, Khairul Anam, officer-in-charge of Baliadangi Police Station, said he was yet to formally receive any complaint.

## Production

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The Beanibazar-1 well was closed in 2016 after producing 35 billion cubic feet of gas from a depth of 3,450 metres out of the 4,100-metre deep well.

“After removing the old pipe, we will interpret the log to confirm the presence of gas and then extraction will be resumed. We are hopeful of producing 7-10 million cubic feet of gas per day.”

In addition, more than 90 barrels of condensate will be produced daily from the well, he said.

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## Farmers block

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Upazila Agricultural officer Sadiquzzaman, however, said the crisis occurred because there was a mismatch between the supply and demand of the fertilizer.

“We distributed 25kg urea each among 900 farmers,” he said.

This year, the government restricted private sector retailers from selling urea. This might have been the reason behind the fertilizer shortage, said a local fertilizer dealer.