

SNIPPETS FROM "ARAAL".

PHOTOS: COURTESY

## 'Araal': The duality of man in its full, unhinged glory

**The pious and religious Siddique is a Muezzin on a small island in Monpura. His life revolves around the small mosque, where he would serenade the village with the sound of Azaan. One day, when he comes to his house, he discovers the body of a prostitute. He doesn't have a single clue as to how the body arrived, and buries it deep under his residence. The dead body haunts him in his sleep, and finally, when he confesses to the police, they find out that the body is no longer there. How did the body disappear?**

**Pritom Hasan undergoes a drastic change in look for "Araal". Here, he plays the role of an orphan, who was brought up by the senior priest at the mosque.**

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

"Araal", starring Pritom Hasan and Nawshaba Ahmed dwells on the psychological aspects of humanity on a setting of a remote Island. Directed by Nazmul Nabin, the movie revolves around protagonists Siddique and Shefali, whose lives intertwine due to a sudden twist of fate. The thriller will be available for streaming today, on Chorki.

"Monpura is an extremely beautiful island, which is surrounded by the majestic Meghna river," says the director. "Its scenic beauty and its remote surroundings drew me towards it. However, everything comes with a price. The electricity there only stays from 6 pm till 12 am, and thus, most of the times we had to work with a generator. Sometimes, the mosque wouldn't let us shoot there, and so we had to convince the senior imam to let us shoot there," said the filmmaker.

Most psychological thrillers are usually set in an urbanised setting. However, "Araal"

reflects on the stories of a remote island, that hasn't been engulfed by the complexities of city life.

"I wanted to showcase how psychological problems like post-traumatic stress disorder and amnesia can also affect the inhabitants of a remote island. I wanted to highlight the dilemma of a common man who fails hard to speak up against the injustice prevalent in the society," added Nabin.

Nawshaba plays the role of Shefali, a mother and a former sex worker, whose only goal in life is to establish a better future for her daughter.

"Shefali is a character who has multiple layers within her. She doesn't speak much, but her presence acts as a catalyst in the movie," says Nawshaba.

The actress also stresses the struggles of Shefali and her constant fight to be acknowledged as a human being.

"Shefali wants to give her daughter a decent future and thus, she leaves behind her time in prostitution to lead a more normal

life. Her dream is to arrange a 'milad' for her mother on her death anniversary but not a single muezzin wants to help her as she is a 'soiled and tainted woman'. It speaks to how due to social stigma, these sex workers are not treated like human beings, let alone respected," added the actress.

Pritom Hasan undergoes a drastic change in look for "Araal". Here, he plays the role of an orphan, who was brought up by the senior priest at the masjid.

"The challenging aspect of the movie for me was to enact Siddique's walk. His body language and movement styles were a reflection of how he was brought up. We also had to work hard in terms of the look, and thus, I had to cut my mustache to look the part," says Pritom.

The singer also highlighted the difficulties of portraying characters with psychological nuances.

"Handling a two-faced character is challenging for sure. Siddique tries to portray himself differently in front of others, but his real personality is on full display when he thinks no one is watching. Drawing a fine line here is the hardest aspect of my character," added the actor.

## Shah Abdul Karim's family now getting copyright royalties

After the death of Baul Shah Abdul Karim, many used his songs commercially without taking permission from his family. Taking this situation into account, the Bangladesh Copyright Office registered the intellectual property rights of 472 songs by Abdul Karim in December of last year.

According to Section 78 of the Copyright Act of Bangladesh - a song cannot be commercially broadcast - as welcome tunes, on TV, YouTube, etc. - without the permission of the lyricist and composer, who owns the rights to the song.

The songs have been archived on the website, shahabdulkarim. com. Under the supervision of Zafar Raja Chowdhury, former registrar of the Copyright Office, ZM Studios provided technical assistance in the development of the website, to help preserve Abdul Karim's music.

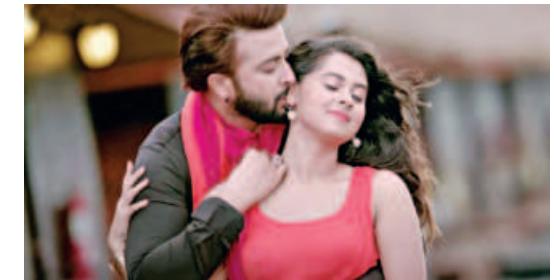
## Shakib Khan hints on separation with Bubly

Rumours that there is no relationship anymore between Shakib Khan and Bubly were circulating in the media for a while.

Shakib all but confirmed the rumours in a conversation with the Daily Star.

"Isn't it obvious that there is no relationship left between us anymore?", said Shakib to TDS. "People should understand after seeing our interactions. Since she came from the USA to Bangladesh 9 months ago, we had not interacted. So, should I go ahead and announce this to everyone?"

On the other hand, Shabnam Bubly told the media that despite all the mishaps in the past, she wants to forget them and live in a happy family with Shakib Khan.



# NEWS

## Bangladesh

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themselves collectively to address challenges and to progress.

"Authoritarian trends that predate the pandemic continue to erode the rule of law," said Elizabeth Andersen, executive director of the WJP. "Checks on executive power are weakening and respect for human rights is falling."

## Rohingya man

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In a report yesterday, The Daily Star, quoting an APBn official, stated that a Rohingya man named Mohammad Salam was shot dead at Ukhia's Kutupalong refugee camp on Tuesday.

However, Salam, who was shot at the camp, is currently under treatment at Cox's Bazar General Hospital.

## IMF talks begin

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Mitchell, security consultant.

The team will discuss economic and financial reforms and policies with the Bangladeshi authorities during its stay till November 9, read an IMF statement on Friday.

The delegation's objective is to achieve progress towards a staff-level agreement on a prospective Extended Credit Facility (ECF) or an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme, and access under the newly created Resilience and Sustainability Facility in the coming months, the statement added.

## BFIU gets three

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taskforce, led by the attorney general and formed to recover laundered money, took place on January 3.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the home ministry, foreign ministry, finance ministry, ACC, BFIU and the CID, reports UNB.

It was decided at the meeting that urgent steps were needed to identify the launderers and bring back black money stashed in foreign banks.

On August 31, the HC ordered BFIU chief Masud Biswas to form the research cell and submit a progress report by the next hearing, which was held yesterday.

## 'Ready to pay more'

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The meeting was held at the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority office in the capital.

Speaking to The Daily Star after the meeting, Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said he again proposed increasing the price of industrial gas by 40 percent to Tk 22.83 per cubic metres from the existing Tk 16.33 to resolve the crisis.

"We want uninterrupted gas supply to our industrial units for operating those in full capacity. We are ready to pay more for gas from the government," said Khokon.

Khokon said they were running their units at half capacity because of the gas crisis.

He said the government will have to spend an additional \$1.2 billion if it imports LNG from the international spot markets at the current price.

If the government imports LNG worth \$1.2 billion, the industrial units can be supplied with adequate gas for six months, which would eventually fetch \$6-10 billion through export of goods and supply of raw materials to local industries, the BTMA chief said.

He said Nasrul Hamid agreed in principle to the proposal of spending an additional \$1.2 billion, although making a decision on the additional spending depends on Bangladesh Bank as it is desperately trying to stop the drop in forex reserves to face any future challenges.

Md Saiful Islam, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), told this correspondent that the government was positive about importing LNG for supplying gas to industries as the state minister and the PM's adviser said they would consider the proposal.

The adviser and the state minister advised the businesses to cope with the current gas and power supply situation as there was a global energy crisis stemming from Russia Ukraine war, Saiful added.

A leading textile producer and garment exporter, who attended the meeting, said the government is also

planning to import more furnace oil so that the power crisis can be resolved soon.

Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, suggested the government prioritise power supply to those industrial units who produce essential commodities.

The rationing of power is working properly for the industrial units as load-shedding has become a normal occurrence in the industries now, he told The Daily Star.

BTMA member mills are the biggest consumers of gas, who use 16.62 percent of the total gas consumed in the country, according to data from a business body.

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## Scientists find

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Strange stars live up to their names both colloquially and theoretically.

When they form out of the collapsing core of a massive and dying star, neutron stars are believed to become so compressed that the normally charged constituents of matter, the positively charged protons in the atomic nuclei and the negatively charged electrons orbiting each atom's nucleus, are crushed together into negatively charged neutron particles.

But it's theorized that under the right conditions, the interiors of neutron stars could get even weirder.

It's theorized that the matter deep in a neutron star could be squeezed until the usual subatomic particles such as neutrons no longer exists, and matter exists in the form of the even smaller particles, known as quarks, that make up the more familiar protons and neutrons. Quarks come with strange names, such as up, down, top, charmed, and in fact, "strange."

## Jamaat in disguise?

FROM PAGE 2

"Now, if any party wants to register with us, it has to apply for registration as a new party. It can get registration if it meets the conditions. If it fails, it will not get it."

Jamaat's registration as a political party was announced illegal by High Court in 2013. Following the verdict, the EC in October 2018 cancelled Jamaat's registration.

Earlier this month, Amar Bangladesh Party, founded by former leaders of Jamaat, also applied for registration as a political party.

The PM instantly asked her principal secretary to sit with the National Board of Revenue to settle the issue.

The businesspeople said some private banks were reluctant to open letters of credit citing dollar crisis.

The premier assured them that she would sit with finance ministry high-ups and the Bangladesh Bank governor to solve the problem soon.

She also asked the businesspeople to import essential commodities from countries that produce them so that the cost is low.

The PM also directed Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque to make sure that the import of agricultural inputs is not hampered and every measure is taken to boost food production to the highest level, the sources said.

Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told The Daily Star that the prime minister asked them to maintain a stable supply of edible oil and sugar to the market.

He said the stock and supply of the two items were stable but the prices went up in the local market because of price hike in the international market.

Rana used to sell the pills in different areas, the officer said, adding that police followed him for a while before arresting him.

Rana was previously accused in three cases.

## 'No factory has to shut'

FROM PAGE 1

In response, Sheikh Hasina assured them of taking measures so that no factory has to face closure. She also promised to improve gas and electricity supplies within a short period, said sources who attended the meeting.

Hasina, during the meeting at the Gono Bhaban with importers and exporters, asked the businesspeople to ensure that food items are available to consumers at a fair price and urged them not to make excessive profits.

Prices of edible oil and sugar were elaborately discussed and the businesspeople said they were facing difficulties in refining sugar due to gas shortage and the Tk 29 per kg duty on the import of unrefined sugar was hurting them, said meeting sources.

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Hasina, in her opening speech, called upon the businesspeople to place he country and the countrymen before profits.

"There's no Hawa Bhaban and the development wing at the PMO to share your profits with," she said, reports UNB.

She said during the last 14 years of Awami League rule, businesspeople ran their businesses and made profits without any hindrance. She said businesspeople are now free from the pain of Hawa Bhaban and development wing of the PMO.

"We had said that we will not allow our factories and industries to close, we have to continue ... I ensured workers' wages, gave the stimulus packages," she said.

The PM said when the opposition is holding anti-government protests on the streets, some businesspeople have become anxious, but there are some others who have started looking for opportunities to make profits by "opening Hawa Bhaban again".

"Don't know why, suddenly they [businesspeople] have started singing the same tune ... that there is a lack of this or that ... this cannot be done or that cannot happen," said Hasina.

The PM said the government was importing LNG at higher prices and giving it to the businesspeople at a cheaper rate.

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, Awami League Secretary of Commerce and Industries Siddique Rahman, Director General (additional secretary) of the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection of the Ministry of Commerce AHM Shafiquzzaman, Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, TK Group Managing Director Mohammad Mustafa Haider, City Sugar Industries Ltd Adviser Amitava Chakraborty, City Edible Oil Ltd Director Biswajit Saha, S Alam Group Senior General Manager Kazi Salahuddin Ahammad, Deshbandhu Group Managing Director Golam Rahman, Meghna Group Managing Director Mostafa Kamal and ACI Ltd Managing Director Arif Dowla were present at the meeting.