

# 'Every producer in Bangladesh said, don't bother'

Nuhash Humayun's "Moshari" to be executive produced by Oscar winners

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SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

In a bombshell announcement that took everyone by surprise, Nuhash Humayun's *Moshari* will now be executive produced by Oscar-winning Hollywood superstars Jordan Peele and Riz Ahmed. In addition, Variety predicted that the prodigal director's horror flick will make the Oscar nominations this year, in the "Best Live Action Short" category. Earlier, the director also helmed the first ever Bangladeshi project on Hulu.

The Daily Star caught up with Nuhash to talk about his recent achievements, and his reaction to them.

**How did you get Jordan Peele and Riz Ahmed to agree to produce "Moshari"?**

It actually happened quite organically. Dana Gills, Senior VP of Development and Productions at Monkeypaw (Jordan Peele's company) was on the jury for SXSW 2022, when *Moshari* won the SXSW jury award. Conversations opened up with JP's team. Monkeypaw's storytelling is incredible and revolutionary in how it bends genre to shine a mirror to our society and they connected



**Your expansion into international markets was planned well ahead. What was your thought process?**

I've always believed in my heart that there's a bigger audience for my stories but honestly this is all happening way sooner than expected. I haven't even made a full feature of my own yet!

I still remember in 2018 when *Iti Tomari Dhaka* premiered in Busan and I saw how audiences embraced my opening segment, *The Background Artist* - it was an experience like no other because these audiences didn't know my name or my family. They only saw me for my work.

Honestly, that's what interests me about expanding all over the world - to have my work be my identity

**Does Peele and Riz joining the project mean that the film will be remade into a full feature?**

There are currently murmurs of a full length feature version of *Moshari*, but I can't reveal more details at this point - or who the associated individuals will be.

with *Moshari* - we've been having wonderful conversations about the themes and layers of the short

Riz Ahmed and Allie Moore, through Left-Handed Films, also discovered the film soon after and shared some very inspiring words to me

All this has been in talks since early 2022, so keeping it hush-hush has been excruciating. Glad to finally be able to say they are EP on the short!

**Variety predicted that "Moshari" will be nominated for the Oscars.**

Variety's prediction is surreal to me, because I still remember the day every producer in Bangladesh told me not to even bother sending this short to film festivals.

It is incredible to see the support for our vision, it makes me very proud to see a Bangla word like *Moshari* on the Oscar predictions list.

I'm keeping my head down low and working on my next projects - but I'd be lying to say I'm not overwhelmed with excitement



Jordan Peele and Riz Ahmed

**Can we expect a historic Hollywood release?**

The resources required to expand the post-apocalyptic world of *Moshari* would be significantly larger than the budget of the average Bangladeshi film, so it would definitely have to be international leaning producers.

Whether my films release in Hollywood first, or SXSW, or an OTT, they'll always have my *deshi* DNA.

## Warner Bros did not want Henry Cavill to return as Superman

Hollywood heartthrob Henry Cavill will soon be reprising his role as Superman. However, it has now been revealed that Warner Bros were not keen on his return.

Apparently, *Black Adam* star Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson had to convince Warner Bros to bring back Henry Cavill, to play Black Adam's arch nemesis.



Dwayne Johnson posted a video to his Twitter, where he talked about how he had to 'fight' to make Black Adam look invincible, a part of which involved getting Henry Cavill to return as Superman.

The *Black Adam* actor went on to add that the studios tried to make up 'inexplicable' and 'inexcusable' reasons to not bring back Henry Cavill. However, Dwayne would not take no for an answer and ensured Henry would return for the movie.

## Deepto TV launches their OTT platform Deepto Play

Deepto TV's latest initiative in entertaining the masses is their newly launched OTT platform, Deepto Play. The inauguration ceremony for Deepto Play was organised at the offices of Deepto TV on Monday, November 28 at 7 pm. Present at the launching, as the Chief Guest, was State Minister of the ICT Division, Zunaid Ahmed Palak. Deepto Play can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs by downloading the Deepto Play app from the Google Play Store.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NUHASH

# NEWS

## Smog engulfs Indian capital as winter pollution worsens

REUTERS, New Delhi

Thick smog engulfed India's capital New Delhi yesterday as air pollution worsened with the setting in of winter, shooting up concentrations of fine particles in the air three times above the acceptable limits.

The world's most polluted capital city struggles to breathe as every winter as cold temperatures and calm winds trap pollutants closer to the ground.

"As the minimum temperature is dropping, gradual fog occurrence during early morning hours is likely to increase, leading to deterioration of air quality index (AQI)," said the federal government's System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) in a daily bulletin.

The AQI in parts of the city shot up above 400 yesterday, which is classified as the 'severe' category of

air pollution, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The level of fine particles measuring 2.5 micrograms or PM2.5 was 180 micrograms per cubic metre of air as of 10am in the Delhi National Capital Region, CPCB data showed, three times above the 24 hour acceptable limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre of air.

Authorities have brought in several measures over the years to improve the city's air quality, including switching Delhi's fleet of public transport to cleaner fuel, spraying water from on top of towers and on roads and controlling burning of firewood and waste during cold weather.

But experts have said these measures need to be applied across northern India and in cities and towns around New Delhi that form the wider National Capital Region, which also suffer from poor air quality, to effectively control pollution.

## No rail operations

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However, a BR official, preferring anonymity, said they may write to Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) to increase the number of buses on Dhaka-Narayanganj route to cater to an additional pressure of passengers.

The PBRLP, the railway's biggest project, is being implemented to build a 169-km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through the Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,247 crore.

The government approved the project in March 2016, and it was supposed to be completed by this June.

However, the project's physical work started in July 2018, mainly due to the delay in signing the loan contract with Chinese Exim Bank.

In the meantime, the project's cost increased to Tk 39,246 crore, and the deadline was extended to June 2024.

BR had planned to launch train and road operations simultaneously when the Padma Bridge opens, at least on the Mawa-Bhanga section, but later changed the decision as the bridge authority did not hand over the bridge to the BR in due time for "technical reasons".

The Padma Bridge was open to the public this June.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan in August this year inaugurated the installation of a rail track on the lower deck of Padma Bridge and hoped to start rail operations on Dhaka-Bhanga section via the bridge by next June.

Project Director Afzal Hossain said they will build three dual gauge lines from the capital's Kamalapur to Gendaria, and to lay the lines, the train operations on Dhaka-Narayanganj route need to be suspended.

He said apart from the rail lines, they will also build an underpass at Tilpapara in the capital, and operations need to be suspended for that as well.

## Rohingya man

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was handed over to his relatives after an autopsy at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

Amir Zafar, commanding officer of APBn-8, also an additional deputy inspector general of police, said two people were detained in connection with the killing.

## Witness killed

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a case against them with the court on November 6 and my brother was the witness."

He added that when he and Khalek were going to the court yesterday, Mozammel and his family members attacked them.

"They beat me with bamboo sticks and kicked my brother in the chest. He immediately fell to the ground. When I took him to the hospital, the doctor declared him dead," Sattar told The Daily Star.

Rabiul Islam, officer-in-charge of the Dhunat Police Station, said, "Abdul Sattar had filed a case against Mozammel and others after their altercation. Today [yesterday] was the date fixed by the court to record the witness's statement. He was on his way to the court when the incident occurred."

He added that a case was being filed in this regard and police were already trying to arrest the accused.

## Mummies

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uncovered an extension of the cemetery which included archaeological tombs dating back to different periods of time.

In 2021, investigators at the site unearthed a skull with a tongue-shaped ornament in its mouth. By the end of 2021, a man, a woman, and a child mummy were all again found with golden tongues.

Dr Mustafa Waziri, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Archaeology, said that the mission had found a number of golden chips in the form of human tongues in the mouths of some of the mummies, which were in a poor state of preservation.

Several mummies were discovered coated with gold on the bone directly underneath the linen wraps.

The archaeologists also found golden chips in the forms of scarabs and lotus flowers, as well as several funeral ornaments and pottery that were likely used in the mummification process.

Experts believe that the mummies' real tongues were removed during the embalming process and replaced with a gold chip so the deceased could speak to the ancient Egyptian god of Osiris, who was "Lord of the Underworld".

## Is an olive branch offered?

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his wife Mahima Saad welcomed Quader to the hotel.

The JP chief exchanged greetings with Raushan and enquired about her health. They had breakfast together.

The two leaders held a one-to-one meeting for about 10 to 15 minutes, sources said.

Sources close to Raushan said the JP leaders discussed getting the expelled and former leaders back into the party and properly evaluating their contributions to the organisation.

Raushan, also the chief patron of the JP, asked Quader to conduct the party activities following discussions with her and other senior leaders.

They also talked about nominating a strong and reliable party candidate for the upcoming mayor polls to Rangpur City Corporation. The opposition leader agreed to nominate incumbent Mayor Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa as the party's mayor candidate in the December 27 polls.

Raushan and Quader discussed the current political situation in the country. They also agreed to make the JP stronger and unite its leaders and activists ahead of the next general election.

"We don't want any division in the party. We want to unite all the leaders and activists of the party. We want to be elected to power to materialise the ideals of late president HM Ershad," a JP leader loyal to Quader told The Daily Star.

Aggrieved by Quader's recent sharp criticism of the government, AI high-ups were allegedly backing Raushan to put pressure on the JP chief.

The opposition leader on August 31 convened the party's 10th national council on November 26.

Sources in the JP said pro-Raushan faction had planned to remove Quader from the party's helm in the council and take control of the organisation.

Raushan, however, later postponed the council.

The rift between the two JP factions intensified as the JP Parliamentary Party on September 1 at a meeting decided to remove Raushan from

the post of the opposition leader and replace her with Quader.

Quader is now the deputy leader of the opposition.

The JP chairman in the last three months expelled several leaders, including opposition chief whip Moshir Rahman Ranga and former MP Ziaul Haque Mridha, from the party for siding with Raushan.

**QUADER CLEARED FOR PERFORMING DUTIES**

Yesterday, a High Court bench cleared the way for GM Quader to perform the duties as the JP chairman.

The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal stayed till January 3 a Dhaka court directive that on November 16 upheld an injunction order asking Quader to refrain from carrying out party activities.

The bench passed the order following a revision petition filed by the JP chief challenging the lower court order, his lawyer Sheikh Muhammed Serajul Islam told The Daily Star.

He said the HC also issued a rule questioning the legality of the lower court's injunction order.

On November 16, a Dhaka court in an order said the injunction barring Quader from making any political decision of the party would remain in force and therefore he could not make any political decision.

Earlier on October 31, another Dhaka court issued an injunction barring the JP chief from taking any political decision regarding the party.

The injunction came following an application filed by former JP lawmaker Ziaul Haque Mridha.

## Woman 'raped'

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under investigation. Lata's sister Pakhi Begum alleged that some people picked up Lata in a CNG-run autorickshaw from in front of their home Monday night.

Later at 3:00am, they heard from the police that Lata was in the ICU.

She alleged that her sister was raped and the culprits later set her on fire.

Pakhi said some people in their village went into hiding following the incident. If police arrest them, everything will be clear, she claimed.

## Complete probe

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money launderers and loan defaulters are not allowed to use credit cards, get air tickets for travelling abroad, hold the position of chief executive officer of any company and enjoy the facilities provided by the state like the ordinary people do. In our country, a law has been enacted barring the loan defaulters from contesting any election," the HC bench said in the verdict.

Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder, presiding judge of the bench, also said, "We are talking against corruption and corrupt people for the welfare of the people and the state."

Details of the HC verdict could not be known as its written version was yet to be released.

After the delivery of the verdict, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the commission was taking time for completing the investigations as it needed to collect relevant information and evidence.

Around 2,300 witnesses of the 56 cases have been examined so far, he said, adding that the investigations were at the final stage.

Khurshid said Mohammad Ali is accused in 12 cases involving Tk 424 crore and there are specific allegations against him of misappropriation of money.

Replying to a question, the lawyer said statements from Basic Bank's former chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu have been taken in connection with six cases, and he will be implicated in those if his involvement in embezzlement of the bank's money is found.

Mohammad Ali's lawyer SM Abul Hossain told this correspondent that he will take the next course of action after the ACC submits the investigation reports to the trial court concerned.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state during hearing of the rules yesterday.

The HC issued three rules on different dates in 2020 and 2021, asking the ACC and the state to explain why Mohammad Ali, who has been in jail since June 9, 2019, should not be granted bail in the three graft cases.

On Monday, the HC bench expressed disappointment at the embezzlement of large amounts of money from the Basic Bank and the ACC's failure to press charges in any of the 56 cases.

According to a Bangladesh Bank enquiry, around Tk 4,500 crore was siphoned out of bank between 2009 and 2013 when Bacchu chaired the board of the bank.