

SIAM WINS National Film Award twice in a row



PHOTO: TAKEN FROM FACEBOOK

ZAHID AKBAR

Siam Ahmed started off the year with a bang, earning his second National Film Award, after already winning the prize in the 2020 edition of the award ceremony. This time, the actor has been announced as the winner in the 'Best Actor' category for his performance in the film, *Mridha Bonam Mridha*.

Last year, he received this honour for the first time, for his performance in *Bishwoshundori* (2020).

With films like *Shaan*, *Paap Punno*, *Operation Sundarban*, and *Damal*, he has amazed the audience with his versatile roles over the previous year.

In the beginning of 2023, his film *Adventure of Sundarban* hit theatres. The film also stars Pori Moni in a lead role. While the actor is busy gearing up for a new venture in Kolkata—where he will share the screen with the Tollywood superstar, Prosenjit Chatterjee—The Daily Star caught up with Siam to learn more about his upcoming work and his feelings after claiming the National Film Award.

"Awards are always inspiring for an artiste, I am happy and honoured to have gotten this prize twice in a row," shared the actor, "However, it would make me even happier, if Tariq Anam Khan sir would receive this

honour, as his contribution to the film took it to another level."

Siam dedicated the award to the entire team of *Mridha Bonam Mridha*.

While the film brought another dimension to narrative storytelling in the film industry, it did not do well in the box office. Now that Siam has bagged an award for the project, he believes that people should definitely watch this film. "*Mridha Bonam Mridha* sheds light on the psychological conflict between a father and a son. I think it is a great narrative that people can relate to their own lives," he adds, "The production is available on OTT, and I would urge people to watch the film."

Due to scheduling conflicts for the Tollywood film, Siam could not actively participate in the promotional campaign for *Adventure of Sundarban*. "I had to go to Kolkata, for the pre-production of the upcoming project I have signed with," shared Siam, who immediately engaged in campaigns throughout cinema halls, as soon as he returned to Dhaka. He also informed us that shooting for his Tollywood film, directed by Sayantan Ghoshal, will begin by the end of February.

During Siam's stay at Kolkata, he had posted a video on social media, where Prosenjit had wished him luck for his upcoming release. "It made me really proud and happy that Bumba Da himself had asked the audience to watch my film," told the actor. "I also got to spend a lot of time with him."

The Siam starrer film, *Antarjal* is slated for release in Eid-ul-Fitr. The cyber thriller project also features Bidya Sinha Mim, ABM Sumon and Sunerah Binte Kamal, among others.



6th edition of Dhaka Art Summit starts tomorrow

Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh's largest exhibition platform for art and architecture, will begin this Friday (February 3). The sixth edition will be based around the Bengali theme of *Bonna* (flood).

The event will feature over 160 local and international artists. Topics like climate change and gender relations will be a key focus in this year's event—which will run between February 3 and 11. A press conference was held yesterday, to share further details about the event.

The nine-day event will include workshops, performance seminars, and a variety of exhibitions, as well as the participation of renowned art critics and collectors from around the world.

'Poran' coming to Canada in February

Even seven months after its theatrical release, the craze for Raihan Rafi's *Poran* does not seem to be slowing down. Now, the Sariful Razz, Yash Rohan and Bidya Sinha Mim starrer is all set to appear in Canadian cinema halls, starting February 3.

The news was confirmed by the director of the film, Raihan Rafi himself.

After being screened in multiple cinema halls in the US and Australia, *Poran* will now be screened in twelve different cities in Canada, including Halifax, Toronto and Montreal, amongst others.



NEWS

Two Polish skiers dead in Indian Kashmir avalanche

AFP, Gulmarg

Two Polish nationals were killed and 21 other skiers were rescued from the site of an avalanche that hit the Indian resort of Gulmarg yesterday, police said.

A huge snowslide barrelled down from the 4,390-metre (14,400-foot) peak of Mount Apharwat in Indian-administered Kashmir and buried nearly two dozen people on the slope, all foreigners except for two local guides.

High-altitude rescue teams rushed to the site on snow scooters and retrieved the bodies of the two Polish skiers, police officer Amod Nagpuri told AFP.

Supply fuel oil

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Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, inviting him for an official visit to Saudi Arabia to review and expedite ongoing collaborations.

Momen appreciated and accepted the invitation, and said the visit schedule would be fixed through a diplomatic channel.

During the meeting, they discussed various other issues and expressed satisfaction at the state of relations flourishing rapidly in many fields including political, economic, trade and investment, security and defense, manpower, and other areas.

On the prospect of further employment in Saudi Arabia with reference to Neom city, Momen conveyed Bangladesh's readiness to provide skilled workers and technicians.

He also indicated that Bangladesh was ready to assign a dedicated university or training institute to upskill people in specialised trades to cater to the Kingdom's needs.

Momen urged the Saudi envoy to explore the possibility of prospective financing in the Eastern Refinery Unit-2 from Saudi Fund for Development.

Saudi Ambassador Essa Yousef Essa conveyed to Foreign Minister Momen Saudi Arabia's readiness to facilitate Bangladesh's proposal to set up a fertilizer industry in KSA.

Fitness sham

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accidents, which saw a sharp rise in recent years.

THE CUMILLA CASE

Debashis Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station, said they seized the mini-truck when some men were preparing to commit a robbery using the vehicle.

Police arrested two of them and recovered some sharp weapons from their possession, the OC told The Daily Star last night, adding that the mini-truck was still in their custody.

A BRTA official told this correspondent yesterday that while the vehicle was impounded at the police station, Pranab Nag issued the fitness certificate to the unfit vehicle on November 23 without inspection, which is a negligence of duty and a gross violation of the authorities' order.

The authorities investigated the matter following a media report and took punitive action against the official as the allegation was found to be true, he added.

In July last year, BRTA suspended inspector Nur Mohammad Toha of Narayanganj circle for issuing fitness

Father held for going

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"As the matter was not settled, we sent the child to Victim Support Centre. The court will decide on this," he said.

On Sunday, a Dhaka family court granted Japanese citizen Eriko Nakano custody of her two children — Nakano Jasmine Malika, 11, and Nakano Laila Lina, 9.

The court said it reached the decision, considering the well-being of the children. The same court also dismissed the case filed by Imran Sharif in February last year, seeking the custody of the children.

In her general diary, Eriko Nakano said she could not contact her younger daughter, who was staying with her father at his Gulshan residence before the court ruling, despite making several attempts. She said her mail to Imran got no reply.

Moreover, she claimed that the father and daughter weren't living in the house for the last two weeks.

Rab's Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin told media that they had to intervene as the father went into

clearance to an impounded truck. The vehicle was seized after it got involved in an accident.

The truck ran over and killed three people, including an eight-month pregnant woman, in Mymensingh's Trishal upazila on July 16 last year. The vehicle was seized by police from the spot.

At that time, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder had told this newspaper that they were trying their level best to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and that they already sent out a strong message to all officials that stern actions would be taken if anyone was found involved in such incidents.

But a similar incident took place again.

This correspondent could not reach the BRTA chairman for comments as he didn't respond to calls yesterday.

A BRTA official said if a departmental probe finds an official to be involved in such irregularities, he may be handed a maximum punishment of sacking.

However, officials found guilty of such irregularities are often pardoned, he added.

Boeing bids adieu

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and the actor John Travolta, who is certified as a pilot for the 747.

The jet has a unique legacy with a significance to aviation that is difficult to overstate.

The plane's size, flying range and efficacy "made it possible for the middle class to travel outside Europe or the United States at an affordable price, even during the energy shocks of the 1970s," said Michel Merluzeau, director of aerospace and defense analysis at AIR consultancy.

"It opened up the world," Merluzeau said.

Boeing built 1,574 747s in all. But the jet has over time been eclipsed by newer models that fly more efficiently and burn less fuel.

Commercial airlines in the United States have not flown the 747 since 2017.

PIL filed

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Minister of state for power Nasrul Hamid visited the 1600MW Godda power plant in Jharkhand in early January and told reporters that from mid-March, Bangladesh would begin receiving electricity from the plant.

Myanmar junta

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largely deserted.

Most buses on roads elsewhere in the city were empty and there was a heavy security presence.

It was similarly quiet in the second city of Mandalay, a resident told AFP. "There are a few people walking here and there in neighbourhoods but almost no activity on the main roads," the resident said, requesting anonymity.

Local media images also showed empty streets in the eastern city of Mawlamyine.

Around 200 supporters of the military marched through Yangon's historic downtown in the early afternoon, escorted part of the way by soldiers, correspondents said.

The US embassy in the city warned of "increased anti-regime activity and violence" in the days around the anniversary.

Around 400 protesters gathered outside Myanmar's embassy in Bangkok, some chanting slogans against the military and holding portraits of Suu Kyi.

Missing candidate's family

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Meherin said they could not take part in the election campaign for the last 7-8 days. "If my husband were not missing, we would have won the polls."

Asif's wife went to the poll center but did not cast her vote. "I saw agents of Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan forcing [voters] to vote for him in the presence of the presiding officer."

Meherin said she requested the administration to take action but to no avail.

Voters do not have any faith in the election commission, she added.

She further said the people of the constituency rejected the election and the main opponent was missing.

FBI searches Biden's house

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Biden, who is expected to announce a re-election campaign in the coming weeks or months. It has stripped him and fellow Democrats of a weapon against former President Donald Trump, who also had classified documents found at his home.

Trump has launched his own re-election campaign and could face Biden in the 2024 general election.

Bauer said the Department of Justice chose to do the search

"They showed their support for Asif."

Meherin e-mailed a complaint to Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal about her husband going missing.

On Tuesday, Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman said they received a probe report from the deputy commissioner, the superintendent of police and the election officer of Brahmanbaria.

"Based on the information available, it seems that the candidate may have gone into hiding."

He said the local administration in its report said that the candidate was "missing" and it was sure that law enforcement agencies had no links with the incident.

without advance notice to the public.

"Under DOJ's standard procedures, in the interests of operational security and integrity, it sought to do this work without advance public notice, and we agreed to cooperate," he said.

"The search today is a further step in a thorough and timely DOJ process we will continue to fully support and facilitate. We will have further information at the conclusion of today's search."

Hajj package

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President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, told The Daily Star.

He said the private agencies will fix their package rates in conformity with those of the government's.

About the rise in the hajj package rates, the state minister said one Saudi Riyal is being sold for Tk 30 this year against last year's Tk 21.

Faridul said the government has fixed this year's plane fare at Tk 197,797 as the ticket price has gone up due to the global economic crisis. Last year, the plane fare was Tk 140 lakh.

Like the previous year, three airlines — Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Saudia Airlines and Flynas — will carry the hajj pilgrims this year.

The hajj is likely to be held on June 27, subject to sighting of the moon.

The government on January 9 signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia on hajj. According to the deal, 15,000 Bangladeshis will perform

hajj this year under government management while 1,12,198 under private management.

Biman will carry 50 percent passengers while the two Saudi carriers will transport the rest of the pilgrims.

The Saudi government has lifted the age limit for hajj pilgrims this year, paving the way for people over 65 to go for the pilgrimage.

According to the "Route to Makkah Initiative" deal, all Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims who would fly from Dhaka will complete their pre-arrival immigration in Dhaka.

Depending on the Covid situation, the Saudi authorities can take a decision on the number of the pilgrims.

In 2022, a total of 57,585 Bangladeshis performed hajj. The figure was around 1.27 lakh in 2019.

Due to the pandemic, the largest annual Muslim congregation was held on a limited scale in the last two years.