

'MERCULES' traumatised me

SABILA NUR

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Television's most adorable actress, Sabila Nur, is elated about the release of her first web-series, *Mercules* on Chorki. The series is based on real-life incidents, and the actress terms her character 'Joyeeta' as one of the most challenging ones that she has ever enacted on-screen.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the actress talked about *Mercules*, her love for challenging roles, and more.

What are your thoughts on 'Mercules' being based on a real-life incident?

That is the reason that I was really drawn to the plot. The series will focus on a character, who made headlines with her story some years back. Audiences will be able to relate to the story when the series is released on the platform.

How difficult was it to portray Joyeeta on-screen?

Extremely difficult. The story was so mentally distressing that even the audience could feel the stress piling up from the plot. It took me 2-3 months to prepare for the role, which is why I have lost out on lots of projects. It took me a lot of time to come out from the character, as I was traumatised and depressed while working on the project.

Why did you choose 'Mercules' as your first web-series?

As a television artiste, I have worked on a lot of stories, so I was looking for something unique. When I read the script, I knew I would never get the chance to work on this ever again. I

read the entire 177-page draft at a go, which made me realise that the story was really special to me.

How was it working with Gias Uddin Selim in 'Mercules'?

Unfortunately, I didn't have any scenes with him but I still made sure to catch his shooting. I was literally blown away by his performance. Audiences will be stunned when they will see his character.

Most of your contemporaries have stopped working in TV and have diverted to OTT. Will you be following the same path?

After Qurbani Eid, I don't think any of my TV series have been telecast.

I didn't release any work on Valentine's Day, as I was preparing for *Mercules*. In terms of OTT, it takes a lot of time for an artiste to prepare for the role, which I have learned while working in *Mercules*. So, if I do get a story that requires me to give this level of dedication, where I have to stop working on television, I will obviously do it. However, as I entered showbiz through TV, I really don't want to leave it.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Tom Hanks is the 'worst' at Razzies



Tom Hanks' depiction of Colonel Tom Parker—Elvis Presley's real-life former manager—in the 2022 *Elvis* film, is considered to be cruel, corrupt, and according to the 2023 Razzie Awards results, deserving of 'Worst Supporting Actor' and 'Worst Screen Combo' awards.

Before the world goes on to celebrate the best films of the season during the Oscar ceremony today, the Razzie Awards called out the worst in cinema on Saturday.

Despite Tom Hanks' legacy of Oscar-winning roles, many critics and fans condemned his performance in *Elvis*—particularly his accent.

The Razzies named Hanks the 'Worst Supporting Actor' and 'Worst Screen Combo', for his performance and his 'latex face' in the film.

F S Nayeem's first look on 'Mission HuntDown'

The first look of popular actor F S Nayeem in the Hoichoi web-series, *Mission HuntDown* was released yesterday and has already created an excitement among the audience.



The photo was shared by the official page of Hoichoi Bangladesh. In the caption, Nayeem was introduced as Additional SP, Mahid. In the picture, the actor can be seen holding a pistol and looking intensely at the camera.

"Since the look was released, I have been getting phone calls from my well-wishers. I am excited about this project, as it is my first time leading a web-series and playing a cop. I have done romantic or soft characters before, but this is the first time I am playing such a serious character," shared Nayeem.

NEWS

Inflation rises

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January 31. BBS data showed that inflation averaged 8.14 percent in the 12 months to February.

"Inflation has risen not only in Bangladesh but also globally due to the coronavirus pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war," said Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, while speaking to reporters after the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council at the NEC auditorium in the capital.

He said thanks to proper steps and higher domestic production, it dropped in the previous five months.

Food inflation rose to 8.13 percent in February from 7.76 percent in the previous month. Non-food inflation dropped to 9.82 percent from 9.84 percent.

Inflation is higher in the rural areas than the urban areas. It was 8.80 percent in the rural areas and 8.75 percent in the urban areas, BBS data showed.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said: "A very significant rise in food inflation in February possibly reflects the preponed Ramadan effects on prices as mobile courts become more aggressive during the fasting month. Also, it looks politically more palatable since Ramadan price increases have drawn a lot of flak in recent years."

High non-food inflation has been sustained by a 15.8 percent increase in electricity prices in two months in addition to a rise in gas prices for commercial and industrial users, he said.

The local currency has lost its value by about 25 percent against the US dollar in the past one year owing to the shortage of the US currency.

T-Rex skeleton

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journal Nature indicating that only 32 skeletons of adult T-Rex's — one of the largest terrestrial predators ever to walk the Earth — had been found worldwide.

The Trinity skeleton is made up of bone material from three T-Rex specimens.

They were excavated between 2008 and 2013 from the Hell Creek and Lance Creek formations in Montana and Wyoming in the United States, the auction catalogue said.

Rab clears 8 students

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truth has prevailed."

He hoped that they would soon get back their belongings including motorbikes, mobiles, and laptops that were seized by Rab.

Jamsher Ali, a family member of two of the victims, said, "Since my innocent grandson and nephew were framed in this false case last year, they have been living in fear. Finally, they can now return to their lives."

On March 7 last year, a tea vendor Abdul Barek, 60, was injured after

Robbers knew

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eight men and recovered Tk 2.54 crore, DB Chief Muhammad Harun Or Rashid told a press conference at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

The arrestees, Sanowar Hossain, 28; Emon alias Milton, 33; Badrul Alam, 33; Mizanur Rahman, 20; Sonai Mia, 28; Enamul Haque Badsha, 26; Akash Matbor, 25; and Sagar Matbor, 22, have been placed on a five-day remand each.

The DB did not share more about the arrestees.

It arrested Sanowar in Banani area and recovered Tk 1.14 crore from him on Saturday night. After raiding Emon's Joar Sahara house, the DB recovered Tk 32.47 lakh.

The DB also arrested the Hiace driver, Akash, and his brother Sagar, claiming that they took Tk 1.07 crore from one of the trunks the robbers left behind.

The DB claimed that it recovered the Tk 1.07 crore from their Dakshin Khan home.

The robbery was committed in Turag area around 7:15am on Thursday when officials of Money Plant Link Private Ltd, the firm hired for transporting money to DBBL ATMs, were heading towards Savar EPZ in a rickety Toyota Noah from Mirpur DOHS with Tk 11.25 crore in four trunks.

DB sources said during the robbery, some of the robbers used masks and gloves.

They reached the 300 Feet area in the capital around 9:00am. They changed their clothes inside the

being hit by a teenager's motorcycle in the capital's Mirpur-12.

However, a case, filed over the incident three days later, told a different story that had no mention of the accident or the biker.

It instead accused five college students and three other teenagers, including two schoolchildren, from the same neighbourhood of beating and injuring Barek and extorting Tk 40,500 from him.

The accused included a 15-year-old son and a 17-year-old cousin of Mohon Mia, who allegedly fell victim

to enforced disappearance at the hands of the same Rab unit.

Barek's son Nazmul Hossain Bappi, the plaintiff, earlier told The Daily Star that the case was drafted by Rab-4 and that he only signed the statement.

Names of the three teenagers were included in the case without his knowledge, he added.

He alleged that the elite force kept him and the five college students at Rab-4 office in Mirpur's Paikpara for around 24 hours before they were all taken to Pallabi Police Station for

filing the already drafted case and the handover of the five accused to the police.

The police station recorded the case on March 10 last year.

The Daily Star did a thorough investigation of the incidents and published two reports in July and August last year revealing how a bike accident became an extortion case and how such actions by a Rab unit have forced a Mirpur family into never-ending distress.

On July 3, 2022, the Rab-4 took charge of the investigation.

Hardly any unexplored gas left

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president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

No company — foreign or local — were appointed for onshore or offshore gas exploration.

"Decades ago, an American company said that we have huge gas — they pressured us to explore it and export. But the government didn't agree. After some years, they are saying that we have no gas. We should fully utilise our local resources," Rahman added.

Golam Md Alamgir, chairman of Max Group and an FBCCI director, echoed the same.

"We are keeping our dollars under the ground and buying gas from outside by spending dollars. Due to the negligence of Bapex [Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company], brilliant officers are going abroad. Bapex could have been a big company in the world and earned dollars. But we didn't invest in them properly," he added.

Summit Group chairman Aziz Khan called for a lower cost of funds to attract more investment in the power and energy sector.

"A window in Bangladesh Bank for lower interest for long tenure loans and tax incentives should be provided for capital-intensive projects to nullify the extreme volatility in this market," he added.

For energy security, he called for

private sector investment in upstream liquefaction facilities and liquefied natural gas storage as well as LNG carriers in foreign gas-producing countries and companies.

"This would enable us to get equity gas at a relatively lower price," he added.

Deepesh Nanda, chief executive officer of GE South Asia, shared his experience investing in the country.

"Our investment was not possible without the support of the government with a solid policy framework."

In the case of a combined cycle power plant, the natural gas was made a pass-through. That means the risk of the fuel was on the state.

The power plant had a power purchase agreement that had a guaranteed fixed capacity payment for 22 years. The payments were guaranteed by the government and power ministry through a sovereign guarantee and the PPA was denominated in US dollars.

"It became impossible for any international investor to find fault as to why we should not be investing in Bangladesh," Nanda added.

Md Abul Kalam Azad, former principal secretary of the prime minister, presented the keynote paper where he also emphasised on properly utilising the local resources, including gas and coal.

Power Secretary Habibur Rahman presided over the session.

Khaleda's release

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being sentenced to five years imprisonment by a special court in Dhaka in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

On October 30 the following year, the High Court enhanced her punishment to 10 years after dismissing her appeal in the case.

The former prime minister was convicted by another special court in Dhaka in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case on October 29, 2018. She was sentenced to seven years imprisonment by the court.

BNP-Jamaat

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the Ahmadiyya community demanding cancellation of the three-day-long Jalsa Salana, an annual gathering of the members of the Ahmadiyya community.

The agitators set fire to many houses and four shops belonging to the community. They also attacked a local police station, vehicles of law enforcers and a traffic police officer.

Twenty cases — 16 with Panchagarh Police Station and four with Boda Police Station — have been filed over the attacks, said police.

Additional forces have been deployed at different town and village points to avert further untoward incidents.

Ukraine readies

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weapon, it seems inexhaustible in volume and in time."

But even if it did capture the "small town", she added, "it will not impact the strategic corridors we still control in the region".

British military intelligence said that the Bakhmutka River in the centre of the city now marked the front line.

"Ukrainian forces hold the west of the town and have demolished key bridges over the river, which runs north-south through a strip of open ground 200 metres-800 metres wide," the British defence ministry said.

"This area has become a killing zone, likely making it highly challenging for Wagner forces attempting to continue their frontal assault westwards."

Wagner chief Prigozhin, an ally of President Vladimir Putin, has been entangled in a power struggle with the defence ministry.