

Creating an iconic, humane character

SHARMIN JOYA

"It takes a writer or a filmmaker almost a lifetime or so to create an iconic character," Ashfaq Nipun, the creator of the top-notch cop crime thriller web-series, *Mohanagar*.

OC Harun's character has definitely become one of the most iconic ones in Bangla OTT, which is evident especially after season two of the show.

While sharing his experience of working on the second season, the director told The Daily Star that it was the toughest project of his career. "Keeping up with the audience's expectation is extremely tough, and challenging," asserts Nipun, "I could have continued the second season as an explainer to the previous one, rather I took the risk and propelled the entire story to another tangent, which might have failed significantly. I had to take the risk."

The bold and honest portrayal of the contemporary political and social scenario definitely took a lot of courage. The metaphors used in the show convey some strong messages against oppression.

"From the sense of moral duty and as an artiste, I am liable to society to capture the time I am living in. Although it is extremely challenging, yet, it will remain as a reflection of contemporary times, be it in the form of fiction," says Nipun.

Even though the first season's ending hinted at another, Nipun mentioned that it was actually the audience whose reaction and demands brought OC Harun back. "I am blessed to have been able to create such a character and at the same time, to have Mosharraf Karim, one of the finest actors of our time, play it."

How did the character come to his mind? "All of us share a lot of similarities and qualities with him," explains Nipun.

OC Harun's character lingers in grey; he

is equally humane and corrupted. "We can consider him as the culmination of everyone around us. He has strength and limitations as well, and most of all, he possesses the unique trait that we have as a nation—to be kind and tough at the same time."

Harun's vulnerable nature managed to make a place in the audience's hearts, who are eagerly waiting to see the full consequences of his actions. How far can the character go? "Well, only 5 percent of the OC's persona has been explored, we have the other 95 percent still unexplored, thus there is a huge scope of experimenting with this character further."

It begs the question; will we see a season 3 of *Mohanagar*? The director answers with a mysterious smile, "The

beauty of most web-series is that they are character-driven, rather than plot-driven. Any character can come back at any point. There is that flexibility. No character is gone forever. The door is always open for them to return. Let's hope that the story of *Mohanagar* continues."

Nipun also confirmed that he will indeed be gearing up for his silver-screen debut. "I am planning for it, and for the big screen, I would love to make something light-hearted," he adds.

Amidst all kinds of criticism, *Mohanagar* proved to be a landmark in the OTT industry, that will have an impact in the long run. "If we can open the avenue for liberal discussions and constructive criticism, especially to the visual mediums, then it will be essentially good for our own culture and the world will know us as broad-minded and adaptable," he concludes.



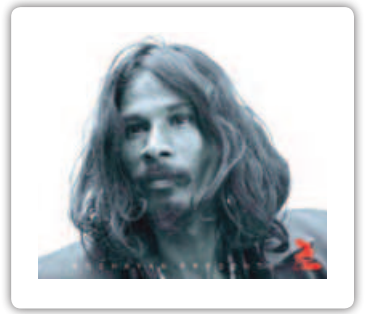
Behind the scene image of Ashfaq Nipun and Mosharraf Karim



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

'Adim' heading to film festival in Bulgaria

After winning the 'Best Film' award at the 12th Queens World Film Festival, the audience have been eagerly waiting for Juboraj Shaimim's *Adim*, which is set to have its theatrical release in Bangladesh on May 26.



Meanwhile, the director has also informed media outlets that after releasing in Bangladesh, the film will soon be screened at a film festival in Bulgaria.

According to what Shamim told media outlets, the film has been nominated in the 31st Love is Folly film festival in Varna. *Adim* has been selected in the 'International Competition' category.

The Love is Folly film festival will be held in Varna from August 25 to September 3.

Pori Moni's 'Maa' to premiere at Cannes Film Festival

Directed by Aranyo Anawer, the Pori Moni starrer film *Maa* will be released this May 19, on the occasion of Mother's Day. However, before the film's domestic release, it will already have premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

Aranyo Anawer, the director of *Maa*, confirmed the news to The Daily Star. "This is great news for our film, *Maa*. It feels great to be blessed with such an honour."

He also added, "This is a Liberation War-based film. I hope the audience of the country will support *Maa* when it is released in theatres."

In *Maa*, Pori Moni will be playing the role of a mother. Aside from her, the film also stars Farzana Chobi in an important role.

Speaking about this special moment, Farzana said, "The news that *Maa* will be premiering at the Cannes Film Festival has moved me greatly. Tears are coming to my eyes. I'm overjoyed."

COUNTRYWIDE

It's tender palm time

Traders passing busy time in buying and selling the summer fruit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Tender palm traders in different upazilas of the district are now passing busy time in harvesting and selling the season summer fruit that has high demand during the severe heat.

Traders from different areas come to the district during this time every year and after collecting tender palms they took those to different districts across the country including the capital.

One of the traders said trading of tender palm started around two weeks ago and will continue in full swing for two more weeks.

"In the past, we had to transport tender palms to Dhaka by launch or truck, which was quite time consuming. But, after inauguration of the Padma Bridge it takes only five hours to reach Dhaka," said trader Kiyum Howlader from Mathbaria upazila.

Over 20 tender palm-laden trucks or covered leave for Dhaka from the area every day, he added.

Tender palm traders said they buy a whole tree at a cost of Tk 800 to Tk

1,500, depending on number of the fruit. Moreover, they have to pay an additional Tk 200 to the labourers in order to pluck the fruit from each tree.

After meeting all the expenses, each tender palm costs them Tk 7 to Tk 8, trader Sagar Howlader said, adding that they sell one tender palm, containing three seeds, at Tk 10 through commission agents.

Another trader Siddik Khan said their expenditure has increased a bit due to the increasing transportation cost.

Now one have to hire a covered van, which can carry about 800 bunches of tender palm, spending Tk 17,000, he said.

Jalil Khan, another trader, said demand of the seasonal juicy fruit has increased in not only the cities, but locally also as it has created an extra source of earning for the village people.

Abdur Razzak, a resident of Safa village in Mathbaria upazila, said earlier they used to sell the tender palm locally, but now they are getting good price of the summer fruit due to smooth transportation facilities.

Govt playing

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party will not be able to achieve that goal this time as people have already taken to the streets.

"Our ongoing movement will be intensified in the coming days and we will force the government to meet the demands of the people," he said, adding, "We will announce fresh programmes soon."

The BNP leader further alleged that the government has taken a step to convict his party activists under old cases and the law ministry even prepared a list in this regard.

"They [government] have started using all state machineries, including the judiciary and administration, to drive out the senior opposition leaders, especially those leading the ongoing movement."

He said some 1,15,433 cases were filed across the country, in which 39,78,481 opposition activists were made accused. Of the cases, over 2,830 cases were filed under the Digital Security Act.

About AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader's remarks on inviting the BNP in the election-time government, Fakhrul said, "Do you [journalists] believe it? In 2018, we held talks with the prime minister and had faith in her. But she didn't keep a single word."

"Such comments are nothing by conspiracies to mislead the people."

About BNP's meeting with the UN residential coordinator in Bangladesh, he said, "We hold routine discussions with foreign missions that have their offices here. You must keep in mind that we don't 'complain' to others."

Barishal AL split between uncle

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AL, chairman of Barishal district council and a close aide of Sadiq, was not included in the committees.

Contacted, Afzalur said that as AKM Jahangir is the incumbent district council chairman and Sadiq Abdullah is the incumbent mayor, they are still serving two important official posts. "So, they were not included in the committees to avoid legal complications."

However, Khair Abdullah could not be reached over the phone for comments despite repeated attempts.

Contacted, Gazi Naimul Hossain Litu, joint general

secretary of Barishal city AL and a close aide of Sadiq, said a meeting with all leaders and activists of Barishal city and district AL will be held on May 12.

"We'll discuss all election related issues there and take a decision regarding everyone's role in the election."

An AL leader who belongs to the anti-Sadiq faction, preferring anonymity, said, "We don't want to see followers of Sadiq in the committees."

However, Tarun Chanda, a senior member of Barishal district AL, said the rivalry between the two groups must end to ensure the victory of the party candidate.

HC slams health ministry

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of prisons.

The petition, seeking necessary directives to appoint doctors in prisons across the country for proper treatment of inmates, was filed as a public interest litigation by Supreme Court lawyer JR Khan Robin on February 18, 2019.

"As children of the land, we know many things. I went to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for treatment. What I saw is worse than the condition of a small hospital in a foreign country," Justice Kamrul Kader said.

There was corruption in the purchase of equipment for Faridpur Medical College Hospital even though it is near Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's area, said the judge.

Most of the government doctors deprive the people of rural areas of proper treatment by living in Dhaka where they have private practice, he added. Such corruption could

Arav jailed

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to bring Arav Khan back home.

Earlier, the tribunal recorded the statements of 10 witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

According to the case statement, Arav Khan went to the house of his father-in-law Sekendar Ali in the capital's Moghbazar on January 28, 2015, to extort money from him at gunpoint. He was arrested from outside the house by Ramna police and a revolver was also recovered from him.

The case was filed against him under the Arms Act with Ramna Police Station.

After conducting an investigation, detectives pressed charges against Arav Khan on March 1 that year. The tribunal framed charges against him on May 10.

The fugitive convict is also accused in another case filed over the killing of Special Branch inspector Mamun Imran Khan on July 7, 2018.

Arav Khan secured bail from a higher court on March 14 of 2018 and went into hiding. The tribunal declared him a 'fugitive' in the case and issued an arrest warrant against him on October 24 that year.

The fugitive convict is also accused in another case filed over the killing of Special Branch inspector Mamun Imran Khan on July 7, 2018.

The case is now pending with the Dhaka's First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

Interpol has issued a red notice for the arrest of Arav Khan who runs a jeweller's in Dubai.



Workers are seen loading tender palm onto a covered-van at Safa village in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila.

PHOTO: STAR