

'I am who I am, because of my fans'

Shakib Khan on 24 years in showbiz

ZAHID AKBAR

On May 28, 1999, Shakib Khan stepped into the Bangladeshi entertainment industry and since then, he never looked back. He started his journey 24 years ago with the film *Ononto Bhalobasa* and later on acted in 247 films. The 4-time National Film Award winning actor's last film, *Leader Amie Bangladesh* broke records, setting a new wave across cinema halls country-wide.

Awaiting its release this Eid-ul-Azha, Shakib's *Priyotoma* has already caused an exciting murmur among the audiences. On that note, the star sat down with The Daily Star to discuss his two decades long career, and everything that came with it.

You're one of the leading heroes of the country now, what's your takeaway from the last 24 years?

On May 28, the day I stepped into the 24th year of my career, I was on the set of *Priyotoma*. What else can an actor want? I am happy to be a part of the film industry, and I am grateful to my fans, audiences, reporters, and everyone involved. I am who I am, because of them. Nothing comes above people's love. I want to move forward with the lessons of the past, doing what I do now.

You have never disappointed your fans and neither have they ever let you down. That is quite clear whenever one of your films are released.

I act for my fans, so my films are for them. None of them watch my films for free, they buy tickets with their own hard-earned money. The film being a hit or a flop is also

in the hands of the fans. No matter what, my fans travel miles to see my films and I am nothing without them.

Despite rumours that your career is over, you have proved otherwise by delivering hit after hit. What do you think about that?

I have been hearing such things for the last 16 years, ever since I got a platform in the industry. Every time I was held back, I moved forward even stronger with people's love. When I have their love, I don't pay heed to such rumours. These rumours will remain, we just simply have to move forward regardless.

Why do you think people conspire against you?

I have observed for quite some time that a particular group of self-serving people tend to do that. If I listened to them, I would have stopped a long time back. Even if ten people want to harm me, millions of people want the opposite. It's not possible to make everyone in the world happy.

How much do you invest behind getting into a character?

I always try to make my characters dynamic. Whatever time I get, I spend it by creating a get-up and look, while also trying to embody the character. If we're playing the long game, struggle is not an option. My fans keep me inspired to work through everything, they help me become who I need to be.



PHOTO: COLLECTED



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR REEHEL



The magic of Kosovan cinema: 2-day film festival coming to Dhaka

Kosovo, a country with a rich film tradition, continues to make its mark on the global stage. Over the years, many of its films have gained recognition and accolades at various international film festivals. In an effort to showcase the cinematic excellence of Kosovo, the country's embassy is organising a two-day film festival in Dhaka.

Titled "Kosovar Film Days 2023", the festival will take place on June 5 and 6 at the main auditorium of the National Museum, running from 3 pm to 5 pm on both days. The event will feature a full-length film and seven captivating short films from Kosovo.

'Jinn' sets new record

Shajal Noor and Puja Chery's first film together, *Jinn*, was released during Eid-ul-Fitr. Directed by Nader Chowdhury, the film is still running in different theatres across Dhaka and other parts of the country. The audience have continued to show their love and interest for *Jinn*.

Nader Chowdhury, the film's director told The Daily Star that *Jinn* is currently running in nine theatres so far. "I think it's a big achievement for us. This would not have been possible without the love of the audience," shared the director.

He also added, "Since its release, everyone has been in love with *Jinn*. That love is still there. This is how Bangladeshi cinema will move forward. It is running in 9 theatres in its fifth week. This film has made me very hopeful."



COUNTRYWIDE

Collapsed bridge not repaired in 3 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An iron structure bridge over a canal in Dumki upazila, collapsed more than three years ago, still lies without repair, much to the sufferings of people of several villages.

Besides, over 500 students of nearby Habibullah Government Secondary School are the worst sufferers as they have to cross the canal on small boats amid risk to go and from their institution every day.

Otherwise, the school children are compel to travel an additional four kilometres, using the alternative route.

Local people said Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built the iron structure bridge over Varani Canal in Lebukhali area in 2009.

In 2015, a portion of the iron bridge was badly damaged, but then the LGED authorities repaired the damaged part within a few months.

In January 2020, a major part of the important bridge completely collapsed after being hit by a sand-laden cargo.

Since then, most of the villagers including school going children use small boats to cross the canal as the authorities concerned are yet take necessary step to repair the bridge.

Atiqul Islam, head teacher of Habibullah Government Secondary School, said the institution, nationalized in 2018, was established in 1961.

Currently the school has nearly 1,000 students.

Of them, over 500 students either have to come to the school by crossing the canal on small boats, or walking an additional four kilometres through an alternative route, the headmaster said.

However, the number of students at the institution has been decreasing alarmingly as the bridge is lying unrepaired for long, he added.

Abdus Salam, acting chairman of Lebukhali Union Parishad (UP), said he has sent several letters to different concerned departments, including the LGED, urging them to repair the bridge immediately, but they are yet to take any step in this regard.

There are many other important establishments including the union land office, post office and two weekly markets on either side of the bridge, he said.

Contacted, Patuakhali LGED Executive Engineer Latif Hossain said they have taken up a plan to remove the damaged bridge and build a new one there.



A number of students are seen crossing the Varani Canal in Patuakhali's Dumki upazila on a small boat amid risk of accident. PHOTO: STAR

ACC sues Prof Yunus

FROM PAGE 12 among the employees as per its agreement with the Grameen Telecom Sramik Karmachari Union.

The Grameen Telecom MD and the president of the employees' union, Kamruzzaman and Firoz Mahmud, signed the agreement on April 27 last year and the account was opened on May 8 with the Dhaka Bank's Gulshan branch.

"Since the bank account was opened after the signing of the agreement, the account number was not supposed to be mentioned in the agreement. But the account number was mentioned in it, meaning the agreement was fake," reads the case statement.

"The Grameen Telecom chairman and the board members in association with each other produced the fake agreement as an authentic one to help misappropriate money

and thus committed a crime under the money laundering prevention act," it adds.

An amount of about Tk 364 crore was distributed among 156 employees between May 25 and June 12 last year. However, about Tk 26.22 crore was transferred to another account with Dutch-Bangla Bank between May 17 and May 30 last year.

"The money was transferred to another account without any written or verbal approval from the employees. From that account, the money was transferred to the personal accounts of the employees union leaders and lawyers," the case statement says.

The ACC found that about Tk 1 crore was lawyers' fees and the rest of the money was misappropriated by the employees union leaders and lawyers.

Contacted, Grameen Telecom MD Nazmul yesterday said no money

was misappropriated.

"We have done everything following the settlement agreement," he said.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday ordered "a six month status quo" on the judgement of the Labour Appellate Tribunal that justified the demand of profit sharing by 106 former workers of Grameen Kalyan, another non-profitable and charitable company established by Prof Yunus.

The HC also issued a rule asking the Labour Appellate Tribunal and the 106 workers to explain why the tribunal's verdict should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Zafar Ahmed and Justice Md Bashir Ullah came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by the Grameen Kalyan challenging the legality of the tribunal's verdict, Golam Rabbani Sharif, a lawyer for the workers, told The Daily Star.

Expressway worker arrested

FROM PAGE 12 An expressway worker, who was about 100 yards away from the spot where the boy was fatally hit, said, "No one was there to keep people away from the place where the work was going on."

"We only restrict people's movement when girder segments or viaducts are lifted... The authorities usually do not take adequate measures when doing regular tasks."

Meanwhile, the First Dhaka Elevated Expressway Company Ltd in a statement last night said its construction sites conformed to the local and international guidelines and met the standards.

However, it was an "incident of thievery" that led to the boy's death. "The deceased was involved in thievery. He was assisting

a syndicate of workers who were trying to steal the project's steel rod. They were throwing rods from the top of the Elevated Expressway. Unfortunately, one of the steel rods fell and hit his head," read the statement.

"We are committed to supporting the investigation and fully cooperating with the relevant authorities..."

Rights activist Nur Khan Liton said the case filed by the authorities against a worker is an attempt to shift the blame.

"Anything can accidentally fall. But one has to check whether there are adequate safety measures to prevent tragedies. I think one single worker should not be blamed," he told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Hasib, the

Pyari Begum

FROM PAGE 12 among Bengalis regarding the exploitation and discrimination by West Pakistan was on the rise. Bangalee technicians and workers in the film industry were becoming disillusioned with the Pakistani film industry. Kolkata, having become the centre of the Bangalee film industry due to partition, was progressing in film production at the time.

Finding female artistes for such a project was a challenge in the 1950s. Initially, director Abdul Jabbar contemplated having a man dressed as a woman for the film, a common practice in stage plays at the time.

Later, Abdul Jabbar Khan placed an advertisement in the newspaper to find an actress for "Mukh O Mukhosh". Pyari

Begum, an intermediate student at Eden College, and her friend Zahrat Ara responded to the advertisement published in Chitrali magazine. They would go to the office of Iqbal Films in Nawab Katra. Thus, the journey of Pyari Begum in the Bangla film industry began.

Pyari Begum's demise follows the passing of Zahrat Ara, her co-actress in "Mukh O Mukhosh", on July 19, 2021.

In her final interview with The Daily Star in 2021, Pyari Begum spoke about the loss of her friend and co-actress Zahrat Ara, "My close friend and co-actor Zahrat Ara has passed away. I am quite old now.

There are a lot of things I do not remember. Even then, I am glad to have been an actor in the first ever Bangla feature film."

Power cuts

FROM PAGE 12 not possible to shed the load in some areas, such as the PMO, the secretariat and the hospitals. We can keep the situation under control if we have a shortage of around 200 MW, but the shortage is way more than that now," said Bikash Dewan, managing director of DPDC.

Talking about the gap between demand and production, Desco Managing Director Kausar Ameer Ali said, "Due to the increasing gap, we need to shed the load at least twice a day."

Interestingly, the power sector is getting the highest gas supply ever, over 1,100 million cubic feet a day, which seems to be inadequate as around 4,818 MW gas-fired power generation capacity remains unutilised on average against the capacity of 11,039 MW.

From May 24 to May 29, furnace oil and diesel-fired power plants produced

around 3,800 MW of electricity against the capacity of 7,122 MW while coal-based power plants produced around 2,226 MW of electricity against the capacity of 3,360 MW, PGCB sources said. Bangladesh imports around 1,065 MW electricity from India against the capacity of 1,160 MW, they added.

Both the coal-based Payra and Rampal power plants produced only around 300 to 350 MW of electricity for the last few days, which increased power cuts in different districts in Khulna. Power generation shortage has forced Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB), which supplies electricity to 55 percent of consumers across the country, to shed load in all of its areas.

As of May 29, the highest average of power cuts occurred in Khulna zone, followed by Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Rangpur, Cumilla, Sylhet and Barishal.