

AFRAN NISHO'S journey to the big screen

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In the vibrant world of Bangladeshi entertainment, one name has been making waves with his remarkable talent and versatility – Afran Nisho. Now, Nisho is set to embark on an exciting new chapter in his career as he takes his first steps onto the silver screen with his debut film, *Shurongo*.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Nisho opens up about his journey, the challenges he has faced, and the tremendous popularity he has achieved.

From the small screen to OTT, then debuting on the big screen this Eid, how has the journey been?

I don't believe in categorising acting based on the medium. I consider myself an actor who can adapt to any medium. It's all about the art of acting. The audience watches an artiste perform, and as an artiste, I strive to deliver my best regardless of the platform. Acting is dynamic and requires understanding the context, the story, and adapting to different environments. At the end of the day, an actor should be able to perform in any medium.

This will be your debut film. How are you feeling?

While it's my first venture into the world of cinema, it's not my first acting experience. Throughout this long journey, I have faced numerous struggles and failures. I started my acting career in dramas in 2005, and prior to that, I began modelling in 2000. It has been a step-by-step process of proving myself.

I never had the opportunity to act on stage or receive formal training in acting. Instead, I learned by observing and studying senior actors. I didn't imitate them, but rather tried to understand their techniques, dialogue delivery, and overall approach. Senior artistes have been my mentors, my sources of learning throughout this journey.

When did you realise that you had become

popular as an actor?

Popularity didn't come overnight. It was a gradual process. As I continued acting, I started noticing that my work was being recognised by the audience. People began talking about my performances. Initially, there wasn't much discussion, but I didn't compromise on my acting style. I have always been a hard-working actor. It's about staying true to oneself and constantly evolving. I embraced a more natural acting style. Eventually, people started mentioning my name, and that's when I realised I had achieved a level of popularity. But it took time to reach that point.

How was the experience of transitioning to cinema?

Venturing into cinema is a significant responsibility. But is the big screen really different from the others? Making a movie involves a team effort, and I'm just one part of that team. Over the years, I have transitioned from low-budget dramas to OTT platforms. Each step has been a learning experience.

Do you have any fear, worries or doubts as your first movie is about to be released?

No, I am not scared. There's nothing to lose or win. I have received congratulations from many people for the release of *Shurongo*. My colleagues and fellow artists have been supportive and have shared their well wishes. The love and feedback I'm receiving before the movie's release is my biggest gain.

How confident are you about 'Shurongo'?

I have confidence in the movie. There are high expectations, and everyone will understand it's worth it, once it is released. The entire team has put in a lot of work, and director Raihan Rafi has worked tirelessly. I believe in fate, and if luck is on our side, something remarkable will happen.



PHOTO: COLLECTED & STAR



Three iconic heroes reunite on the streets of New York

The journeys of Dhallywood actors Misha Sawdagar and Amit Hasan can be traced back to their debut film, *Chetona*, directed by Chotku Ahmed in 1989. While the paths of the other lead actors diverged, fate recently brought Misha and Amit together again, this time in the vibrant streets of New York.

There, they met another hero from that film, Khalid Mohammad Bidyut, and clicked photos together.

They all gathered to celebrate the birthday of Khalid Mohammad's son in Long Island, New York. Sharing a treasured moment from their past, Misha posted a heartfelt picture on Facebook, reminiscing about their debut film and expressing gratitude to their mentor and director, Chotku Ahmed.

Anurag Kashyap to head the jury at Sydney Film Festival

Director Anurag Kashyap received a resounding response at the Cannes Film Festival with the premiere of his police noir, *Kennedy*. Building on the success of the film, Anurag Kashyap has achieved another milestone. He has been appointed as head of the jury for the main competition at Sydney Film Festival.

Joining him on the esteemed jury panel are actor Mia Wasikowska, film curator and journalist Dorothee Wenne, writer and director Larissa Behrendt, and filmmaker Visakesa Chandrasekaram.

NEWS

Vendor beaten to death

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programmes of the AL and its associate bodies.

This newspaper talked to at least four locals who corroborated Shafiqul's claim, requesting anonymity. They, however, said that the rally was organised by Jubo League.

Police, however, allegedly made the victim's 19-year-old younger brother Md Sajib Mia to file a case with a different narrative.

According to the case statement, Hafizur was beaten by Asaduzzaman Chayon, Md Tareq, and three to four others following a brawl.

The brawl ensued after the victim asked Chayon, Tareq and their associates to change a torn Tk 100 note that they gave him to pay for chicken fries. After the beating, one Munna asked the attackers to leave the spot, reads the case statement.

When asked about the statement he made in the case copy, the complainant, Sajib, said, "Police wrote the case copy and asked me to sign, which I did. I did not even read what was written in the case."

Police arrested Chayon on Monday night.

"It is mandatory for every pavement vendor to attend Awami League

processions and rallies. My brother used to attend them sometimes, other times, he would avoid them," said Sajib.

Asked about the allegations made by Shafiqul and the witnesses, OC Mohammad Mohsin of Mirpur Police Station said, "The case has been filed after receiving firsthand information from the complainant and the detained accused. The facts will be uncovered during the investigation."

About the complainant's claim that he just signed the case copy as asked by police, the OC insisted that the case was filed based on the complainant's statement.

"After any incident, many people provide many versions of the event," he added.

Locals said Chayon and Tareq are associates of local leaders of pro-ruling party bodies and used to collect tolls from street vendors.

Contacted, Shafiqul Islam Akher, joint general secretary of local ward AL, said those who are responsible for killing Hafizur Rahman have no connection with him.

"There was a Jubo League rally at Mirpur-II. I heard that Hafizur was beaten by the accused as he did not attend the meeting," he added.

he told The Daily Star.

He, however, said they have taken special measures to cope with the challenges.

They have made a list of vehicle repairers and they will be on standby during the Eid journey so that they can repair vehicles immediately if any gets collapsed, he said.

"We will not allow any union or trade body to stop any vehicle on the highway in the name of collecting tolls," he added.

DIG Mozammel Haque said they have already requested the garments factory owners to declare the Eid holiday in phases so that people leave Dhaka by rotation.

He said south-bound people may not face any problems if the toll plazas are managed properly.

He said it would take 30 seconds to complete the toll process even if it was done the fastest way. "So, there is a risk there."

Islami Andolan

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Though the IAB said that Monday's city polls were questionable and rejected the election results, its mayor candidates bagged the second most votes. The BNP boycotted the polls.

The nominees of the main opposition in parliament, Jatiya Party, lagged far behind the IAB candidates.

In Barishal city polls, IAB candidate Faizul Karim secured 33,828 votes against JP nominee Iqbal Hossain Taposh's 6,665.

IAB candidate Abdul Awal bagged 60,064 votes in the Khulna city polls against JP nominee Shafiqul Islam Madhu's 18,074.

Also on Monday, IAB favourites won the councillor by-polls to ward-15 of Dhaka North City Corporation and a councillor election to Cox's Bazar municipality.

The IAB mayoral candidate in the May 25 Gazipur city polls, Gazi Ataur Rahman, secured 7.9 percent of total votes cast when JP candidate MM Niaz Uddin got 2.9 percent.

Currently, IAB has two councillors in two Dhaka city corporations, and one each in Jhenidah, Kuakata, Faridpur Sadar, Nilphamari Sadar municipalities. The party also has 13 union parishad chairmen, said party sources.

Founded in March 1987 by Fazlul Karim, widely known as "Charmonair Pir", the IAB showed a demonstration of its organisational abilities in the 2018 national election.

The IAB candidates in that election bagged 12.55 lakh votes in 299 constituencies, which was 1.52 percent of the total vote cast. The party fielded candidates in 299 out of the total 300 constituencies – the highest by a single party. The AL fielded nominees in 262 constituencies, the BNP in 258, and the JP in only 45.

IAB candidates ran in the 2008 parliamentary polls in 160 constituencies and secured 733,969 votes, 1.05 percent of the total vote cast.

The IAB was among the three political parties, including the AL and the BNP, which secured more than one percent of the total votes cast in that polls.

HC summons OC, addl SP, magistrate

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The bench of Justice Mustafa and Justice Md Aminul Islam ordered the trio to appear before the HC on July 16.

The boss of the two policemen concerned, Shariatpur Superintendent of Police Saiful Haque, has been replaced by Md Mahbul Alam, an SP of the Highway Police in Madaripur.

Speaking to our Shariatpur correspondent, Saddam and Bokul described the ordeal they went through in the early hours of May 30 during a police raid at their friend's home in Keraniganj of Dhaka.

Some readers may find the brothers' descriptions of the torture in the following four paragraphs very graphic and disturbing.

"The OC [Sheikh Md Mostafizur Rahman] held my mouth open, while Additional SP Rasel Monir continued to beat up my younger brother Bokul and ordered him to urinate into my mouth," Saddam told our correspondent.

"Bokul was being beaten up brutally and he was forced to comply. But he still managed to avoid the mouth and urinated on my body," said Saddam as Bokul sat next to him with downcast eyes.

"Additional SP Monir pulled out my nails with pliers," added Bokul. His digits still bear evidence of the torture. His left thumbnail has been pulled clean off, revealing a drying scab, while the big toenail is hanging by a thread of skin.

Marks of bruises are all over their bodies.

The brothers were accused of robbing Shahin Alam Sheikh, returning from

Kolkata on a Dhaka-bound bus with \$17,000, and another man on May 21.

In the case filed on May 23, police alleged that the brothers' cohort aboard the bus stopped the vehicle near the Bhanga-Naodoba culvert wishing to get off.

When the bus stopped, the brothers along with others got on board, dragged Shahin and his companion out, beat them up, and robbed them, the FIR claims.

Shahin trades foreign currencies in the black market.

The Chowdkar brothers deny the allegation. They say the case was filed because of political rivalry. Shahin is a relative of Zajira Chhatra League President Rubel Byapari.

"There was a scuffle but we did not rob Shahin," said Saddam.

Rubel was allegedly present during the raid in Keraniganj and participated in the torture, but this newspaper could not reach him despite many attempts.

Shahin's aunt told The Daily Star that his money, amounting to Tk 21 lakh, is missing.

The two brothers did not return home after the case was filed and went to the High Court for bail.

After they got bail in Dhaka, they headed for their home in Shariatpur with a stopover at a friend's place in Keraniganj on May 29.

Police raided the friend's house at 1:00am. "They forced their way in and even though we showed the police the bail order, they handcuffed us and started beating us up," said Saddam.

"The torture continued until 7:30 in the morning."

other relevant issues.

The HC also ordered the government to withdraw the Rapid Action Battalion officials, who were involved in picking up Sultana, and attach them to the Rab Headquarters, for the sake of transparency and neutrality in the investigation.

The probe committee was ordered to submit the report before the court in 60 days.

The court on the same day issued a rule, asking the authorities concerned to explain why Sultana's detention by Rab officials without any case against her should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

Those bound

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road would not be a problem if traffic discipline could be managed.

The vehicles heading north will use the main road while Dhaka-bound vehicles will use a bypass from Bangabandhu Bridge.

Citing the experience of last Eid-ul-Azha, he said the root cause of the congestion was rundown vehicles as over 50 such vehicles broke down near Bangabandhu Bridge during last year's Eid journey.

Such rundown vehicles are a major concern, he said.

Shahabuddin Khan, additional inspector general of highway police, said this Eid journey could be challenging mainly because of three reasons – short vacation, roadside cattle markets, and a huge number of cattle-laden trucks.

"If people do not leave the capital in phases, there could be congestions,"

They were then taken to a spot under the Padma Bridge and told that they were to be killed in a so-called crossfire, Saddam said.

"We were then blindfolded and driven around in a car for over an hour. Then we were taken to a building [later understood to be the police station] and our hands were cuffed to something in a room," said Saddam.

They remained in that state until late in the evening when they were taken to the OC's room.

"We found our relative Abu Zafar Thandu being beaten up. Police demanded Tk 72 lakh for our release," said Saddam.

The two were kept in the lock-up and finally sent to court on June 2, more than 72 hours after they were apprehended.

Their father Abdur Rashid said that he signed over two of his shops to a person who gave cheques for Tk 72 lakh that were given to the policemen.

Rashid was arrested on May 23 and sent to jail. He claimed that he too was tortured in custody.

"They raided my house at 2:00am and picked up my wife, daughter-in-law and her year-old baby. They took us to the police station, where I was beaten up, and threatened to be forced to drink urine if I did not reveal where my sons were. I kept saying that I did not know," said the 70-year-old.

Saiful Haque who was the SP of Shariatpur until yesterday refused to comment on the torture allegedly perpetrated by his subordinates.

The Daily Star could not reach the OC and the additional SP for comments.

Finish probe into Sultana's death

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means two months. Don't make any more delays in this regard," the bench told the deputy attorney general during the hearing on the petition.

Sultana, 41, an office assistant of Naogaon's Chandipur union land office, died on March 24, two days after she was detained by some Rab members on her way to work.

On April 5, the HC bench directed the cabinet secretary to form a high-powered committee, comprising the chief judicial magistrate of Naogaon and a judicial officer nominated by the district judge, to probe the detention and death of Sultana and

The HC asked the officials concerned to show causes why they should not be directed to take action against the Rab officials who picked up Sultana.

The HC bench issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Monoj Kumar Bhaumik.

He filed the petition on March 28 seeking HC directives on the government to form a committee, led by a retired HC judge, to probe the incident mentioned in the report run by The Daily Star on March 27 under the headline "Sued under DSA: Woman dies in Rab custody".