

Enjoyed 'Mayaa' with Srijit: Mithila

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Rafiath Rashid Mithila, a well-known face in the local industry, has finally made her Indian film debut. Her film *Mayaa* was released in Kolkata last Friday. Directed by Raajhorshee Dey, *Mayaa* has been released across 28 halls in Kolkata.

She spoke to The Daily Star on the phone, recounting her experience so far.

Your film has just been released in Kolkata, how are you feeling?

I feel great, this is my first film in Kolkata. I have grown very fond of the story of *Mayaa*.

How has the response been so far?

It has been good. The film has been released in other cities of West Bengal apart from Kolkata. Some of shows have been running houseful, that is very fulfilling to know.

You had attended screenings as well, how was the audience's reaction to the film?

The viewers didn't recognise me initially, with a few asking "Are you Maya?". That is a big deal to me as I did indeed portray the role in different get-ups.

Did your partner join you in watching the film?

I watched the film with Srijit. He is not only my husband but an exceptional director as well. To be complimented by him on my acting and performance was a big achievement.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

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NEWS

Uzbekistan holds vote set to cement president's rule

AFP, Tashkent

Uzbekistan was holding a presidential election yesterday that is set to hand incumbent Shavkat Mirziyoyev a third term as head of the gas-rich Central Asian state.

The 65-year-old Mirziyoyev has promised to open up his country, a tightly controlled former Soviet republic, to foreign investment and tourism.

He served as prime minister under his hardline predecessor Islam Karimov before winning his first term in 2016 and getting re-elected in 2021.

A constitutional referendum this year paved the way for him to serve two more presidential terms and increased the mandate from five years to seven, meaning he could stay in power until 2037.

"I hope the next president will be Shavkat (Mirziyoyev). I am expecting him to increase the fight against corruption and to notice the ecological problems we have," said Nodira Khidoyatova, a 57-year-old company director, after casting her ballot.

4 schemes to be on offer

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later, said finance ministry officials. The government is considering rolling out the UPS on a limited scale in the next couple of months. The full-fledged operation will take some time, they said.

The schemes will be operated through apps. For smoother operations, over 100 tech experts will be recruited by the authority.

To operate the Samata scheme, the government will require a list of poor people. On the other hand, decisions are needed to be taken on whether Progati and Surokha will be made compulsory for private organisations, said officials.

The authority will hold talks with different chambers and associations in this regard. After that, it will be finalised and incorporated into the rules.

The dividend rollover mechanism is also incorporated into the rules. The accumulated fund will be invested in the market like in treasury bonds.

The dividend will be set upon the profit of the respective year and reinvested in the following year.

There will be a 14-digit unique number linked to the national ID number.

The government has already formed a two-member National Pension Authority (NPA) to execute the UPS formulated to provide pension services for the common people.

Kabirul Ezdani Khan, the additional secretary of the finance division, has been made the executive chairman of the NPA and Golam Mostofa, another additional secretary of the division, has been made the executive member.

In January, the government enacted the Universal Pension Management Act, of 2023. There will be a 16-member governing body headed by the finance minister.

Secretaries of different ministries, the Bangladesh Bank governor, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission chairman and the presidents of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries, Bangladesh Employers Federation and Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be its members.

Under the proposed scheme, a beneficiary can enjoy pension benefits subject to the payment of a subscription fee up to the age of 60 if the person enrolls between 18 and 50 years of age.

BRICS summit to be 'physical' despite Putin warrant: S Africa

AFP, Johannesburg

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday that next month's BRICS summit, which Vladimir Putin has been invited to, will be held in-person despite an arrest warrant on the Russian leader.

"The BRICS summit is going ahead and we are finalising our discussions on the format," Ramaphosa told journalists on the sidelines of a conference by the ruling ANC, adding it will be a "physical" meeting.

He did not say if Putin -- who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over accusations that Russia unlawfully deported Ukrainian children -- would attend or not.

The admin sees

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of Jashore, and Prime Minister's Office Director Ehtasham Reza as the DC of Kushtia.

Besides, public administration Deputy Secretary Rafiqul Islam has been made the DC of Barguna, Economic Relations Division Deputy Secretary Debi Chanda is appointed as the DC of Habiganj, Additional Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Khalid Hossain as

the DC of Bagerhat, Narayanganj City Corporation Chief Executive Officer Shahidul Islam as the DC of Barishal, Deputy Secretary of Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs Muhammad Nizam Uddin Ahmed as the DC of Bhola, Local Government Division Deputy Secretary Shahed Parvez as the DC of Netrakona and Power Division Deputy Secretary Sheikh Russel Hossain as DC of Sylhet.

Record 91 hajj pilgrims die

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Bangladesh (HAAB).

Hajj pilgrims who die in Saudi Arabia are usually buried in Saudi Arabia, HAAB President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim told The Daily Star.

This year the holy hajj was observed on July 28.

According to the religious affairs ministry, 122884 people went to

Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj this year.

The first return flight arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on July 2. The last return flight is scheduled to arrive on August 2.

A total of 29,004 hajj pilgrims returned to the country as of July 8 by 76 flights of Biman, Saudia and Flynas.

Momen writes to 12 members of US Congress

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R Keating and James P McGovern, on June 8 wrote to US President Joe Biden on different issues concerning Bangladesh.

On May 25, six Congress members from the Republican Party, including Scott Perry and Barry More, wrote another letter to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken regarding Bangladesh's internal issues, the ministry informed the parliamentary body in a written statement.

The ministry officials said it was not noticed in the past that Congress

members from the Republican Party showed such interest in Bangladesh-related issues.

The ministry said neither of the two letters were written to the Bangladesh embassy or the Bangladesh government.

The Bangladesh embassy in America communicated with the offices of the Congress members for confirming about the authenticity of their letters.

The embassy officials have already met several times the officials of the Congress members' offices and

cleared Bangladesh's stance on their letters, the foreign ministry informed the JS watchdog.

They also talked to several officials of the US Department of State and the White House, including Michele J Sison, Rashad Hussain and Donald Lu, and told them that the allegations made by the 12 Congress members were based on false and wrong information.

Awami League lawmaker Faruk Khan presided over the standing committee meeting.



Members of the 'Chennai Manipuri community' hold a peace demonstration to protest in solidarity with the people of India's northeastern state of Manipur amid ethnic violence, in Chennai, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP