



Decades not deterring AFSANA MIMI

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Afsana Mimi's film 'Patalghor' has been released in Chorki yesterday. The actress is seen playing a single mother, who struggles through life with her only daughter by her side, played by Nusraat Faria.

Afsana Mimi has seamlessly shifted from television to OTT, going from *Kothao Keu Nei* to *Mohanagar 2*. The versatile actress also created a name for herself in films such as *Nodir Naam Modhumoti*, *Chitra Nodir Pare*, and *Priyotomeshu*, among others.

Afsana Mimi's film *Patalghor* has been released on Chorki on July 27. The actress is seen playing a single mother, who struggles through life with her only daughter by her side, played by Nusraat Faria.

"This is the first time that I have worked with Nusraat Faria and I had an incredible time shooting with her, outdoors in Pangsha. We started shooting around October 2020 and the memories that we made there will forever be treasured in my heart," said the actor.

The film has an incredible ensemble of talented actors and Afsana Mimi is hopeful that audiences will surely love *Patalghor* based on its wonderful concept.

"The movie revolves around the bond between a mother and a daughter. I play the role of a single mother who has to grapple with the complexities of her relationship with her daughter. The film highlights how distance tries to test our relationship, but our love pulls us back together," added the actor.



PHOTO: STAR

Prior to being released in Bangladesh, the film was screened in various international festivals and even competed in the 'Asian Competition' category at the prestigious Bengaluru International Film Festival. The film was also screened at the 53rd International Film Festival in India.

Patalghor also won the Best Feature film award at Nepal International Film Festival on March.

Although Afsana Mimi can be hardly seen on television anymore, she has been channeling her efforts towards OTT.

"OTT has a wider range of audiences. People from all around the world, who understand Bangla, can fully enjoy the content. Furthermore, some of the programming is dubbed in different languages in order to reach a global audience. This makes OTT a fantastic

medium for artistes," said the actor.

Afsana Mimi believes that a great number of producers are invested in producing quality content in OTT.

"OTT can be a wonderful example of how to produce great concepts, with exceptional acting. Directors here get the perfect canvas to showcase their talents on a boarder spectrum. New talents and budding directors are venturing to the sector too," stated Afsana Mimi.

When asked about her biggest strength when it comes to acting, the accomplished actor replied it's the love of fans.

"I am here because of my fans. When it comes to shooting, we have to travel to numerous locations and my fans shower me with lots of affection. Their love is something truly priceless," said the actress.



'Barbie' hits \$200M, 'Oppenheimer' \$100M in 5 Days

Greta Gerwig's whimsical film *Barbie* has surpassed \$200 million in North American ticket sales and reached \$400 million globally, becoming the seventh-highest-grossing film of the year domestically. Margot Robbie's portrayal of the iconic doll has captivated audiences worldwide, boosting the success of the film that had a budget of \$145 million.

On the other hand, Christopher Nolan's poignant and lengthy biopic *Oppenheimer* delves into the world of brilliant scientists and politicians. Despite its weighty subject matter, the movie has earned \$107 million in North America and a total of \$238 million worldwide, making it one of the select 19 films to hit the \$100 million milestone this year.

Sunny Deol dishes out justice in 'Gadar 2' trailer



The much-awaited trailer of Anil Sharma's *Gadar 2* was finally released Wednesday, and its star casts Sunny Deol and Ameesha Patel have reprised their iconic roles as Tara Singh and Sakeena in the film.

Tara and Sakina's son Jeete (Utkarsh) is tortured by a Pakistani army officer in the caravan. Tara assures a distraught Sakeena that he will bring back Jeete. He goes to Lahore and sledgehammers Pakistani army personnel. The trailer of *Gadar 2* was released on the occasion of India's "Kargil Vijay Divas".

Gadar 2 is slated to be released in theaters on August 11.

NEWS

Corruption, labour rights

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decisions. Bangladesh does not have a separate court division dedicated to commercial cases."

The legal system lacks independence from the government, which directs judicial appointments. Other pillars of the justice system such as the police are also closely aligned with the ruling political party.

Arbitration and dispute resolution are limited by the fact that the timeframe is unpredictable with many taking years. Moreover, arbitration results are unevenly enforced by the courts, which appear to show a bias against foreign investors, it said.

"Corruption remains a serious impediment to investment and economic growth."

Bangladesh is a party to the UN Anticorruption Convention and has laws to combat bribery, embezzlement, and other forms of corruption, but enforcement is inconsistent.

"Corruption is common in public procurement, tax and customs collection, and among regulatory authorities. Off the-record payments by firms reduce Bangladesh's GDP by 2 to 3 percent, according to some estimates."

The current Awami League-led Government publicly states its commitment to fighting corruption, but opposition parties claim the ACC is used by the government to harass political opponents, it said.

Government efforts to ease public procurement rules and a recent constitutional amendment to diminish the independence of the Anti Corruption Commission, the main institutional anti-corruption watchdog and investigator in cases of bribery and corruption, may undermine institutional safeguards against corruption.

The report also expressed concern

about the political situation in Bangladesh.

"Although Bangladesh is a traditionally moderate, secular country, political disturbances are likely to grow in size and intensity as national elections approach in late 2023/early 2024."

In the last general election in December 2018, Prime Minister Hasina's ruling Awami League party won 289 parliamentary seats out of 300 in an election marred by widespread vote-rigging, ballot-box stuffing, and intimidation.

"Harassment and violence during the pre-election period made it difficult for opposition candidates and supporters to meet, hold rallies, and campaign freely. Civil society groups are widely concerned about the trend toward a one-party state and the marginalisation of all political opposition groups."

The One Stop Service Act (2018) gave responsibility for attracting foreign investments to four investment promotion agencies: Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA), Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), and Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA).

"These agencies offer some streamlined services, but corruption and excessive bureaucracy have held back the complete and effective rollout of the One Stop Service Act."

To encourage investment, the government has offered incentives, guarantees and tax breaks (e.g., no value-added tax on exports, tax holidays for certain industries).

However, several US companies have experienced difficulties securing the incentives initially offered by the government. They reported that infrastructure guarantees (ranging

from electricity to gas connections) were not fully delivered and tax exemptions were delayed.

"These challenges are not specific to US companies but reflect the broader challenges in the business environment."

The report also slammed the labour situation in the country.

The Bangladesh Labor Act specifies compensation for injured workers, employment conditions, freedom of association, health and sanitary conditions, leave policies, minimum wage setting procedures, right to join unions and working hours.

"But in practice, the government does not consistently and effectively enforce labour laws and independent trade unions face persistent barriers to registration. Charges for unfair labour practices are rarely brought against employers for violating labour rights, but workers in unions have been subjected to police violence, mass dismissals, and arrests of union leaders for asserting their rights to protest, according to labour rights groups."

Companies frequently discourage or prevent the formation of independent worker-led labour unions, preferring pro-factory management unions.

Labour organisations reported most workers feared reprisal if they exercised their rights to form unions, attend meetings or bargain collectively with employers.

The government reports over 1,000 registered trade unions, but labour leaders estimate less than 200 active trade unions are in the country's dominant export sector, garment, and only 30 to 40 of these engage in collective bargaining negotiations because union activities are inhibited by intimidation, corruption and violence.

Two convicts executed 17 yrs after killing

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employee.

Mohiuddin was the brother-in-law of late BNP minister Aminul Haque. He belonged to the pro BNP-Jamaat teachers' platform at the university.

The executions were carried out more than a decade after Rajshahi's speedy trial tribunal handed down death sentences to four accused in 2008.

A six-member Appellate Division bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, delivered the last verdict in the case on September 15 last year.

"In view of the evidence as discussed earlier we have no hesitation to hold that Dr Mohiuddin, a highly educated man and associate professor of Rajshahi University, only for the purpose of getting promoted to professor annihilated Dr Taher from this world presuming that if Professor Taher lived, the chance of his getting promotion would be zero," said the verdict.

THE MURDER

Prof Taher went missing from his home on the campus on February 1, 2006, when he was aged 59.

Two days later, police recovered his body from the septic tank of his home.

Taher's son Sanjid Alvi Ahmed

filed a murder case with Motihar Police Station on the same day accusing unidentified people.

THE INVESTIGATION

On March 18, 2007, the police submitted a chargesheet accusing six persons.

Other than Mohiuddin and Jahangir, another key accused in the charges was Mahbubul Alam Salehi, the then-president of RU unit Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Three others were Jahangir's father Azimuddin Munshi, brother Abdu Salam, and brother-in-law Nazmul Islam.

Soon after Taher went missing, the police arrested the trio -- Jahangir, Salam and Nazmul, who made judicial statements and confessed that they murdered Taher and dumped his body in the septic tank on February 1.

The trio's confession also revealed the names of Mohiuddin and Salehi.

THE PLOT

The slain professor detected plagiarism and piracy in 10 out of 11 of Mohiuddin's research papers, which the latter submitted for his promotion, according to the charges.

Salehi also had a grudge against Taher over his examinations. Mohiuddin and Salehi hired the killers by promising them money

and jobs.

After Jahangir killed Prof Taher by stabbing, Mohiuddin and Salehi confirmed his death by suffocating him.

While Jahangir, Salam and Nazmul carried the body and dumped it in the septic tank. Mohiuddin and Salehi were also there with them.

THE TRIAL

The trial started at Rajshahi's Public Safety Tribunal in June 2007 by framing charges against the six.

However, the court refused to conduct the case two months later mentioning "unavoidable circumstances."

The trial resumed at Rajshahi's Speedy Trial Tribunal in December and examined a total of 26 witnesses before announcing the verdict on May 22, 2008.

THE VERDICT

The tribunal judge ATM Mesbaudoula gave death sentences against four persons -- Mohiuddin, Jahangir, Salam and Nazmul.

Two other accused -- Salehi, and Azimuddin were acquitted.

The judge in his verdict observed that Ahmed's findings of piracy were enough to prevent Mohiuddin's promotion.

EU to keep the pressure on Myanmar

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Dhaka; Sebastian Rieger-Brown, first secretary (political); and Anna Orlandini, who oversees EU's humanitarian efforts in Bangladesh.

The delegation met with 15 Rohingya representatives, both men and women, at UNHCR's Community Centre at Camp 4.

A Rohingya leader who participated in the discussion said they told the delegation that the situation in Rakhine is still not suitable for repatriation.

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), a camp-based organisation working for the rights and justice of Rohingya people, said he along with some executive members of their organisation met the delegation at Camp 4 extension and handed them a letter.

"In the letter, we requested the EU delegation to help us with dignified and justified repatriation and create a safe zone for Rohingyas in Myanmar,"

he said.

A Rohingya woman expressed her concern over the reduction in food assistance to \$8 from \$12. She told the delegation that they are struggling to run their family.

Later, the delegation visited the Rohingya Cultural Centre operated by the International Organisation for Migration and met with the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner at his office in Cox's Bazar town in the evening.

AL candidate meets

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Asked about the meeting, AL candidate Bacchu said, "I've been visiting many places to ask for votes."

He said he went to the mosque to do the same. However, he claimed not to have held any meetings there and did not notice if Mufti Izhar was present.

When his attention was drawn to the photo, he asked The Daily Star, "If you know everything, why did you call me?"

Meanwhile, Belal confirmed to The Daily Star that during their visit, Mufti Izhar was indeed present. "However, his son Mufti Harun was not present at that time. We were there to ask for blessings and vote."

According to the media reports, Mufti Izharul, a former Naye-e-Amir of Hefazat, is known to have helped

radical organisation Huji spread its tentacles across the country since the early 90s.

His son Harun Izhar was freed on bail in Chattogram on May 23 this year after securing bail in 28 cases filed in the port city, Rajshahi and Dhaka.

On April 29, 2021, he was arrested from the madrasa by Rab in cases filed with Hathazari Police Station over anti-Modi protests in March of that year.

According to the investigators and media reports, Mufti Harun, once an active organiser of the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji), had been arrested several times for his alleged links to a madrasa bomb blast in Chattogram's Lalkhan Bazar in 2013 and for plotting an attack on the US embassy

in Dhaka with Lashkar-e-Taiba in 2009.

Senior officials of Chattogram Metropolitan Police said that after the Hathazari clash on March 26, 2021, which left four dead, Harun played a significant role in taking the bodies of the deceased without the postmortem from Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Investigators and senior police officials of Chattogram said Lalkhan Bazar madrasa used to be a training centre for Huji members. The institution has been under the scanner of law enforcement agencies since the 2013 bomb blast.

There are 488,638 voters in this constituency and polls will be held in 156 polling centres with 201 polling booths with electronic voting machines on Sunday.