

RASHED MAMUN APU A new villain in town

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SHAH ALAM SHAZU

In the realm of contemporary cinema, Rashed Mamun Apu stands out for his remarkable portrayal of negative characters, earning accolades for his roles in the highly acclaimed films *Poran* and *Damal*. With an impressive tally of 15 released films and an additional 12 awaiting their debut, Apu has firmly cemented his status as a sought-after actor. Notably, he graced the screens with *Prohelika* and *Laal Sari* during the previous Eid season.

Your emergence as a prominent figure in the industry hasn’t gone unnoticed. What type of roles resonate with you the most?

My artistic focus is drawn more towards negative characters. These roles offer a myriad of opportunities to delve into the intricacies of a character’s psyche. The canvas for expression is vast. As an actor, my aspiration is to master the craft of acting. I regard myself as a character artiste, a facet of the industry that often goes underappreciated.

Could you share the response you received, especially from loved ones, for your performance in ‘Prohelika’?

The experience of portraying DB Officer Sharif in *Prohelika*, under the direction of Chayanika Chowdhury, was immensely rewarding. The character offered layers that I eagerly embraced—shifting between shades of negativity and adaptability. The response from various quarters was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the depth of engagement the role offered. My role in *Prohelika* stands as a pinnacle in my cinematic journey.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Reflecting on your filmography, which cinematic endeavour do you believe brought you closest to the hearts of the audience?

To be candid, while I am grateful for every film I’ve been a part of, *Poran* holds a special place for the recognition it brought me. Additionally, my portrayal of Kutu in *Damal* was exceptionally well-received by the audience. The character of Kutu, a *razakar*, evoked significant reactions and discussions. Even today, Tojo’s character from *Poran* remains a topic of conversation. Undoubtedly, *Poran* stands as the zenith of my career thus far.

Can you share your aspirations for a dream role?

The journey of learning is infinite, a path I am eager to tread. I draw inspiration from both veterans and contemporaries. I don’t have a dream role. Every role that comes my way assumes the status of a dream role.

How do you manage the hassle that comes with popularity, during visits to your hometown?

I embrace popularity as an achievement rather than a burden. I have many friends and relatives in Rajshahi. I have studied law at Rajshahi University. Visiting my hometown is an experience I relish, as I am met with huge response and immense love from people there. This reservoir of love serves as a driving force to deliver compelling performances on screen.



Suhana Khan starring in next Karan Johar film?



After a hiatus spanning seven years, Karan Johar has made a triumphant return to the director’s chair with his latest film, *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, which is making waves at the box office. However, it appears that Johar is wasting no time and is already gearing up for his next venture, which reportedly features none other than his close friend Shah Rukh Khan’s daughter, Suhana Khan.

According to insiders at Bollywood Life, both Karan Johar and Suhana Khan are enthusiastic about the upcoming project. Unlike any of Johar’s previous franchises, this new film will showcase an entirely fresh script, presenting a captivating romantic narrative.

While details about Karan Johar’s next project with Suhana Khan are still in their preliminary stages, sources suggest that filming is likely to commence by the end of this year.

Shyam Benegal applauds Shuvoo’s acting in ‘Mujib’

Shyam Benegal, the director of the highly anticipated film *Mujib: The Making of a Nation*, has showered praises on Bangladeshi actor Arifin Shuvoo for his acting prowess.

In a recent interview with an Indian YouTube channel, Shyam Benegal delved into the film’s creation, sharing insights into his creative journey and vision for the project.

When asked about the actors’ performances, Benegal remarked, “Every Bangladeshi actor in the film was outstanding, but if I were to single out one, it would be Arifin Shuvoo. He is an incredibly hardworking and dedicated actor.”



COUNTRYWIDE

People suffer as road condition awful

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Thousands of people in Netrakona’s Kendua upazila have been suffering badly as the nine-kilometre-long Kendua-Mahmudpur road has become almost unfit for movement due to lack of repair for long.

Moreover, the road goes under water and remains waterlogged even after a moderate rainfall.

Locals said a number of cracks and potholes developed on different parts of the busy road due to lack of proper maintenance by the authorities concerned.

Several thousand people, especially students and office goers, who use the road to reach Kendua upazila headquarters, have to suffer a lot due to the dilapidated condition of the road.

Critical patients and their attendants are the worst sufferers as they have to travel through the awfully dilapidated road to reach Kendua Upazila Health Complex, Ali Hossain of Baniagati village said.

Out of the nine-kilometre road, about four-kilometre portion, stretching from Sajura intersection to sub-registry office, has developed many small and large potholes in the last four

years, said Ashik Mahmud of Sajura village.

During monsoon, the situation gets more worsened as most parts of the important road goes under water and many of us cannot attend our classes, said tenth grader Abida Sultana of the same locality.

Chirang Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Enamul Kabir Khan said local people have been urging the authorities concerned to repair the road for long, but no step has been taken yet in this regard.

Nearly 50,000 people of different villages under three unions of Kendua, and four unions of adjacent Madan upazila use the road to go to Kendua upazila headquarters every day.

Local farmers do not get fair prices of their produces as they cannot carry their agricultural good to nearby markets due to awful condition of the road, he said.

Contacted, Kendua Upazila LGED Engineer Mozammel Hossain said a proposal for the road repair work has been sent to the concerned ministry recently.

They will start the repair work soon after getting allocation from the higher authorities, he said.



A portion of Kendua-Netrakona Road has remained dilapidated for long, but the authorities have turned a blind eye to the woes of its users. PHOTO: COLLECTED

It’s a strong message to the corrupt

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his three-day visit yesterday.

During the meetings, he sought to learn the challenges that Bangladesh faces in curbing corruption and preventing money laundering. He also wanted to know what support Washington could provide Bangladesh to this end.

During Nephew’s visit, two media outlets reported that some Bangladeshi individuals, including politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats, will be facing US sanctions for corruption.

Asked about it, Foreign Secretary Masud said there was no discussion on any specific individual, although Nephew noted that sanction is a tool against corruption.

A diplomatic source told The Daily Star yesterday that Washington does not reveal names of individuals who may face sanctions.

But the US is considering imposing sanctions on corrupt individuals because the Biden administration has taken a strong position against corruption globally, as it hurts democracy.

Nephew’s visit to Bangladesh is part of that initiative as corruption here is widespread and a huge amount of illicit money transfer happens from Bangladesh to different countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Middle East, Malaysia, and Singapore, the source said.

“Before imposing sanctions, there is a process. They [US officials] conduct internal investigations to collect evidence before it [imposing sanctions],” the diplomatic source added.

Analysts say the timing of Nephew’s visit is significant, as the US has already put pressure on Bangladesh by imposing sanctions against some Rab officials, and is

demanding a free and fair election this year against the backdrop of alleged anomalies in the last two national polls in 2014 and 2018.

“Washington wants to both punish the corrupt as well as support the institutions of Bangladesh in building capacity to fight corruption,” the diplomatic source said.

Ittekkharuzzaman, who was present at a meeting between Nephew and civil society groups at the US embassy on Monday, told this correspondent that if Washington means what is being said about imposing sanctions on corrupt individuals, it can initiate legal procedures against the money launderers, confiscate the ill-gotten money and help bring the money back.

During the meeting with Nephew, Foreign Secretary Masud said that many

countries, especially those known as tax havens, do not cooperate fully when it comes to providing information on money laundering.

Ittekkharuzzaman, during his meeting with Nephew, said that many countries where ill-gotten money is transferred actually create conditions for laundering and do not question the origin of the money.

He said that Nephew acknowledged the matter and said they will look into it.

During their meeting with Nephew, Bangladesh officials said that the US can help Bangladesh in enhancing capacity of relevant officials and institutions, including those of the ACC, the BFIU, and Criminal Investigation Department of police who are responsible for investigating financial crimes.

Ittekkharuzzaman said if equipped with appropriate knowledge and technical knowhows, Bangladesh officials can easily interact with the foreign entities to glean information on financial crimes, investigate, and prosecute the offenders.

“Money laundering is a sophisticated crime. One needs high-level skills to investigate it, especially as there are international connections,” he said.

But financial corruption is not all about money laundering. Many financial corruptions take place within the border. So, how can the US initiative help curb domestic corruption?

Ittekkharuzzaman said that if those involved in large-scale corruptions are punished, it will have an impact on society as a whole. To do that, the government needs to uphold its political commitment and show zero tolerance for corruption.

Number of local organisations to be cut by half

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observers were selected on the basis of a guideline. “According to the policy, politically affiliated organisations are not qualified for being observers,” he noted.

The local observers must be non-partisan and politically neutral, EC officials said, adding that organisations with affiliation with any party cannot be a member of an election observation body.

The registration of local election observers was introduced before the 9th parliamentary election in 2008. Based on the Representation of the People Order bill, the EC developed a policy for selecting local election observers.

This year the EC started the selection process in February and a total of 210 organisations applied to the election commission (EC)

for registering their names as election observers.

Later, the EC shortlisted 94 organisations and enquired about them with assistance from two intelligence agencies. Certain questions were raised about the political affiliation of over two dozen applicants, said EC sources with knowledge of the list.

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir said the EC used a number of tools to check the competency of the applicants.

Commenting on the selection and registration process, EC Brigadier General (Retired) Md Ahsan Habib Khan said, “The Election Commission Secretariat selected the organisations after proper verification of all necessary information and following the policy thoroughly.”

The EC is set to provide registration to 39 new organisations.

From the previous list, some 40 organisations applied this year for registration again. 29 of them are likely to get registration this year, too. They include Manabdhikar O Samaj Unnayan Sangstha, Seba Social Foundation, Agradut Sangstha, Activity for Reformation of Basic Need, Highlight Foundation, Move Foundation, Democracy Watch, Jatiya Nirbachon Parjabeckkhan Parishad, Disability Inquisition Activities, Abdul Momen Khan Memorial Foundation, Eslap, Bibi Asia Foundation, Lutfor Rahman Bhuiyan Foundation, Samaj Unnayan Prayash, Jubo Unnayan Sangstha, Taltola Jubo Unnayan Sangstha, Banche Shekha, Association for Social Development of Bangladesh, and Institute for Environment and Development.

The much talked-about organisations – Election

Monitoring Forum and SAARC Human Rights Foundation – did not get registration this time. Both the organisations are headed by Abed Ali.

Election Monitoring Forum recently brought four foreigners – two journalists and two social workers – and introduced them as “international election observers” to the EC and various other organisations. SAARC Human Rights Foundation was criticised for its “partisan” role in the parliamentary election in 2018.

During the 2018 national election, about 26,000 individuals from 81 organisations were approved as observers by the EC. In the 2014 polls, about 8,900 individuals monitored the election when 153 MPs were elected unopposed and many opposition parties boycotted the election. In 2008, 1.59 lakh local

observers monitored the election and in 2001, the number was 2.18 lakh.

Stakeholders

FROM PAGE 12 incorporated a provision of fine up to Tk 25 lakh. If someone fails to pay the fine, there can be a jail sentence of three to six months, Law Minister Anisul Huq told media.

The bill also reduced the punishment for propaganda or campaign against the spirit of the Liberation War, Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the national anthem, or the national flag from 10 years to seven years, he said.

Miller was also asked on the extradition of one of the self-declared killers of Bangabandhu living in the US.

He said they don’t comment on extradition matters.