

A TRAVELING STORYTELLER

of a living culture

12 years without Tareque Masud



Tareque Masud, a name highly regarded by Bangladesh and the international film fraternity, was an enigma. A film activist by heart, his legacy is not only limited to his films but also includes his ideas. On this fateful day, the Bangladesh film industry lost one of its finest filmmakers in an unfortunate road accident on August 13, 2011. On his 12th death anniversary, The Daily Star looks back at the life of this fascinating filmmaker.

DOWEL BISWAS

"In Sufism, the human body is made of clay, and the soul is always associated with a free bird. This soul is encaged in a clay body, and the body is very limited, very transitory, fragile, weak; the soul always wants to be free and has an immense desire to be free," Tareque Masud, the esteemed filmmaker, said on naming his most renowned autobiographical film, *The Clay Bird*, in an interview.

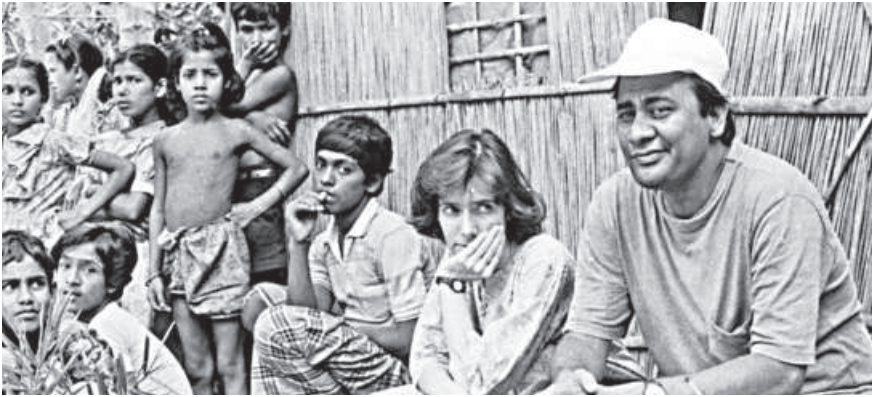
Widely acclaimed, Tareque acquired a much-loved title, *Cinema Feriwal*, the Peddler of Movies, as this storyteller didn't stop at making socially responsible, relevant, religiously 'awakened,' and politically 'incorrect' cinema, docu-fictions, short films- he ensured that the people whom he made films for and with, experience these with him.

His notable productions include *Sonar Beri* (1985), *Adom Surat* (1989), *Muktir Gaan* (1995), *Muktir Kotha* (1999), *Matir Moyna* (2002), *Ontarjatra* (2006), *Runway* (2010) and the unfinished project *Kagojer Phool* (2011).

A man with strong conviction and tenacity, Tareque, with his beloved confederate in life and filmmaking, Catherine Masud, brilliant cinematographer Mishuk Munier, and their trusted crew traveled all through the villages of Bangladesh to reach the



common masses with their films. To understand Tareque, we need to first look into one of his earliest and most outstanding works of art, *Adam Surot*, which he made about the legendary impressionist mystic painter S M Sultan. In 1982, he, along with his Kaleidoscope camera and a very limited number



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

of films, went to Narail and shot this 54-minute documentary over the next seven years, which would later change the history of Bengali cinema.

Tareque was more of an archivist, the finest kind, than a filmmaker. He and Catherine made *Muktir Gaan* by painstakingly collecting and stitching



footages of 1971 shot by an American filmmaker, Lear Levin, along with other archival footages. The film proceeds with a musical troupe, traveling from one place to another during the Liberation War, entertaining and motivating refugees and freedom fighters.

In a sense, the tremendous



Gaan became the protagonists of *Muktir Kotha*...When they saw *Muktir Gaan*, they said, it is good, but we have also fought; our stories are not there in *Muktir Gaan*; we will tell our stories, and thus *Muktir Kotha* was made," Tareque Masud explained in an interview.

Tareque's brilliance in utilizing Moushumi Bhowmik to render Allen Ginsberg's iconic poem on the refugees of the War, *September on Jessore Road*, deserves a separate mention by itself. The song, with Bhowmik's mesmerizing voice and accompanied by scenes of devastated refugees shown on the screen, sparks a sense of horror, morbidity, and melancholy in the audience, an impact that lasts for some time even after the film is over.

A film activist at heart, Tareque did not shy away from presenting stories of people who may be argued to be relatively underrepresented or voiceless – the poor, the marginalised, and the minority groups.

Tareque Masud's artistic mind was not only engrossed in art, but he also went out in search of his Bengali roots. He also went out to seek the existence of a larger society beyond the concept of religion, freedom of expression, and ethnicity. To understand Tareque Masud, we need to adhere to his ideals.



Watched 'Priyotoma' more than once: Apu Biswas

From the former couple's statements about each other now, it seems that they have let bygones take their place.

The actress was alight with praises about Shakib Khan's, "It's an amazing film, there are only a few like it". Apu also spoke about her own production, *Laal Shari*, expressing her satisfaction at the response it received.

Rani Mukerji shares harrowing story of losing her baby



Rani Mukerji recently shared a tragic personal anecdote at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, that she suffered a miscarriage five months into her second pregnancy, in 2020. She tragically added that the incident occurred before filming of *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*, which was released back in March this year.

The actress said, "I didn't speak about this when I was promoting the film because it would have come across as me trying to speak about a personal experience that would propel the film... so, it was around the year when Covid-19 struck. It was 2020. I got pregnant with my second baby at the end of 2020 and I unfortunately lost my baby five months into my pregnancy."

Mukerji also shared, "Around 10 days after my miscarriage, Nikhil (Advani) reached out to me with the story. I was instantly drawn to it, not that my personal experience had to align for me to connect emotionally with the narrative."

COUNTRYWIDE

Growers busy in producing vegetable saplings on floating seedbed

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Farmers in Pirojpur and Barisal are passing busy time in growing vegetable saplings on floating seedbeds.

The innovative method, locally called Dhap, started around two months ago and will continue till October.

But, compared to the previous years, the production cost has increased a bit this year.

Currently, saplings of different vegetables like bottle gourd, pumpkin, chili, papaya, bean and many more are produced in the marshland of Pirojpur's Nazirpur and Nesarabad upazila and Barisal's Banaripara upazila.

These saplings are later taken to different areas across the country by boats, trawlers and trucks.

"Previously we used to buy a 180-feet-long floating seedbed at Tk 10,000, but this year we are paying Tk 3,000 more for the same," farmer Jakir Hossain said.

Another farmer Mohammad Mamun said beside the seedbed price, wages of day labourers' has also increased.

"This year we are paying Tk 200 more

for a farm labourer," Mamun said.

Meanwhile, a number of farmers said production of saplings has been hampered a bit due to low water level in the marshland.

"If there is not enough water, farmers cannot tend the saplings properly as they have to depend on boat for the work," farmer Rezaul Karim said.

One of the sapling traders Bakir Hossain said at present each sapling is being sold between Tk 5 to Tk 8, depending on its variety, to the wholesalers.

Wholesalers can hardly make a profit of Tk 2 to Tk 3 by selling those to the retailers, Bakir added.

Starting from June, production of vegetable saplings continues for the next four to five months, the farmer said.

Contacted, Pirojpur Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Nazrul Islam Sikder said they are working with the farmers to increase the quantity of the saplings produced in the marshland.

The area of cultivable land is gradually increasing every year," he added.



A farmer tends his floating seedbeds at Muluhar village in Barisal's Banaripara upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

8 Bangladeshis

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over the phone after several hours, but found the phone switched off," said Lutfa Begum, 35, elder sister of Monir.

The next morning, she tried to contact broker Zakir over instant messaging app imo.

"Answering the call, one of his assistants said eight people, including my brother, went missing after the boat capsized," Lutfa added.

Jamal Hossain, brother of another missing person Kamal, said, "My brother left Bangladesh about six months ago. Zakir took him to Libya."

His brother called him around 8:00pm on Wednesday and said he would take a boat soon.

"That was my last conversation with my brother," Jamal said.

He said local union parishad member Milon Mia on Friday told him that his brother along

with some others went missing after a boat capsized.

Contacted, Milon, member of Narayanpur Union Parishad, said he came to know about the incident from some locals.

"I tried to contact Zakir [in Libya] over imo. But another person answered the call and said eight people went missing. The man didn't elaborate on the incident."

Mohammad Tanvir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Belabo Police Station, said he heard about the incident from some locals, but was yet to receive any written complaint.

Kazi Asif Ahmed, head of the diplomatic wing at the Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli, last night said the incident took place outside Libya.

The mission was trying to get details of the incident, the official told this newspaper over the phone.

BNP has no global support

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governments, three leaders present at the meeting told The Daily Star.

Hasina, also the prime minister, said BNP has no global support, reports BSS.

According to the three leaders, who spoke on condition of anonymity with this newspaper, Hasina told the meeting that BNP-Jamaat's current position is completely contradictory to their past actions.

"Have the people of the country forgotten their wrongdoings? We suffered torture at their hands, and it is our responsibility to publicise the wrongdoings of BNP-Jamaat," Hasina told the meeting that started at 7:30pm and ended at 11:00pm.

The meeting decided that AL will hold rallies in Sylhet, Khulna, Cumilla, Dhaka, Barishal and Chattogram cities in the

coming months, and Hasina will address every rally. Further details of the rallies are yet to be finalised.

Addressing the meeting, Hasina warned that those engaged in tarnishing the image of the party lawmakers will not be considered for nomination.

To strengthen the party, Hasina directed the leaders to accommodate devoted activists in different committees.

She assigned presidium members Faruk Khan and Abdur Razzaque to supervise the formation of thana and ward committees under Dhaka north and south city units.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader moderated the meeting, also attended by Matia Chowdhury, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Kazi Zafarullah, reports BSS.

The country saw a major surge in militant activities and drives in militant hideouts in 2016-2017. Law enforcers conducted at least 23 major anti-militancy drives across the country that left around 69 militants killed in those two years.

However, there has not been any major militant activity or drive in militant hideouts for the last couple of years, except for some activities by Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya. The government banned this group on August 9 this year.

Officials involved in anti-terrorism activities had been claiming that militant outfits were under control, although they were on alert.

10 held from 'militant den'

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Investigators suspect the group has adopted a new operational and recruitment model. This "new method" entails persuading an entire family, rather than a lone wolf, to abandon their homes and join the militants on "hijrat".

This way, they can avoid suspicion as no one from their family files any complaint about their going missing.

"Tracing this outfit took us time, as no one from these families were left behind to file a complaint," said Asaduzzaman.

He added that they arrested a man in Dhaka a while ago when he was planning to take his family to the Moulvibazar den.

"This led us to the hideout."

This strategic shift indicates that militant outfits are adapting to new situations to remain operational, evading the radar of law enforcers, the CTTC chief added.

In the past, a single individual would leave home to join militant outfits. Subsequently, their family members would file a missing report, alerting the law enforcers.

Locals around the Moulvibazar "hideout" said some of the arrestees bought a piece of land from a local, Rafiq Mia, and built several houses about a year ago.

"We noticed the presence of women and children only a few months ago," said Babul Mia, a

resident of Jogitila area of Tatuli.

Zoynal Mia, also from the area, said the arrestees had earlier told them that they lost their homes to river erosion.

"They would not talk much with the locals. But they told us that more of their relatives would soon join them," he told The Daily Star.

According to Asaduzzaman, the CTTC chief, the suspects invited some other members of the outfit to join them from different parts of the country.

"We have the name of the key person of this outfit. The outfit has quite a few operatives and we are trying to nab them," he said.

Ukraine

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yesterday said Minister Sergei Shoigu inspected troops deployed in the Arctic as well as preparations "to defend specially important installations" in this strategic zone,

Shoigu was accompanied by Alexey Likhachev, head of the state nuclear company Rosatom, and visited Novaya Zemlya, in Russia's extreme north, a statement said.

They also inspected a testing site for nuclear weapons used during the Soviet era, where "advanced tests for military weapons and equipment" were taking place, the defence ministry said, without giving details.

Ukraine launched a highly anticipated push in June after stockpiling Western weapons but has struggled to make headway in the face of stiff Russian resistance.

Russia had beefed up its military presence in the Arctic before it launched what Moscow terms a special military operation in Ukraine in February last year.

It has rehabilitated Soviet-era bases and deployed weapons and anti-aerial S-400 systems in the region, which has vast reserves of hydrocarbons and can serve as a major maritime route between Europe and Asia due to global warming and melting glaciers.

Russia views the entry of two countries in the region – Finland and Sweden – in the western military alliance Nato as a threat to its security.

Finland joined the alliance in April and Sweden is expected to be formally admitted in the coming months.