

Portraying Bangamata was a career landmark: Jyotika Jyoti

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

In the realm of Bangladeshi cinema, Jyotika Jyoti's name has become synonymous with versatile acting. With a journey that began with *Ayna*, directed by Kabori, she has graced the silver screen with roles spanning from Liberation War-based films like *Anil Bagchir Ekdin* and *Jibon Dhuli* to the emotional depths of *Lal Moroger Jhuti* and *Rabeya*.

Yesterday her film *Bangamata*, was screened in different venues across the country, on the occasion of National Day of Mourning. Under the direction of Goutam Koiri, this short film casts Jyotika Jyoti as Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, a persona deeply ingrained in the chronicles of Bangladesh's history.

The actress sat down for an insightful conversation with The Daily Star, delving into the intricate aspects of her acting journey and the portrayal of such an iconic figure.

Your acting repertoire spans varied roles, yet 'Bangamata' marks your first portrayal of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib. How was the experience?

Indeed, this is the first time I have depicted Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib. The experience was a unique blend of honour and challenge. Undoubtedly, there was a certain pressure to accurately capture the essence of such a prominent individual. The offer to portray this revered figure came my way about a year and a half ago. Prior to this, I had also auditioned for the role of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib for the movie *Mujib: The Making of a Nation*.

The short film *Bangamata*, produced by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, holds a special significance. The Cultural Minister's assertion that my portrayal closely resembled Bangamata after witnessing my appearance, validated my efforts and brought immense joy.

How did you prepare for the role?

Immersing myself in the character demanded comprehensive research. I delved into the books authored by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to gain insights into her persona. Additionally, I explored the works penned by her daughter, our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, which provided invaluable perspective. To gain a comprehensive understanding, I studied all available literature about Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib. Conversations with those who had direct interactions with her during that era also contributed significantly. This character embodies profound sensitivity.



Amidst Bangamata's multifaceted character, what aspect resonated with you the most during your portrayal?

The qualities of honesty and simplicity that defined her persona struck me profoundly. While her life

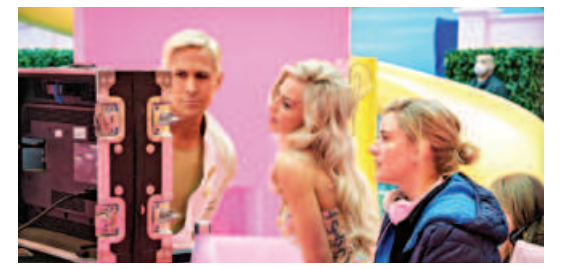
was marked by simplicity, her influence was far-reaching. Her innate generosity, unwavering determination, boundless love for all, and deep respect for others truly set her apart. She embraced everyone as her own, a universal mother figure with unparalleled virtues.

What are your next ventures?

I have two upcoming films that are in the pipeline. Both projects are expected to begin filming shortly. Additionally, I am set to feature in two short films also.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEENEL



'Barbie' retains top spot at the US box office for fourth week

Warner Bros.' hit *Barbie* dominated North American box offices for a fourth consecutive week, industry estimates showed Sunday, as director Greta Gerwig continues to bust industry records.

Gerwig, with *Barbie* had already become the first solo female director to rake in more than \$1 billion at the global box office, this week became the highest-grossing female director of all time in the domestic market, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Industry watcher Exhibitor Relations estimated this weekend's haul for *Barbie* at \$33.7 million, bringing its domestic total to \$526 million.

Starring Margot Robbie as the iconic doll and Ryan Gosling as boyfriend Ken, *Barbie* has earned a whopping \$1.2 billion worldwide.

'Dushshahoshi Khoka' to release in September



Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar's *Dushshahoshi Khoka*, a government granted film which captures the early life of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be released in theatres on September 8.

Shommo Joyti will be seen essaying the character of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the film. On Monday, the film's poster and trailer was unveiled through a grand event in BFDC.

Apart from its cast and crew, Chanchal Chowdhury, Brindaban Das, Shahnaz Khushi, Chhatku Ahmed, Delwar Jahan Jhantu, among others, were present at the event.

COUNTRYWIDE

Sorrows of sharecroppers

S DILIP ROY

Farmer Jahidul Islam, who has no cultivable land of his own, has been producing various crops as a sharecropper for years.

But, despite the hard work, Jahidul has been struggling a lot to maintain his family and finding financial prosperity.

Like Jahidul, a resident of Gorokmandop village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, about 90,000 sharecroppers in different upazilas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram have been battling with the woes.

While talking, Jahidul said apart from his homestead on eight decimals land he has no arable land.

He has been maintaining his four-member family by producing various seasonal crops on four bighas of land, taken lease from a local farmer.

As he has no ability to hire any farm labourer, he cultivates different types crops with the help of his wife Samnia Begum, 40, and two sons—Shahin Alam, 16, and Rashedul Islam, 14.

The landowner gets one-third of the produced crops though he has to bear all the expenses, including seeds, fertilisers and irrigation cost, Jahidul said.

"As the sharecroppers do not have any agreement documents, they never get any government's incentives from the agriculture department," Jahidul said, adding that sharecroppers do not scope to get bank loans.

Another farmer Nazrul Islam of Sardob

village in Kurigram Sadar upazila said he has been cultivating seven bighas of land as a sharecropper for the last 25 years.

Though most of the landowners receive incentives from the agriculture department, they never share those with the sharecroppers, Nazrul said.

The agreements between the landowners and sharecroppers are made verbally as landowners are not interested in making the agreement in papers, he added.

Another sharecropper Jatindra Nath Barman of Barobari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said he would be benefited a lot if we get the government's incentives and bank loan facility.

Landowner Supendra Nath Barman of Panchagram village in the upazila, who leased out his 30 bighas of land to five local sharecroppers through verbal agreements, said, "When I receive any incentive from the agriculture department, I distribute those among the sharecroppers."

But most of the farmers are reluctant to do so, he said.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), there are about 55,000 sharecroppers in Kurigram, while the number of sharecroppers in Lalmonirhat is around 35,000.

Nazrul Islam, manager at Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank in Lalmonirhat, said there is no provision to provide agricultural loans to farmers, who do not have valid land documents or contract agreements.



PHOTO: STAR

Jahidul Islam, a sharecropper from Gorokmandop village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, spraying fertiliser on his leased land to protect the crop from diseases.

Fire at chemical warehouse

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the fire, but could not say immediately what sparked the fire.

"I heard a big bang and then a massive fire broke out. As soon as I along with my wife and daughter came out, my house caught fire," said Mohammad Harun, who lived in one of the two burnt houses.

"The flames went as high as a 10-storey building," said Mehdi Hasan, who rescued two members of the ill-fated family breaking a wall of the house.

AKM Shamsuzzoha, deputy assistant director of fire service, said since it was a chemical fire, it generated a lot of heat. So, it was hard for them to go near the fire initially.

This correspondent found plastic water tanks

on roofs of nearby houses had melted while tree leaves were burnt around 300 yards away from the warehouses.

The air was filled with pungent odour of chemicals when this correspondent was leaving the spot around 4:00pm.

Witnesses said a fireball wounded many. People as far as 300 yards away were hurt.

The deceased are warehouse employee Sohag Hossain, 25, his wife Mina Begum, 22, their one and a half-year old daughter Tayeba Akhter, Sohag's sister-in-law Jesmin Akhter, 35, and her daughter Isha Akhter, an eight-grader.

Sohag's four-year-old daughter Roza Moni is fighting for her life at the Sheikh Hasina National

Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery with 50 percent burns, said doctors.

"Sohag first came out of his house with wounded Roza Moni and again entered the house to save his other family members and suffered severe injury," said his neighbour Ismail.

Sohag and Roza Moni were sent to the hospital where Sohag died around 1:00pm. He sustained 75 percent burn injuries.

Other injured, including a firefighter, took treatment at different hospitals and clinics.

Locals demanded immediate removal of the chemical warehouses from the area. They said if the local administration was active, such warehouses could not have been constructed in a residential area.

Risks, costs surge

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In a similar case, 21-month-old Rafia Islam's parents, from Savar's Hemayetpur, had to spend Tk 60,000 only for medication since she was admitted late to the Shishu Hospital on July 25.

For Shahadat Hossain, a leguna driver, buying medicines worth around Tk 30,000 for his 11-year-old son was too much for him to bear.

In all three cases, the major expenses were for the costly antibiotic—meropenem injection, and Albumin, according to the prescriptions.

"Delayed hospital admission increases the need for a higher number of antibiotics and other medicines. As a result, the cost of treatment shoots up significantly," Dr Kamruzzaman Kamrul, associate professor and the lead consultant at Shishu Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

It also increases the risk of casualties as delayed intervention may result in multi-organ failure in children faster than in adults, he added.

This year, 48 children aged 0-10 have so far died from dengue, making up around nine percent of the total fatalities—426—reported until yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

While the overall death rate among hospitalised dengue patients was 0.5 percent, the percentage was significantly higher for children, standing at around 12 percent of 10,819 children admitted to hospitals.

The statistics, however, do not account for children aged 11-15.

As of yesterday, 6,938 children of this age group were hospitalised while 18 of them succumbed to dengue, representing four percent of the total

reported deaths.

Dr Kamruzzaman, meanwhile, said, "Often a dengue test result may be false negative for many reasons. So, parents should be extra careful."

Prof Dr Iffat Ara Shamsad, head of the paediatric department at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, advised parents to remain cautious regarding the dengue danger signs.

"When a child catches a fever, it is crucial to continue treatment under a doctor—either it is at home or in the hospital. Because children are at risk of developing severe symptoms in dengue," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, 10 people died from dengue while 1,984 were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the DGHS.

The total number of dengue cases now stands at 89,875.

Websites of 25 govt

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The Daily Star, however, could not verify the claim since no such leak was shared as of yet.

The groups also leaked the details of a handful of users from the land tax portal of the land ministry.

Several other organisations faced low-level attacks on their websites, ranging from defacements to sites being taken down for certain time periods.

This includes websites of different police units, ticketing websites and some bank websites. However, almost all of them were recovered within hours.

Bangladesh Government's Computer Incident Response Team (BGD e-GOV CIRT) had issued an alert earlier this month, stating that some religious and ideologically motivated underground hacker groups had declared they would launch a coordinated storm of cyberattacks on Bangladesh's cyberspace on August 15.

The team had warned all to take precautionary measures and be vigilant against these attacks.

Precautionary measures have been taken with the help of Rapid Action Battalion at various government institutions and banks as there are cyber-attack threats, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, at a press conference at the Rab Media Centre yesterday.

The hacker groups also claimed they got access to Rab data, sharing a small-scale leak as proof, but The Daily Star found it to be dating back to 2013, when an alleged hack was executed.

This is the second such alleged leak concerning ICB this year, with the first one occurring on June 20 this year, according to a previous report by The Daily Star.

An earlier press release by the CIRT had said, "The [hacker] group claimed to compromise Bangladesh's state-owned investment company, and exfiltrated

data of over 100,000 investors and investment applicants. The threat group shared a single screenshot as proof of compromise and planned to release the data after successful exfiltration."

These attacks follow a series of such assaults taking place since March, some of which had seen much larger leaks comprising the data of lakhs of citizens' being released into the public domain.

"Over the past 15 days, various types of government organisations approached CIRT to secure their systems, and because of that preparation, we have not seen any assault as big as had been threatened," said CIRT project director Mohammad Saiful Alam Khan

Police raid

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He said the suspects had cleared the land around the hideout and had planned to build more structures and houses. The hideout was supposed to serve as a hub for their operational activities, he said.

Asaduzzaman said they also found Tk 2 lakh cash and 96 detonators inside a travel bag. "Some of the detonators were wired."

The CTC chief said, "We have got some important clues after interrogating the arrestees. We will interrogate them more after putting them face to face with suspects previously detained."

SM Nazmul Haque, deputy commissioner of the CTC, said the outfit used to receive funds from Middle Eastern countries. "One of the arrestees, Jamil, once lived in Oman. Jamil had good relations with Qatar expatriate Rashid Ali, who hails from Kulaura. Jamil used the relationship to buy 50 decimal of land in the area and then built hideout," said Nazmul.

Earlier this month, the CTC arrested 21 members of the outfit. The suspects had 11 children with them.