

If we overcome budget issues, we can outshine Bollywood: Shamol Mawla

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SHARMIN JOYA

2023 has been a great year for Shamol Mawla, as six OTT projects featuring the actor were released until now.

“Each character I have donned so far in the web arena is different from one another,” said the *Mohanagar* famed actor.

The versatile artiste began the year with the release of the much-anticipated web-series *Mohanagar-2*, directed by Ashfaque Nipun.

In May, two productions hit the streaming sites—*Shodor Ghatar Tiger 2* and *The Silence*.

The first season of *Shodor Ghatar Tiger*, directed by Sumon Anowar, faced criticisms as it contained U/A-rated scenes in it. “OTT is a personal medium, and contents are curated carefully with proper age gradations,” shared the actor.

Stating his point, he further added, “I believe, it depends more on the subscriber’s mood when choosing a show. Somedays we love watching thrillers, while there are days, we prefer light-hearted contents. Thus, a platform should have a wide range of gallery with contents of different tastes. It falls on the user to decide when and what to watch depending on their mood.”

On the other hand, Vicky Zahed’s web-series, *The Silence*, marked his first collaboration with the director, alongside Mehazabien Chowdhury as a co-artist. After the immense success of the show, the trio once again appeared together in *Ami Ki Tumi?*, released in July. Both of the series earned accolades and much appreciation from the audience.

“I feel truly blessed for having worked in such strong and unique scripts,” he asserted. “Vicky’s both projects, and Anam Biswas’

Virus brought dimensions in our local narratives. We are already ahead of Kolkata’s OTT contents, and If we can overcome budget issues, we can outshine Bollywood too.”

Has Shamol’s nearly three decades of journey in the industry earned him the acknowledgement he genuinely deserved? The *Money Honey* actor shared his thought, “People have showered me with all their love and support, and being an artiste, I cannot ask for more.”

Talking about the deserved recognition in the fraternity, the actor sighed, “I don’t have the power to control others’ perspective, thus, I hope my work will reshape their views someday.”

Attesting to his humbleness, he shared, “I believe that the artiste in me is yet to grow more.”

Shamol is currently enjoying the success of his released works, and waiting for the soon-to-be released indie web-series. The platform of the upcoming project is yet to be revealed.



Three Bangladeshi films selected for BIFF

The curtains are set to rise on October 4 in South Korea, marking the commencement of the 28th edition of the esteemed Busan International Film Festival (BIFF). This year, three films from Bangladesh have secured a place at this prestigious event.

Biplob Sarkar’s *Agontuk (The Stranger)*, and Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury’s *Boli The Wrestler* will compete in the festival’s ‘New Currents’ competition section. Additionally, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s directorial *Something Like an Autobiography* will compete in the ‘Jiseok’ section.



Hollywood writers-actors’ strike dampens Venice Film Festival’s fervor

In the midst of the glitzy atmosphere of the Venice Film Festival, the event’s jury president, Damien Chazelle, highlighted the ongoing strikes by Hollywood writers and actors that have cast a shadow over the vigor of the festival. The *La La Land* director voiced his concern about the strikes that have brought a halt to much of the US entertainment industry.

He emphasised the difficulties faced by those in the industry due to the ongoing strike.

For the first time in 63 years, artistes have united in a strike, advocating for limitations on the use of artificial intelligence and better compensation in the evolving landscape of streaming entertainment.

NEWS

BNP stares at tough times

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ability to launch a united movement.

Since late July, the BNP has been demonstrating in Dhaka.

The number of people attending the events was not as large as expected by the top leaders. Besides, the programmes saw attacks, arrests, and lawsuits against countless activists across Bangladesh.

From July 28 to August 29, law enforcers accused 13,430 activists in 327 cases, arrested at least 1,620, and injured 1,250, according to the BNP.

The BNP will observe its anniversary by placing wreaths at the grave of its founder Ziaur Rahman in the capital at 10:30am, holding a rally in Nayapaltan around 3:00pm, and taking out a procession after the rally.

India’s Adani hits back

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stock in the conglomerate “through offshore structures that obscured their involvement”.

Adani said in a statement yesterday that it “categorically” rejected the OCCRP’s findings and accused the investigative journalism network of seeking to profit by “driving down our stock prices”.

“We have complete faith in the due process of law and remain confident of the quality of our disclosures and corporate governance standards,” it said.

“In light of these facts, the timing of these news reports is suspicious, mischievous and malicious.”

A meteoric rise in Adani Group’s share prices — its main listed unit shot up more than 1,000 percent in five years — funded the conglomerate’s breakneck expansion.

Billionaire founder Gautam Adani, who was until this year the world’s third-richest man, lost two-thirds of his net worth in the wake of the Hindenburg allegations.

He is considered a close associate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a fellow native of Gujarat state.

Opposition parties and other critics say their relationship helped Adani to unfairly win business and avoid proper oversight.

His empire’s rapid expansion into capital-intensive businesses has raised alarms, with Fitch subsidiary

In different districts and cities, discussions and other events will be held, said a statement issued yesterday.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is restricted from leaving her house and acting chairman Tarique Rahman is leading the party from London.

The BNP was founded on September 1, 1978, by late president Ziaur Rahman with a 19-point programme “to build a self-reliant Bangladesh”.

The party formed governments four times — once under the leadership of Ziaur and thrice under his widow Khaleda Zia. It boycotted the January 5, 2014 election, but participated in the 2018 election when Khaleda was in jail.

and market researcher CreditSights warning last year that Adani Group was “deeply overleveraged”.

Shares in the conglomerate’s flagship Adani Enterprises fell dramatically after the January allegations by Hindenburg, a short-seller that not only tracks corporate wrongdoing but also makes money by betting on stocks falling.

They remain 35 percent down from the start of the year, falling another 2.4 percent yesterday morning trade on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Assaulted engineer

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A staff of the Kaliganj Nesco office, wishing not to be named, told The Daily Star yesterday, “We are very scared. We were also beaten. It is not safe for us to work in Kaliganj.”

Kaliganj Police Station OC (investigation) Habibur Rahman said they will investigate the complaint and take legal action accordingly.

Rocky on Tuesday told this newspaper that 10-12 youths went to his office and identified themselves as AL and Chhatra League men.

“They said they came to my office as I didn’t receive the call from the social welfare minister’s son Rakibuzzaman Ahmed.

“The attackers beat me and abused me verbally. I left Kaliganj because I was threatened with life.”

Govt not harassing Prof Yunus

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than 160 global leaders and Nobel laureates, including former US president Barack Obama, in an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed their concern about the safety of Prof Yunus.

They said they are alarmed that Prof Yunus has recently been targeted by what they believe is continuous judicial harassment and asked the premier to immediately suspend the current judicial proceedings against him.

Prof Yunus faces cases over violation of the labour law and evasion of tax payments.

On July 23, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld a High Court verdict that justified the tax authorities’ decision to impose tax on the money Prof Yunus donated to his three charitable trusts. Two days later, the Nobel laureate paid Tk 12.47 crore tax on the money he donated to his three trusts.

Foreign Minister Momen said Prof Yunus brought laurels for the country, but it is not unusual that such personalities may face

punishment. There are many such instances, he added.

He said as far as he knew, five percent of the profits of Prof Yunus’ companies were supposed to be shared with the workers, but this was not done.

“Those who have written the letter may have not known these matters clearly. They thought he is possibly being harassed for political purposes. I hope those who wrote the letter would learn in detail about the matter. We will definitely provide them with the information if they want to know from us.”

Momen said the government won’t hold any diplomatic briefing on the issue.

Asked if the government felt any pressure, he replied in the negative.

“The court will decide on the matter.... If the major foreign leaders ask us to withdraw the case, we cannot do so because our judiciary is independent.

“If the court thinks that the case has no merit, it can do whatever it deems right. We have nothing to do with it,” Momen said.

AL to stay on streets

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associate bodies will have their own programmes.

Jubo League, the youth front of the AL, is also planning to hold a massive rally in the capital.

Hasina will address the Chhatra League rally scheduled for 3:00pm today.

The student body conducted rigorous offline and online campaigns across the country to make the rally a success and gather the people.

Its central committee has asked Chhatra League units, even those at educational institutions, to send a certain number of activists to the rally.

According to Chhatra League insiders, the units have been asked to explain to the central committee if they fail to send the number of people requested. The unit sending the most people would be rewarded, they said.

Speaking at a press conference

yesterday, Chhatra League President Saddam Hussain said, “We are going to have the biggest student gathering in recent times ... The message of ‘no compromise with the killers’ will be conveyed through the student rally.”

Tomorrow’s “citizen’s rally” at the old trade fair ground will be organised by Dhaka city AL units (north and south) at 3:30pm.

They aim to get 5 lakh people for the rally which representatives of foreign countries, donor organisations, and civil society members will join.

Sources said 11 district AL units of Dhaka division and Narayanganj and Ghazipur city units have been asked to send a certain number of people to the rally.

Two Dhaka city units were asked to send 100,000 people each while the Dhaka district unit 50,000. The other district units were asked to send on an average 30,000 people.

UN body’s suggestions

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2022, included repealing Sections 21 and 28.

Section 28 punishes publication of information that “hurts religious values or sentiment”.

Section 21 criminalises “any kind of propaganda or campaign against the Liberation War, spirit of the Liberation War, father of the nation, national anthem or the national flag”.

“International human rights law protects individuals from intolerance, violence and discrimination based on their religion or belief, but it does not allow restriction of criticism of religious belief or sentiment,” she wrote in her August 28 letter sent under the mandate of the special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

“Furthermore, the imprecise language of the provisions would risk encouraging human rights abuses in the name of religion.”

She also pointed out that criticism of state authorities, including the head of the state, and diverse views relating to a state’s flag, national symbols or historical events are legitimate expressions, protected by international law.

“While appreciating the [Bangladesh] government’s desire to protect the distinct national historical legacy of Bangladesh, the vague and broadly framed nature of this provision could lead to unlawful restriction of political expression and is not consistent with international law.”

Irene Khan encouraged the government to promote respect for the liberation struggle and national symbols and values through enhanced public education instead of pursuing criminalisation.

She also recommended that

the government replace criminal defamation in the CSA and the Penal Code with a provision on civil defamation to help limit the claim only to those directly affected. Another recommendation is this regard was to include public interest in the subject matter as valid defences.

Her letter further said, “The criminalisation of ‘offensive or false information’ [Section 25] is both contrary to international law standards and ineffective in combating disinformation and misinformation.”

“The right to freedom of expression applies to all kinds of information and ideas, including those that may shock, offend or disturb.”

Access to independent, diverse and pluralistic media, and digital and media literacy of the public has proven to be more effective against false information than criminalisation and censorship, she added.

The special rapporteur pointed out that the DSA’s Section 27 on cyber terrorism has been reproduced in the draft CSA.

“That definition of cyber terrorism is extremely broad and vague, and does not refer to the elements in the international definition of terrorism.”

She also said that law enforcement agencies and the telecommunications regulatory authority enjoy extensive, unfettered power under the draft law.

Section 42 gives police a very wide authority to search and seize, and arrest any person without a warrant.

“The experience of the DSA suggests strongly that independent judicial oversight over the conduct of search, seizure and arrest by law enforcement officials must be strengthened.

“The punishments remain disproportionately harsh under the draft act ... The proposed changes would not be significant enough to be meaningful.”

74 killed as fire guts

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the flames.

Blankets and sheets used for escape hung from the burned-out windows. Witnesses spoke of parents throwing their babies out into the street, hoping to save them.

“There were people catching the babies and there were also mattresses laid out for (them),” said Mac Katlego, 25, who lives across the street.

Mulaudzi said rescuers were combing the building “floor by floor” as firefighters damped down hotspots after putting out the flames.

“This is a great tragedy, felt by families whose loved ones perished in this terrible manner,” South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said at an event in the southern city of Gqeberha. “Our hearts go out to every person who is affected by this disaster.”