

# Why should local films suffer for foreign ones?

Now, the question still remains – if the local films had not stepped back, then, according to the rules, there wouldn't have been a chance for *Jawan* to hit theatres in Bangladesh.

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Bangladeshi film industry has been turning on a dime with its own competence. In recent years, films like *Hawa*, *Poran*, *Priyotoma*, and *Shurongo* have proved that the industry is growing rapidly. These films have also made waves in the global arena. Following the trend, every month, a good number of films are released in cinemas. In the coming week, two films were slated to be released on September 8. One of them is Dipankar Dipon's much-awaited cyber-crime thriller,

simultaneously in Bangladesh, creating history in our local theatres. Under the SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) agreement, approved by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on April 10, films have been imported in exchange for Bangladeshi productions. Within this year, two Hindi films have been imported – *Pathaan* (in exchange for *Panku Jamai*) and *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* (in exchange for *Koshai*). However, now, the question arises – when popular Bangladeshi films, such as Mejbaur Rahman Sumon's *Hawa* and

to the arrival of foreign ones? According to Mohammad Sadequl Arefeen, one of the producers of *Antarjal*, they have been requested by the hall owners to shelve their project. "It is not about lack of our confidence, but we had to come to a mutual understanding," he told The Daily Star. "We have considered this because the hall owners have been waiting for this historical moment for a long time. Also, we know that *Jawan* is a film with great potential, but sadly, we were not given the opportunity to share halls and have screenings at the same time."



Dipankar Dipon



Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

*Antarjal*, while the other is Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar's government-granted film, *Dushshahoshi Khoka*, based on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. However, these films have been postponed due to the arrival of Bollywood's much-hyped action film *Jawan*, which will have a global release

Raihan Rafi's *Poran*, are available, why are Bangladeshi movies, which failed to generate revenue even in local theatres, are being exported in exchange for big-budgeted Bollywood films? The postponement of two films now raises another question – how justified is it to halt the release of local films due

Arefeen also informed that *Antarjal* will be globally released on September 22 alongside local theatres. Meanwhile, Dipon shared his thoughts in this regard, "As a director, I feel there should be some proper guidelines that must be maintained to support our local films. We could have competed with an Indian

film, but if we don't get the allocation of halls, then how can we prove it to the audience?" We spoke with the cast of *Antarjal* – Bidya Sinha Mim, ABM Sumon and Sunerah Binte Kamal – they shared that they were disappointed by the delay. However, they have nothing much to do at the moment other than accept reality. Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar informed that his film, *Dushshahoshi Khoka*, has been delayed until the last week of September. "It is true that no one actually forced us to postpone the release, but we had to keep their request," he shared. Interestingly, there are unwritten rules that if there are already two films scheduled to be released in the same week, then another one cannot be on the same line to get premiered. We spoke to Khorshedul Alam Khosru, president of Bangladesh Film Producers' Association, who informed that they did not receive any letter for the preview of *Jawan* from the ministry until September 4. "Being a censor board member, I have not been informed about any such letter yet. Thus, it is not confirmed if the censor board would approve it on time." Mia Alauddin, vice president, Exhibitor Association, said, "Local films should be our first priority, however, the people associated with the business are

now desperate for the release of *Jawan*. There is nothing I could do." "We also understand that a delay in the release of a film loses its charm to the audience. We noticed similar incidents when *Pathaan* and *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* were released in our theatres. Consequently, the halls incurred financial losses." Action Cut Entertainment is the importing company of *Jawan*. Its owner, Anonno Mamun, told the media, "We have diligently followed all the protocols in importing this film. The authorities responsible for permitting its exhibition are certainly not naive. They have approved it with full awareness of the situation. There is no rationale behind creating unnecessary protests to safeguard our industry." Now, the question still remains – if the producers and directors of *Antarjal* and *Dushshahoshi Khoka* had not stepped back, then, according to the rules, there wouldn't have been a chance for *Jawan* to hit theatres in Bangladesh. Certainly, we need comprehensive guidelines, and they need to be followed strictly to encourage local films instead of creating barriers for them. All of the concerned associations should come together to re-evaluate this condition.

## NEWS

### India ease into Super Fours

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India's opening match against Pakistan, who were the first team to move into the next round, was abandoned after just one innings. In their second outing, India were 17-0 in 2.1 overs when heavy rain forced players out of the ground and the field totally covered. Ground staff worked tirelessly to make the ground ready for play again. Rohit and Gill came out roaring and hit a string of boundaries to reach their respective half-centuries

and race to the target. Rohit smashed five sixes in his 59-ball knock. Nepal, who are still finding their feet in international cricket and got ODI status in 2018, put up an impressive show after Sheikh's fifty helped the team to a respectable total. Nepal lost their way after a strong start by Sheikh and Kushal Bhurtel (38) but the middle and lower-order fought back. Number eight Sompal Kami smashed 48 before the innings ended in 48.2 overs. Spinner Ravindra

Jadeja and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj took three wickets each. Rohit won the toss and elected to field first, but Bhurtel and Sheikh got quick runs with help from the Indian fielders, who dropped three catches in the first five overs. "We were maybe 30-40 short. In the middle order we could have done better... I think in these conditions it was really hard because of the dew, but our bowlers did really well," said Nepal captain Rohit Paudel after match.

### DAG refuses to sign AG

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signed by the attorney general, additional attorneys general, deputy attorneys general and assistant attorneys general. The DAG, however, said he did not see the contents of the statement. DAG AKM Amin Uddin Manik told this correspondent, "Many lawyers including the law officers under the attorney general's office have signed it. Nobody is being compelled to sign. I have signed the statement." A total of 104 Nobel laureates and 79 other global figures in an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 28 expressed concern about the safety and freedom of Prof Yunus. In the letter, they asked the PM to "immediately suspend the current judicial proceedings against Prof Yunus". On September 9, 2021, Labour Inspector (general) SM Arifuzzaman

of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments filed a labour law violation case against four people, including Prof Yunus, with the Third Labour Court of Dhaka. According to the case documents, officials of the department on August 16, 2021, inspected the office of Grameen Telecom in the capital's Mirpur and found several violations of labour laws. On June 6 this year, the court framed charges against the accused. The trial began on August 22. On May 30, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case against Grameen Telecom Chairman Muhammad Yunus and 12 others for misappropriating about Tk 25 crore of the Grameen Telecom's Workers Profit Participation Fund. ACC Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Prodhan filed the case with its integrated district office.

### Khaleda Zia

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on Thursday and will determine the next steps of her treatment depending on the reports, party sources said. A BNP member, preferring anonymity, said several tests were done on Khaleda even yesterday, and the medical board will hold a meeting before deciding the next course of action. Prof Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, a personal physician of Khaleda, said she is still not fit to be discharged

from the hospital. "How much longer she will need to be in hospital is still uncertain... Doctors think she needs to be kept under stricter observation." The medical board is currently consulting local and foreign experts for her treatment. Last year, Khaleda's angiogram detected three arterial blockages. She has long been suffering from multiple health complications, including arthritis, diabetes, and kidney and liver problems.

### Gourmati offers new hope

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production is going well. Currently, cultivation of this mango has been expanded to a small extent in the northern regions – Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, and Natore. According to the DAE, 30,000 hectares of mangoes have been cultivated in Naogaon this year. Gourmati was cultivated in around 145 hectares of those, said the district's DAE Deputy Director Abul Kalam Azad. Sohel Rana, a grower in the Naogaon's Sapahar upazila, cultivated Gourmati on 35 bighas of land in 2018. This year, he expects over 1,000 maunds, worth around Tk 80 lakh as per the current market price. He said the prices of other varieties usually range from Tk 1,200 to Tk 3,000 per maund. "But Gourmati's price ranges from Tk 6,000 to Tk 16,000 per maund, allowing farmers to profit at least four or five times more than usual." On the other hand, he said, Gourmati sees higher yield than other varieties. "Each bigha yields around 50-

60 maunds of Amrupali, Langra, Khirsa and Himsagor. But we get around 70-100 maunds in the case of Gourmati. However, as the mangoes need to be kept in the orchards for long time and require bagging, the production cost too is at least Tk 10,000 higher compared to other varieties." Md Raihan Siddique, another grower in Naogaon's Porsha upazila, cultivated Gourmati in 80 bighas of land. "The Gourmati variety can change the fortune of mango farmers. My advice to new farmers is to pick Gourmati for cultivation if they want to stay in the business." Md Kamrul Islam, principal scientific officer at Regional Horticulture Research Station (previously known as mango research Centre), said, "The mango season would start in May and end in July. But since the introduction of the previous late varieties – Ashwina and BARI-4 – the time would be stretched till the first week of September. However, Ashwina's taste is not as good as the Gourmati – which is available in markets till at least September 20."

Gourmati stays in the market for over a month, and no other mango lasts as long, he said, adding while the Katiman variety is also available in the market for a similar amount of time, it cannot compete with Gourmati in terms of quality. "It also has huge potentials to take over the export market as it has great taste as well." Mehedi Masood, project director for the year-round fruit production for the DAE's nutrition improvement project, said, "After detecting this naturally-mutated variety in 2012, we have systematically expanded its cultivation ... In 2015-16, we produced 50,000 plants of Gourmati mangoes through this project and then distributed them all over the country through horticulture centers. "So far, about 5,000 hectares of land across the country has been dedicated to Gourmati cultivation. However, the variety has one flaw – it's poor immunity and resistance to germs." Kamrul Islam said researches are being conducted over the last few years to improve its immunity.

### Myanmar to allow int'l volunteers

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their original villages and the members of particular families will be taken back together, the Bangladesh delegation member said. He said a Myanmar delegation is scheduled to visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar this month to brief the refugees on how they would be repatriated and reintegrated. The visit will take place as part of confidence-building measures for the repatriation. Bangladesh is now hosting more than one million Rohingyas, most of whom fled Myanmar since August 2017 following a military crackdown on the ethnic minority group in Rakhine. Two attempts of Rohingya repatriation failed in 2018 and 2019, with the Rohingyas saying there was no guarantee of safety and citizenship. Dhaka and Naypyidaw are now in talks for the repatriation of 3,000

Rohingyas by December this year. Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Deng Xijun visited Dhaka twice this year – in April and on August 1. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen also visited China and met the Chinese and Myanmar officials in Kunming on April 18. Deng Xijun, during his meeting with Bangladesh officials, had said that Myanmar agreed to settle the Rohingyas in their original villages – a demand that the Rohingyas had been making in response to Myanmar's earlier plan of resettling them in camps or model villages. Meanwhile, a delegation of foreign diplomats, including Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar M Monwar Hossain, on Sunday visited the Rohingyas and other ethnic groups in Rakhine. "Visited, with a team of Yangon-based ambassadors of South Asia and Southeast Asian countries, Bangladesh-Myanmar border in

Northern Rakhaine state," Monwar Hossain tweeted yesterday. He said they were briefed by a Myanmar union minister on post-Mocha rehabilitation efforts and preparations for repatriation of displaced Myanmar nationals temporarily sheltered in Cox's Bazar. JAPANESE SPECIAL ENVOY MEETS FOREIGN SECY Foreign Secretary Masud had a meeting with Yohei Sasakawa, chairman of Nippon Foundation and also the special envoy of Japan for national reconciliation in Myanmar, at his office yesterday. Masud briefed Sasakawa on the initiatives taken by the government for the welfare of the Rohingyas. He also said sustainable repatriation is the only solution to the long-standing problem. Sasakawa informed the foreign secretary about his efforts and contributions to the welfare of the Rohingyas.