



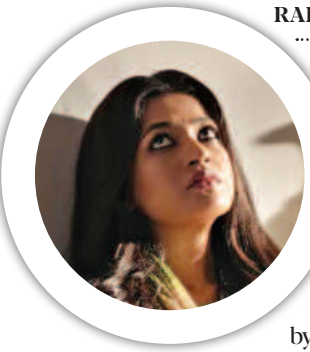
Badhan, despite being cast opposite a veteran like Tabu, held her ground and came up with a stellar performance.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

# Badhan breaks barriers

Strange she was. Shrouded, like a sin. Obvious, like a sacred deed. And sometimes, illogical like fate. She had a habit of tugging at the sleeves of her pullover. Due to superstition, she always sneezed thrice in a row. The crevice in between her collarbones housed a beautiful mole.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA



“I truly didn’t have to act to fall in love with Tabu- I was already in love with her. She is so down to earth and humble, it really mesmerised me.

*Khufiya’s* starting scene introduced Tabu, aka Krishna Mehra describing her lover- secret agent Octopus, in an intimate manner. Usually, we get to see a man describe his lover with such intricate details, but Vishal Bhardwaj, famous for weaving strong feminine characters, changed the dynamics by introducing a romance between two agents who found love across borders.

*Khufiya* was released on Netflix on October 5. Above all else, Bangladesh’s own Azmeri Haque Badhan’s and Tabu’s chemistry became the focal point of the film. The tension-filled interactions between Octopus and KM culminated in an atmosphere that could be cut through with a blunt butter knife.

“I truly didn’t have to act to fall in love with Tabu- I was already in love with her. She is so down to earth and humble, it really mesmerised me. When I first got the script, I was extremely anxious about performing in front of Tabu, but she made it so comfortable for me that it didn’t feel like I was interacting with Tabu at all. It felt like Tabu and Octopus were present in the sets,” said the Badhan.

One of the more iconic scenes from *Khufiya* is the awakening of Tabu’s true desires, which

Badhan does a masterful job of poking, prodding and teasing until the truth reveals itself.

“The kitchen sequence was shot with just Tabu, me, Vishal Bhardwaj, and cinematographer. Everyone was told to go away from that set and the monitor was set in the ground. We did that in one take, and when we did that there was pin drop silence. Vishal said that he loved it. I never kissed anyone on-screen and he described the scene so beautifully. Everyone at the set clapped for us,” added the actress.

During the filming of the movie, Vishal Bhardwaj was looking for a Bangladeshi actress



to play the role of Heena Rahman. The web-film had a bold and daring plot and thus it wasn’t easy to find actress for the role of secret agent Octopus. However, Badhan was hell bent on essaying the character as it had unparalleled

layers to it.

“As an artiste, I have the right to chose what kind of roles I would want to play. Till I was 35 years old, I lived the way society wants their women to follow. I tried my best to be the ‘ideal woman’ and when I failed, and I had to fight for my daughter’s guardianship. I realised that I had no existence as a human being in this society. I see no reason why I wouldn’t want to work with Vishal Bhardwaj and Tabu in a film as an artiste. I wanted to take this challenge and prove my merit,” said the actress.

The director of *Pink*, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury personally messaged her to compliment on her acting. After the release of the film, Tabu also informed Badhan about how people in Bollywood are commending her work in the espionage thriller.

Indian media has applauded Badhan for her bold portrayal of agent Octopus.

“I know that there are lots of people in society who have different orientations. All human beings, despite their limitations or gender identity, should have their basic rights be given to them. I was never really worried about portraying my character as I believe she has her their freedom and social rights as well. I really can’t comprehend why one class of people should have all the rights while the others are shunned from the society,” concluded the actress.

## Pritom Hasan’s solo concert upcoming



With his impeccable talent, young musician Pritom Hasan has created a huge fanbase over the years. The multi-talented singer, music director, model and actor has announced his first-ever solo concert, through his verified Facebook page. Titled, *The Night of Pritom Hasan*, the concert will be held on October 26 at Hall 4 of Bashundhara International

Convention City.

The artiste turned to social media to connect with his fans. He asked them to share their favourite songs, and based on their responses, he curated a playlist of 18 beloved tracks. This carefully selected list includes hits like *Shorgohara*, *Bhenge Porona Ebhabe*, *Ami Amar Moto*, *Shoroter Shesh Thekey*, *Rajkumar* and *Shotti Naki Bhul* amongst others.



## Swastika Mukherjee, Afzal Hossain collaborate for ‘One Eleven’

Noted actor Afzal Hossain will be pairing up with Swastika Mukherjee in his upcoming thriller-based film, *One Eleven*. Directed by Kamrul Islam Refat, the movie revolves around a mysterious murder and the way numerous characters will take turns to put together the missing pieces of the gruesome crime.

Afzal Hossain will portray the role of a writer in this psychological thriller. Swastika Mukherjee, who has also worked in Bollywood, expressed her excitement about collaborating with Afzal Hossain as, “a Bangladeshi actor she admires”.

This marks Swastika’s second Bangladeshi film, following her appearance in *Shobar Upore Tumi* in 2008, opposite Shakib Khan.

# NEWS

## 15 banks fall short of Tk 33,744cr

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Similarly, Citizens Bank has a capital shortfall of Tk 97.10 crore.

Both the banks, which were awarded the licences by the BB along with Community Bank in 2020, blamed the new central bank requirement of having a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 500 crore from June 15 – up from Tk 400 crore previously – for the shortfall.

“We are not actually in capital shortfall because the central bank increased the capital requirement after awarding the licence to us,” said Tarik Morshed, managing director and chief executive officer of Bengal Commercial Bank.

The BB has given the bank until December to meet the capital requirement, he said, adding that Bengal Commercial Bank has virtually no defaulted loans.

The shortfall is because the regulator raised the minimum capital requirement, said Mohammad Masoom, the MD and CEO of Citizens Bank.

“That is why this is not an actual capital shortfall. We have been given

until June next year to raise the capital of our bank. Now, our capital is at Tk 403 crore, which has increased from the Tk 400 crore when we started our operation,” he added.

For the new capital requirement, the local operations of Pakistan’s Habib Bank and National Bank of Pakistan are also facing a capital shortfall of Tk 36.33 crore and Tk 42.45 crore respectively, according to BB officials.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Krishi Bank continues to log in the highest capital shortfall in the banking sector. This time, its shortfall is Tk 15,540.72 crore, up by Tk 1,447 crore in the three months to June.

Agrani’s capital shortfall rose by 12 percent to Tk 3,767.84 crore.

The state-run commercial banks provide a large number of services to the general people and the government free of cost and if those banks claim service fees for those, there would be no capital shortfall, said Mohammad Shams ul Islam, a former Agrani MD.

“The government and the central bank can find a way to meet their capital shortfall,” he added.

Scam-hit lenders BASIC and Janata’s capital shortfall rose to Tk 2,352.37 crore and Tk 2,189 crore respectively.

At the end of June, Rupali’s capital shortfall was Tk 2,230 crore and Sonali’s Tk 10.61 crore. State-run specialised lender Rajshahi Krishna Unnayan Bank’s shortfall was Tk 2,385 crore.

The shortfall of Bangladesh Commerce Bank, where Chattogram-based conglomerate S Alam Group has a stake, stood at Tk 1,313.81 crore. ICB Islamic Bank, which was born out of the scam-riddled defunct Oriental Bank, has a shortfall of Tk 1,812 crore.

Troubled private lenders National and Padma’s shortfall was Tk 1,379 crore and Tk 497 crore respectively.

The capital shortfall in the usual suspects is due to loan irregularities, according to experts.

“The banking regulator will have to take strict action against those who are involved in the loan irregularities and it must have a strong commitment for the betterment of the sector,” said Mustafa K Mujeri, a former chief economist of the central bank.

## US assessment team

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participatory. If enough people participate in it, he said, adding that the government wants all parties’ participation.

Momen said he sought US support in educating people to create a culture of debate on the political parties’ performance.

Momen informed the US delegation that the government has a legal framework for elections and there is an independent Election Commission that can transfer and sack police or other officers who violate laws.

The voter list with photo IDs and the transparent ballot boxes can prevent fake voting, he said.

Besides, agents from all the parties, foreign and national observers will have access to the polling stations, he said.

Asked if there will be any new restrictions from the US as reported by the media, Momen said US officials mentioned no such thing when the prime minister and he went there last month.

“You are inviting such restrictions. No one spoke of any restrictions,” he added.

## No need to worry about reserves: PM

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considering them as the people’s servants.

“Don’t consider the service as a job merely, rather a scope to serve the country. You will have to keep this thing in mind always,” she said.

Hasina also asked government officials to implement development schemes, keeping balance with the environment by protecting canals, beels, and other water bodies.

She asked them to work so that the fruits of different social safety schemes reach the right beneficiaries properly. She also asked to ensure

## Govt couldn’t control onion, potato prices

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responsible for monitoring the market. Even still, we can’t escape responsibility. In the cabinet system, all ministers share responsibilities for this.”

Explaining the challenges related to controlling onion prices, Razzaque said that although onion production in the country is sufficient, due to its perishable nature, it does not last more than two months.

He further said that in the previous year, there was a surplus of onions and potatoes, but farmers struggled to sell their produce. However, the situation has reversed this year, with cold storage owners and wholesalers capitalising on the low production to reap significant profits.

The minister placed the blame on cold storage owners and wholesalers saying that they are not fulfilling their supply obligations, which is a major impediment to price stability. “When our officials apply pressure on them at the field level, some of these suppliers even cease their deliveries. However, we’re trying to address this situation,” he added.

About rice production, Razzaque said, “Since July, we didn’t have to import rice, which is a good sign. Considering all factors, we are in a good position this year in terms of rice production, distribution, and food security for the people.”

diversification of the export basket to reduce dependency on single products such as readymade garments, explore new export markets, and ensure development works sustainably.

Noting that there is a scarcity of land in the country with a large population, she said the large population should be considered a resource.

Hasina said Bangladesh is now a role model for development. She said her government has successfully implemented Vision 2021 and wants to build the country into Smart

Bangladesh by 2041.

The PM asked the newly recruited officers to build themselves into the main craftsmen and soldiers of Smart Bangladesh.

Talking about the “My Village My Town” programme, she said her government’s target is to ensure civic amenities in every village so that the villagers don’t need to go to the town to avail the civic facilities.

The premier asked all to work so that the ongoing development trend continues and Bangladesh does not fall behind its present position.

## Politics now an instrument of material gains

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manipulated the placements in the judiciary by putting in people who are sympathetic to their politics.”

Brigadier General (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain blamed the faulty democratic process and faulty political system and culture for the current situation.

He said no political parties practise democracy within themselves.

“We have polluted the entire election system and there is a lack of faith. We don’t have faith; we don’t have institutions,” said Sakhawat, who was an election commissioner in the commission that held the much-praised 2008 national election.

“When we talk about an independent Election Commission, it is supported by various institutions, but unfortunately, our institutions have not been able to grow or we have broken all our institutions,” he said, also speaking in English.

“If there is no free and fair election accepted by international standards, I am afraid that we will see many more disasters in the country,” he added.

Stressing the importance of healthy politics, Sharmeen Murshid, election observer and CEO of Brotee, an NGO, said, “Perhaps politics is not broken, but certainly it needs repair.”

Talking about the dominance of businesspeople in politics, she said politics is now commercialised and commoditised, and it has become a

matter of profit and loss.

BNP leader Tabitha Awal said, “The state and the way it’s being managed are certainly broken. That’s why the BNP proposed a 31-point solution to mend the state.”

Manisha Chakrabarty, a central member of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, said, “Politics is never broken. What we witness in Bangladesh is a broken system that can lead to a troubling transition of power from one party to another.

“We believe the [politicians] commitment to people has been replaced by a commitment to power. They are committed to staying in power. This is the problem in our politics.”

Dhaka-17 lawmaker Mohammad A Arafat, also a member of the Awami League central committee, said politicians need honesty and genuine intentions to sit down together to find solutions for the problems in politics and the electoral process.

The seminar was moderated by Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan where BNP leader Tabitha Awal, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal’s central committee member Manisha Chakrabarty and Awami League lawmaker Mohammad A Arafat also spoke.

Norway’s Ambassador to Bangladesh Espen Rikter Svendsen delivered the welcome speech at the seminar.