



Mosharraf Karim



Nazia Haque Orsha



Chanchal Chowdhury



Shobnom Bubby



Ziaul Faruq Apurba

WHO WILL BE CROWNED the best actors in OTT?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards is going to honour the best of OTT contents released in 2022. In the second iteration of the grand event, 8 artistes were nominated in the popular category—the Best Actor (male and female).

The voting lines closed on September 14, after tough competition between the contestants. Let us have a look at the list of the artistes who had a neck-to-neck competition in the race. Afran Nisho was nominated for two projects—*Redrum* (as Rashed Chowdhury) and *Kaiser* (as Kaiser). The actor's powerful acting and experimental looks in both projects mesmerised the audience, since fans were confused as to which of his excellent roles to vote for!

Last year's winner in this category, Chanchal Chowdhury, has proved that his acting prowess in every role has thrived in all media of entertainment. His power-packed performance in *Karagar* took his career



Mehazabien Chowdhury



Afran Nisho



Tasnia Farin

to new heights. His much-deserved nomination in the show has got fans excited for yet another potential crowning.

Ziaul Faruq Apurba made his OTT debut with the web-film *Mayashalik*, essaying the role of a calm and polite

character Ovi, suffering from clinical depression. Another well-deserved nomination in the popular category is Mosharraf Karim, for his performance in *Tin Shoroter Golpo*.

The talented women in this category have put forth the performances of

their lifetimes to earn the nominations. Mehazabien Chowdhury's performances in the projects *Redrum* and *Sabrina* were nominated this year. The actress marked her OTT debut with *Redrum*, which earned her accolades for her bold character as Neela. In

Sabrina, she was seen in a completely different avatar.

Nazia Haque Orsha's brilliant performance as the titular *Sabrina* earned her the nomination in this category. She managed to bring life to the unforgettable character.

Breaking out from her conventional roles in Dhallywood, Shobnom Bubby surprised everyone after playing the earthy Aboni in *Taan*. She left an emotional impact in the heart of audiences, while perfectly melding into the role.

Tasnia Farin earned the Best Actor (Female) award with immense love and appreciation from both the audience and jury, for her debut performance in *Ladies and Gentlemen* last year. This year, she has been nominated for her mature performance as Maha in *Karagar*.

The grand occasion will be held on October 21 through a lavish ceremony, celebrating the best of OTT. While only two brilliant artistes will be able to flaunt the trophies of Best Actor and Best Actress, all of the nominations deserve praise for helping to uplift the OTT industry as a whole.

NEWS

China's influence may challenge sovereignty

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Commissioner Jeremy Bruer and UK High Commissioner Sarah Cooke also spoke at the session, moderated by CGS Executive Director Zillur Rahman.

Haas said the US believes in the international rules-based system, freedom of navigation, democracy, human rights, diversity and prosperity in the region.

The Indo-Pacific region is home to more than half of the world's population and nearly two-thirds of the world's economy. Half of all global trade passes through the region's waters.

The global powers are competing for influence in the region. China is going ahead with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while the US has its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS).

Many other countries also have their own strategies. Bangladesh has recently launched its Indo-Pacific Outlook.

The US envoy said, "As we chart our course through the coming decades in the Indo-Pacific, we must not lose sight of the evolving nature of the People's Republic of China's influence."

He said the BRI, along with the Chinese expansive maritime ambitions, have signaled a new epoch in the dynamics of this region. "This brings us to the most pressing strategic challenge to our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific: authoritarian powers trying to alter the fundamental rules of the road in international affairs."

"We must approach this juncture with unyielding vigilance," he said.

Haas said Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a wake-up call to the world and demonstrates that the democratic values cannot be taken for granted, rather they must be defended.

He said the US does not seek conflict or cold war, but wants to promote the vision of a free, open,

secure, and prosperous world.

"We believe we can only truly fulfill these visions when we apply those principles domestically as well.

"What we can't allow is for the strategic challenge from authoritarian powers — powers whose actions would snuff out the sovereignty and autonomy of the nations that make up this region, and who would shut down that prosperity and diversity — to go unmet."

Haas said "competition" in the Indo-Pacific is not about forcing countries to choose, but about offering an alternative vision based on respect, prosperity, and partnership.

"Through deliberate, multilateral endeavours, we seek to create an environment that is conducive not only to growth, but also to sustainable and inclusive prosperity, to security, and to the protection of sovereignty that extends to all Indo-Pacific nations, be they large coastal states or small islands."

The US ambassador said there are many more examples of democratic economies taking off than those of the nations thriving under autocracy or under the shadow of their more powerful neighbours.

"We encourage Bangladesh to recognise the importance of these principles in its own past as it develops its own outlook," he said.

Canadian High Commissioner Lilly said the Indo-Pacific cannot be secure without addressing the Rohingya crisis that's affecting not only Bangladesh but the entire region.

It's important to hold the Myanmar junta accountable and continue the humanitarian assistance for the Rohingya, she said.

The British and Australian envoys said their countries will support Bangladesh for successful graduation from LDC and address the Rohingya crisis.

Israel lays total siege to Gaza

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planning a ground assault there to defeat Hamas.

In a further sign of Israel's rapid shift onto a war footing, a cabinet member from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party said it could set up a national unity government joined by opposition leaders within hours.

Israeli truck convoys were seen moving tanks to the south near the Gaza border.

"We are in control of the communities [attacked by Hamas]," said military spokesman Daniel Hagari, cautioning that some "terrorists" may remain after about 1,000 militants had swarmed into the region on the Jewish Sabbath.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel would impose a "complete siege" on the long blockaded enclave and stressed what this meant for its 2.3 million people: "No electricity, no food, no water, no gas — it's all closed."

Palestinians in the impoverished coastal territory braced for what many feared would be a massive Israeli ground attack aiming to defeat Hamas and liberate the hostages.

Netanyahu has warned Gaza civilians to get away from all Hamas sites, which he vowed to turn "to rubble".

The Israeli PM told mayors of

southern towns hit by the surprise assault that Israel's response would "change the Middle East".

Tensions have spiked as Israel's arch-enemy Iran and their Lebanese ally Hezbollah have praised the Hamas attack, although Tehran rejected any role in the military operation.

"The military operation is still continuing," Hossam Badran, a Hamas official, told AFP from Doha, adding that "there is currently no chance for negotiation on the issue of prisoners or anything else".

The United States has pledged "rock solid" support for Israel and said it would send munitions and military hardware to its key ally and divert an aircraft carrier group to the eastern Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday expressed deep concern about recent events in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, saying the situation could escalate into a wider conflict in the Middle East.

China, expressing deep concern, said it opposes actions that escalate the conflict.

The Arab League said its foreign ministers will hold an "extraordinary meeting" on Wednesday to discuss "Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip".

Meanwhile, in a surprise move, the EU yesterday halted development aid payments to the Palestinians and said it was placing 691 million euros (\$728

million) of support "under review".

Yesterday, the Israeli army said its soldiers had "killed a number of armed suspects" who had crossed the border from Lebanon and that Israeli helicopters were striking targets in the area.

A local Lebanese official told AFP Israel was shelling the southern border area while Hezbollah denied involvement in clashes or "any infiltration attempt" into Israel.

Among the hostages Hamas took back into Gaza were children and a Holocaust survivor in a wheelchair, Israeli officials have said.

Up to 250 bodies were strewn across the site of a music festival in a Negev desert kibbutz, mostly young people, and charred car wrecks were piled up in a sign of the panicked rush to escape, while other revellers were feared to be among the hostages.

"They butchered people in cold blood in an inconceivable way," said Moti Bukjin of the Zaka religious volunteer group which helped collect the human remains.

Beside Israelis, foreign or dual nationals have been reported killed, abducted or missing by countries including Brazil, Britain, Cambodia, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Thailand, Ukraine and the United States.

The situation was also dire inside

Gaza, which has been blockaded by Israel since Hamas assumed control there 15 years ago.

Air strikes have levelled residential tower blocks, mosques and the central bank. More than 120,000 people in Gaza have been displaced, said the United Nations.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank have rallied in support and clashed with Israeli security forces, leaving 15 Palestinians dead since Saturday.

Anti-Israel activists have demonstrated in Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan and elsewhere while security was stepped up around Jewish temples and schools worldwide.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian embassy in Dhaka yesterday said Palestinians have every right to resist oppression, violence and racist practices of the illegal Israeli occupation.

"The Israeli government must refrain from bombing civilians, including women and children in Gaza, and inciting violence and tensions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and especially around religious sites," the embassy said in a press release.

The spiralling conflict has sent shock waves around the world amid fears of a wider escalation, sparking a surge in oil prices on fears of tightening supplies.

Nowhere to go

FROM PAGE 1

the tiny, crowded enclave, exceeding previous bouts of destructive warfare that they fear will leave survivors destitute, without homes, water, electricity, hospitals or food.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant warned that the price Gaza would pay "will change reality for generations" and Israel was imposing a total blockade with a ban on food and fuel imports as part of a battle against "animals".

The death toll in the Gaza Strip rose to 560 yesterday, the health ministry in the Palestinian enclave said, as Israel pounded Hamas targets for the third consecutive day.

Gaza has no protected shelters designated for times of war.

The densely populated enclave's 2.3 million residents, many of them refugees descended from people who fled or were expelled from their homes during fighting when Israel was founded

in 1948, have endured repeated bouts of war and air strikes before.

They expect this one to be worse.

"It doesn't need much thinking about. Israel suffered the biggest loss in its history so you can imagine what it is going to do," said a resident of Beit Hanoun on Gaza's northeastern border with Israel.

Families began stockpiling food as soon as Saturday's attack began but fear that despite Hamas assurances supplies will run low.

With Israel cutting off electricity supplies into Gaza, a looming fuel shortage means private generators as well as the enclave's own power station, which is still providing about four hours of energy a day, will struggle to function.

Electricity shortages mean residents cannot recharge phones, so are cut off from news of each other and from events, and are unable to pump water into rooftop tanks.

At night the enclave is plunged into total darkness, punctuated by the blasts of air strikes.

Gaza health ministry officials said hospitals were expected to run out of fuel, needed to power lifesaving equipment, in two weeks.

Air strikes have damaged and blocked streets, making it harder for ambulances and rescue vehicles to reach bomb sites according to residents and medics. The civil defence said it could not cope with so many bomb sites, and asked for foreign rescue teams to help it save survivors trapped under rubble.

The Beit Hanoun resident said the bombardment of streets seemed like preparation for another Israeli ground offensive, like the ones he watched rolling into Gaza from the roof of his house in 2008 and 2014.

Recorded phone messages and social media posts issued by Israel's

military warning residents to quit some Gaza areas added to residents' fears.

Despite the danger, the 45-year-old was pleased by Hamas' raid into Israel he said, requesting anonymity for fear of Israeli reprisals.

"We are afraid but still we are proud like never before," he said, adding: "Hamas wiped out entire Israeli army battalions. It crushed them like biscuits".

Standing outside his ruined shop, near wrecked houses where three entire families were killed, Brais said he just hoped for an end to Gaza's endless cycle of destruction.

"Enough. We had enough. I am 55-years-old and I spent those years going from one war into another. My house has been destroyed twice," said Brais. "Everything is gone," he said, looking at the wreckage of his shop.