

OTT is the future

SHAHIDUZZAMAN SELIM

Shahiduzzaman Selim is a versatile actor whose acting prowess spans across theatre, television dramas, movies, and the ever-evolving OTT platforms. He has been associated with Dhaka Theatre for a long time and holds the prestigious National Film Award to his name. Beyond acting, he's made a notable mark as a director.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

His recent films, *Shurongo* and *Priyotoma*, generated significant buzz, and at present, he's gracing the screen in two new cinematic ventures, *Omar* and *Lipstick*.

You've devoted over 40 years to acting. How do you define your relationship with this art?

Acting, for me, is akin to a form of prayer. I am an artiste, and acting is my medium of expression. Over the years, acting has become an integral part of my life, filled with passion, camaraderie, and love. It serves as a profound means of self-discovery.

Many believe that the future of entertainment lies with OTT platforms. What are your insights on this?

My outlook on OTT platforms is exceedingly optimistic. I firmly believe that the future hinges on OTT, and it is here to stay. OTT platforms boast substantial budgets, a feature that's often missing in many Bangladeshi films. Moreover, these platforms offer a stage for both established and emerging talents to shine.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

dramas has dwindled, many audiences have transitioned to platforms like YouTube. In contrast to the thriving television industry in India, the Bangladeshi landscape faces different challenges. Here, overwhelming ad content often hampers the viewing experience. However, the crux of the matter is the storyline. Due to the lack of a compelling narrative, viewers lose interest at times.

What, in your opinion, is the way forward?

To succeed, you need a compelling story and talented actors. For instance, NTV aired a drama titled *Ma, Baba, Bhai, Bon*, which gained significant viewership due to its engaging narrative and skilled cast. Similarly, *Family Crisis* has also struck a chord with the audience. The key lies in striking the perfect balance between an enticing storyline and proficient actors.

You've ventured into television dramas, theatre, and cinema. Do you believe

your talents and merits have been aptly recognised in these diverse domains?

On the stage, I've been able to utilise my talents fully. On television, I could say it was partially possible, while in the cinema, I could utilise only a little.

'Shurongo', your recent film, has generated quite a buzz. Are you satisfied with your performance in it?

I've personally watched *Shurongo* twice. Each time I appear on-screen, there's a distinct excitement in the audience. Critics have also lauded and endorsed the film. This isn't my assessment but the verdict of the critics. Nevertheless, my performance has been well-received by the general audience as well. The film owes its success to a multitude of factors, including the harmony between characters, the meticulous direction, a compelling script, and exceptional collaboration with fellow actors.

Richard Roundtree, action hero of 'Shaft', is no more



Richard Roundtree, a pioneering African American actor renowned for his portrayal of the detective John Shaft in the 1970s *Shaft* movie franchise passed away at the age of 81 on Tuesday.

Roundtree succumbed to pancreatic cancer at his residence in Los Angeles, confirmed his manager, Patrick McMinn.

Richard, also known for his significant role in addressing issues of racial relations in the United States, made notable appearances in the groundbreaking ABC television series *Roots* in 1977, which is centered on slavery. He took on significant roles in other prominent projects of that era, such as portraying the motorcycle daredevil Miles in the 1974 film *Earthquake*.

Arab-Israeli actress Maisa arrested over pro-Palestine social media post

During the crackdown on Gaza supporters, Israeli police arrested Arab-Israeli actress Maisa Abdel Hadi. Her recent social media post 'provoked' local officials to call it an 'incitement to terrorism.'

The actress allegedly posted a picture of a bulldozer breaching the fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel during the October 7 Israeli attack. Israeli military has been regularly bombarding Gaza since then.

Maisa Abdel Hadi lives in Nazareth, a city in northern Israel. According to authorities, she was arrested on Monday and is to be held in detention until Thursday. She is one of the Arab Israelis detained for posting pro-Palestine posts on social media.



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▲ Shahiduzzaman Selim, Rosey Siddique and Sreema Yana at Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT Award

I extend my congratulations to The Daily Star for their recent awards ceremony dedicated to the OTT industry.

Do you have any concerns regarding the state of television dramas?

To be honest, I have no major concerns. While it's true that the viewership of television

NEWS

Drones hit area near Ukraine nuke plant

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Khmelnyskyi nuclear power plant. As a result of the explosion, windows in administrative and laboratory buildings have been damaged,” the Energy Ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.

Power lines were also damaged, it added, with more than 1,800 consumers in the towns of Netishyn and Slavuta facing power cuts. Netishyn is about 5 km from the Khmelnyskyi nuclear power plant; Slavuta is about 20 km away.

It was unclear exactly how close the damage was to the nuclear plant.

In Slavuta, 20 buildings were damaged by falling debris. A building used by a fire and rescue unit and another by a police department were

hit by the blast wave, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said on Telegram.

The town's mayor, Vasiliy Sydor, said 20 people were hurt.

The Khmelnyskyi region has regularly been a target of attacks by Russian drones and missiles, which analysts link to a military airfield in the region.

Meanwhile, Russia's parliament yesterday completed the passage of a law withdrawing ratification of the global treaty banning nuclear weapons tests, evidence of the deep chill in relations with the United States as Moscow pursues its war in Ukraine.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia was not prepared to resume discussing nuclear issues

with the US unless Washington dropped its “hostile” policy.

The bill to deratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was approved by 156 votes to zero in the upper house after the lower house also passed it unanimously. It now goes to President Vladimir Putin for signing.

Putin had requested the change to “mirror” the position of the United States, which signed the CTBT in 1996 but never ratified it.

Though it has never formally come into force, the CTBT has made nuclear testing a taboo – no country except North Korea has conducted a test involving a nuclear explosion this century.

Ansars won't get powers

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About the “Ansar Battalion Bill-2023”, which was placed in parliament on Monday, Asaduzzaman said it is currently under analysis and review.

The standing committee members will thoroughly examine the proposals, and if there is any such thing it will be addressed, he said.

The section-8 of the bill stipulates that an Ansar battalion member shall, if an offence is committed in front of him, with the approval of the superior officer concerned, arrest the offender and immediately hand him over to the police and, as the case may be, as per the directives of the judicial magistrate or the executive magistrate or the official concerned, will frisk the detainee; and enter any place, conduct a search and seize goods.

The minister added that

“misinformation” was being spread by various media outlets and the notion that Ansar members have already been given powers to arrest was entirely “false”.

He said both Ansar and police personnel were an integral part of the national law and order. No one is above the basic rule of law, he added.

On Sunday, a day before the bill was placed, top police officials, including leaders of the Bangladesh Police Service Association, opposed the decision to give Ansar members the authority to make arrests. The officials held a meeting with the home minister and expressed their concern.

The officials also held another meeting with the minister yesterday and objected to the decision.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party Chairman

GM Quader yesterday blasted the government for placing the bill at the House empowering Ansar members to detain offenders, search their bodies, and seize goods.

In a statement, the deputy leader of the opposition in parliament said the government's move is ill-motivated.

“Most people think the bill was placed in parliament to increase the government's influence in elections,” he said.

“We think it is unusual to give power to Ansar members to detain anyone. If they are given such powers, chaos will increase at the ground level.”

GM Quader said there is a possibility of misuse of this law.

He also called upon the government to withdraw the bill for the greater interest of the country.

Govt to create 365 posts

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superintendent of police.

After scrutinising the proposal of Police Headquarters, the home ministry in July forwarded it to the public administration ministry for creating 529 supernumerary posts. But the ministry in September approved 342 posts, creating commotion among BCS police cadre officers, said sources at the home ministry.

The home ministry then again wrote to the public administration ministry with a request to increase the posts of additional IGP and DIG. The public administration then increased eight posts of additional IGP and 15 posts of DIG. The finance ministry also approved it.

Sources said before the 2018 elections, police pressed for promotion of 495 officials of the ranks of SP

to additional IGP. The government had approved the creation of 230 supernumerary posts of SP.

They said creating a new post in any government agency is a lengthy process involving several ministries, including public administration and finance. And it usually takes several years to complete the process.

But in the creation of 365 posts, it took only four months, they said.

End wars for a better future

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Global Gateway Forum 2023 at the GGF Conference Venue in Brussels.

She is participating in the event at the invitation of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Hasina said Bangladesh hopes to see the forum as a great platform for lasting peace and sustainable development.

Over 40 high-level government representatives from EU and partner countries, as well as representatives from financial institutions, the private sector, civil society, and international organisations are attending the October 25-26 conference.

They will discuss and share experiences on issues relating to global investment in infrastructure.

In her speech, the PM asked the EU investors to explore facilities in Bangladesh economic zones and hi-tech parks.

Hasina said Bangladesh offers one of the most attractive investment environments in South Asia.

She said the road, rail, and port infrastructure is being built in Bangladesh as part of regional economic corridors. The country has also offered access to the Bay of Bengal to land-locked countries and territories like Nepal, Bhutan, and Northeast India.

The airports of Bangladesh can serve as gateways between the East and the West, she added.

The PM said Bangladesh is now the world's 35th largest economy and its 70 billion dollar economy has grown to \$465 billion in less than 15 years.

On the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh-EU relations, she reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to further strengthen its strategic engagements with the bloc.

“We have fruitful cooperation in security, climate change, and human mobility. Our shared values and commitments remain at the heart of our engagements with the EU,” she added.

Bangladesh is willing to join the EU's efforts in promoting green hydrogen, the PM said.

“We can benefit from the EU's expertise in the sustainable use of marine resources. We need investment in cold chain networks to preserve our agricultural outputs,” she continued.

She said her government appreciates the Global Gateway's focus on transport networks, health security, green energy, digital transformation, research, and innovation.

“Our dynamic young population is ready to join the EU's skills and talent partnership programmes. We trust that the Global Gateway will help realise our vision for a ‘Smart Bangladesh’ by 2041,” said the PM.

Meanwhile, EU Commission President Leyen said Bangladesh and the EU have been “reliable and trusted” partners for 50 years.

“Now, we are taking this partnership even further to reap the opportunities of the green transition under Global Gateway. Dear Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the 50th anniversary of EU-Bangladesh relations is the occasion to take our partnership to the next level.”

AL ready to counter BNP on streets

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the country would come to Dhaka.

“If so many people travel to Dhaka, the situation will be different. That is why our commissioner [of DMP] will decide where the rally can be held,” said the home boss.

The minister said that there is no scope for granting permission to Jamaat if it applies under the banner of Jamaat as it is not a registered political party.

AL MEETING
The AL yesterday held a preparatory meeting for the October 28 rally at its Dhaka district unit office in Tejgaon.

Speaking at the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said, “Gayeshwar [BNP leader] has said they will occupy the streets and allies if the permission [for the rally] is not granted. He spoke as if all the doors would be opened to welcome him if the streets and allies were captured. We are absolutely prepared. You will not find a way to escape even in allies.”

Quader said, “We were not in the attack before but we are on guard this time.”

“If any attack happens, we will launch a counterattack. We will not spare them. We must stop the evil forces united.”

According to AL sources, the

leaders have been instructed to gather on the streets with sticks under the cover of placards, flags, and banners.

If any situation arises, the party supporters will use the sticks. But they will not launch an attack first, the sources added.

The AL leaders have also been asked to enquire about any unknown person roaming around. If necessary, the party supporters would take help from police.

AL Joint General Secretary Bahauddin Nasim said that they have made preparations to mount a counterattack.

“We are mentally prepared to prevent their attacks,” he told The Daily Star.

POLICE PREPARATIONS

Police have planned three-tire security centring the rallies.

Checkpoints will be set up a day before the rallies at all entrances to the capital to check firearms and explosives.

Besides, monitoring of messes and hotels have been beefed up, and social media watch has been strengthened to stop spreading of rumours, officials said.

Police are also planning to hold a meeting with the BNP to discuss details about its rally before making a

decision on granting permission.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they will ask the BNP to change the venue.

He hoped that the BNP as a major political party will realise that there would problems if the programme is held on a street.

He said two major political parties are seeking to hold rallies on the same day. “Their leaders and activists will gather at the venues with processions. This would definitely create public suffering on roads.”

About allowing BNP to hold several rallies on the street in front of its Nayapaltan office previously, the DMP additional commissioner said the police earlier requested the party to hold its programmes on weekends using a single lane of the road.

“That was actually the least good option. But we do not want any public suffering and that is why we are discouraging parties from holding rallies on the street.”

Mahid said they give the political parties some conditions for holding the rallies. “We hope that everyone will hold rallies peacefully without violating those conditions. Or else lawful actions will be taken.”