

INSPIRING STORIES

RAFIUL QUADER RUBEL: An emerging actor, a fighting father

Everything was going quite well – from receiving appreciation to getting important characters, added to a perfect family life. However, fate had other plans, as a sudden shock threatened to uproot his life entirely.



Rafiul Quader Rubel with his family.

SHARMIN JOYA

You have seen him in web projects like *Guti* donning the role of a manager, *Mohanagar 2* as an Intelligence Officer, or as a drug dealer in *Myself Allen Swapan*— he has left an impression with every appearance. Rafiul Quader Rubel's opportunity to shine came thanks to the rise of OTT. Recently, he appeared in *Bewarish*, an episode in web-series *Procholito*.

Working as a merchandiser in the clothing industry was going well for Rubel's beautiful family, which includes his wife Aziza Shamsunnahar and their two daughters— Turi and Joyee.

At one point, Rubel decided to leave his job and transitioned into the world of acting full-time. It has been two years since he started his career as a professional actor, engaging in various media, including television, and ads.

"I am really grateful to Shankha Dasgupta for believing in me and giving me the break in *Guti*, which brought me acclaim," he shared. "After working in a completely different profession for many years, I ultimately found myself where I always wanted to be."

Everything was going quite well – from receiving appreciation to getting important characters, added to a perfect family life. However, fate had other plans, as a sudden shock threatened to uproot his life entirely.

In July, Rubel's older daughter, Turi was suffering from high fever and headache. "While I was shooting in Dhaka, I received a call from home and learned that her health deteriorated. We immediately took her to the hospital for diagnosis, doctor's suspected dengue, however, it tested negative."

According to Rubel, upon learning her symptoms, the pediatrician suggested an MRI for 11-year-old Turi. The result shook everyone, including the doctors. "She was diagnosed with brain tumour, that too at the fourth stage. A medical board was formed in Chattogram and they didn't allow any further time, we had to



Rafiul Quader Rubel

PHOTOS: COURTESY

let her go for the operation in Chattogram," he said.

After a successful operation, in the past month alone, about 30 sessions of radiotherapy had to be given to the little girl. After the first session of radiotherapy, Turi threw up 22 times. Due to the heavy dose of medicine and the therapies, there were injuries all over her mouth, she couldn't eat anything.

"My daughter is very calm and quiet, she loves to paint and she is teacher's favourite child at school," shared the proud father. Rubel shared that he and his wife Aziza Shamsunnar both are stage performers. Rubel is a member of the theatre troupe Tirjak Natyogoshthi in Chattogram. "After our wedding, I changed at least ten jobs in my previous profession. However, the moment I learned that our first child was about to arrive, I joined the 11th job and was determined to not switch jobs anymore as it brought a sense of responsibility in me," shared the visibly emotional actor.

Little Turi was taken to Chennai for further treatment. "Through this process, I learned some of the greatest lessons of my life," he said, "This treatment is extremely expensive, after the operation we already spent over Tk 25 lacs, and more will be spent in chemo and radiotherapy."

Rubel shared that a few people of this industry were beside him during these toughest days of his life. "Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Raihan Rahi, Nasir Uddin Khan, among many others – some helped me with a visa, some monetarily and some provided much-needed emotional support."

Thanks to the prayers and good wishes, Turi is responding to the treatment, and improving rapidly. On December 7, she will be taken to Chennai again for checkup and therapy.

Rubel wants to return to work as soon as possible, the stage is where his heart lies. In Chattogram's Tirjak Natyagoshti, Nasir Uddin Khan and Imtiaz Barshon were his peers. Encouraged by fellow actor and producer Itakhar Saymon and Riyad Bin Mahmud, he had made his way into television and OTT. However, even before that, Rubel had a foothold in the theatrical scene.

The actor performed in plays like Jean-Paul Sartre's *Deowal* and Momtaz Uddin's *Bornochora*. In the 1997-98 season, when Tarek and Russell moved to Dhaka, Rubel joined Tirjak. There, he acted in various plays such as Bertolt Brecht's *Samadhan* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. He also wrote plays for Tirjak, titled *Lojja* and *Shotyandho*.

Rakhee Gulzar to return to screen with Nandita Roy's film



Renowned Padma Shri-winning actor Rakhee Gulzar is all set to star in acclaimed director Nandita Roy's upcoming Bengali film *Amar Boss*.

The septuagenarian will be portraying the protagonist of the film, which is scheduled to commence shooting on January 3, next year.

The acclaimed actress was last seen in 2019 in the late director Gautam Halder's *Nirban* and is making a comeback after four years of hiatus in her long, glorious film career. Before *Nirban*, she played a lead role in Rituparno Ghosh's 2003 film *Shubho Mahurat*.

'Beni Khule' and 'Jhumka' make it to Spotify Bangladesh's top tracks

Spotify Bangladesh unveiled this year's most streamed tracks, and BTS' Jungkook dominated the chart with his song *Seven*.

Spotify's most streamed list of tracks listened to in Bangladesh also includes Habib Wahid and Muza's *Beni Khule* in the sixth spot while Blue Touch's enchanting *Mayabee* claimed number eighth spot. Xeler and Muza's track *Jhumka* undoubtedly got a lot of us moving to its beats, and secured the ninth position, while Tanning Sarowar's *Dube Dube* took the tenth spot.



NEWS

11 vehicles torched on first day of blockade

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In Gazipur, arsonists stopped a moving truck and bus and set it on fire on the Dhaka-Tangail highway in the Kaliakoir area.

In Dinajpur, criminals torched a paddy-laden truck in Kaharol upazila, injuring the driver in the process, said fire officials.

In Natore, two buses were set ablaze in Sadar upazila's Boro Harishpur area, while a lorry was set on fire in Sirajganj's Ullahpara upazila.

Meanwhile, criminals torched two buses, including a BRTC double-decker, and a truck last night between 8:30pm to 10:30pm in the port city's Akbar Shah, Double Mooring and Dampara areas.

On the day, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said the EC's show-cause notice for violations of the electoral code of

conduct ahead of the "one-sided" January 7 polls was "a joke".

"It is the Election Commission that has destroyed the integrity of the constitution by announcing the election schedule against the people's will," he told a virtual press briefing yesterday, reports UNB.

"This is a lopsided election where all candidates that are contesting are either directly or indirectly linked with Awami League," the BNP leader said.

He also said the EC's decision to transfer UNOs and OCs on the occasion of elections is "just a reshuffle among Awami-minded UNOs and OCs".

Rizvi claimed the people are least bothered about this one-sided election which more than 60 political parties have boycotted.

The BNP leader alleged that the government is using law enforcers and the judiciary arbitrarily alongside

ruling party "cadres" to establish fascism by again snatching the people's right to vote.

"The attacks on houses and businesses of pro-democracy leaders and activists, including BNP, continue to take place all over the country," Rizvi said.

In such a situation, he said fear and anxiety have gripped the BNP and ordinary voters ahead of the election.

He claimed that over 230 party leaders and activists were detained, and 10 cases were filed against 985 named and many unnamed BNP men in the last 24 hours till yesterday afternoon.

Rizvi added that law enforcers arrested more than 18,860 leaders and activists in 505 cases across the country until yesterday afternoon, since October 28 -- the day of BNP's grand rally.

Aspirants from minorities rise in number

FROM PAGE 12

According to the EC, of the 29 registered political parties taking part in the upcoming polls, eight did not nominate any members of minority communities.

Data shows that AL has nominated 20 people from minority communities.

The three Islamist parties who gave tickets to people from minority groups are: Zaker Party (five nominations), Bangladesh Tarikat Federation (two nominations) and Bangladesh Supreme Party (one nomination).

Shamim Haider, secretary general of Zaker Party, said they usually give party tickets to members of the minority communities as many are a part of their front organisations.

The new political parties, who gave their party tickets to people from minority groups, are: Trinamool BNP (nine nominations), Bangladesh Nationalist Movement

(two nominations) and Bangladesh Supreme Party (one nomination).

Meanwhile, the main opposition in parliament, Jatiya Party, gave nominations to five people from minority communities, while JP (Manju) nominated one person.

Other parties who nominated people from minority communities are: Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal (one), Gonotantri Party (two), Bangladesh National Awami Party (one), Workers Party of Bangladesh (three), Bikolpodhara Bangladesh (one), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) (two), National People's Party (six), Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Mukit) (three), Bangladesh Kalyan Party (one), Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktijote (one) and Bangladesh Congress (six).

The eight parties that did not give their ticket to anyone from the minority are: Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Bangladesh Muslim League, Gono Front, Islamic Front Bangladesh, Islami

Oiljajote, Bangladesh Islamic Front, Bangladesh Muslim League (BML) and Bangladesh Nationalist Front.

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, said many people from ethnic and religious minorities are aspiring to become lawmakers through other parties as they do not have their own.

"This is also the outcome of discontent among the minorities, who are often neglected and belittled. They are using the new parties to contest the polls and express their discontent."

Currently, there are 18 AL lawmakers in parliament who are from ethnic and religious minorities.

After the 2014 polls, there were 18 minority MPs, of which 18 were from AL and two were independent.

After the 2008 polls, there were 14 minority MPs, and only eight in the election before that.

son-in-law soon after his death and released him after a few hours.

Contacted, Shahidul Islam, officer in charge of Shajahanpur Police Station, said, "We detained a man named Tuhin suspecting his involvement in planning sabotage. Later, we came to know that his father-in-law had died and released him."

Shorna scripts historic win

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Brits for 30 in the 10th over to give the Tigresses their first breakthrough.

In the following over, leggie Fahima Khatun castled Annerie Dercksen.

Shorna, the third leg-spinner in Bangladesh's ranks, came to bowl in the 14th over with the hosts needing 60 in the final six overs. She held her own and struck first in the 16th over to dismiss Sune Luss, giving away eight runs in the over.

BJP wins 3 of 4 key

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In the 230-member Madhya Pradesh assembly, BJP won comfortable majority with 137 seats and leading in 28 others, Congress failed to do so in Rajasthan (a total of 199-member assembly seats) and Chhattisgarh (90) seats where it was in power.

In Rajasthan, BJP won 115 seats to return to power and in Chhattisgarh the party was on course to wrest power winning 34 seats and leading in 20 seats. Congress got 44 seats and led in

With South Africa needing 28 to win in the last three, Shorna came back in the 18th over to take the most important wicket of opener Bosch, who seemed to have held the key for the hosts as she had put away nine fours and a six for a 49-ball 67. In a stellar over that shifted the balance in favour of the visitors, Shorna managed to take a second wicket when she dismissed Nondumiso Shangase, giving away just two runs.

She took a couple of more wickets in the final over to seal the victory for Bangladesh.

Earlier, Murshida Khatun's career-best 62 not out, her third T20I fifty, and a quickfire cameo from skipper Nigar Sultana Joty helped Bangladesh to 149 for two after they opted to bat first.

Murshida put away six fours and one six for her 59-ball 62 and Nigar smashed six boundaries in a 21-ball 34-run knock.

party's "hat-trick" of victory in the heartland states would resonate far and wide.

"Some people are saying today's hat-trick in the three states has guaranteed BJP's hat-trick in 2024," a smiling Modi said in a clear reference to the coming general elections.

"Today's victory in assembly elections is historic and unprecedented. It is the victory of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and self-reliant India," Modi said.

Candidature of 202 scrapped

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submit documents regarding his party post.

A JP candidate of the same constituency had his candidature withheld as he did not provide his tax documents, said RO Sheikh Russel Hasan.

Ashraf Hossain Alam, popularly known as Hero Alam, was among 11 candidates whose nominations were cancelled in Bogura.

The nomination of actress Mahia Mahi for Rajshahi-1 was among four that got cancelled.

AL nominees for Cox's Bazar-1 Salah Uddin Ahmed and Mamunur Rashid Kiron for Noakhali-3 had their candidatures cancelled due to loan defaults, according to the ROs.

Four other MP aspirants had their candidatures cancelled in Cox's Bazar.

At least 18 had their candidatures cancelled in Chattogram.

Khulna district RO Khandkar Yasir Arefin cancelled the nomination papers of 18 candidates in three constituencies for forging signatures, electricity bill arrears, not signing

affidavits, and loan default.

In Gazipur, JP nominee SM Niaz Uddin's candidature was withheld for loan default, said Md Hasibur Rahman, an assistant returning officer of the district.

The nomination of BNM candidate and singer Doly Shayontani for Pabna-2 was cancelled due to loan default, an assistant returning officer of the district confirmed.

In Cumilla, nominations of 26 candidates, mostly independents, were cancelled on different grounds, said RO M Mushfiqur Rahman.

The nominations of all three JP candidates, along with nine others, were cancelled in Manikganj due to loan default and gas bill arrears.

In Brahmanbaria, 10 candidates, nine of them independents, had their nominations cancelled, said RO Md Shahgir Alam.

Nominations of two independents were cancelled in Narsingdi.

Shariatpur district RO Muhammad Nizam Uddin Ahmed cancelled the nominations of two independents in Shariatpur-1 and 2.

The nominations of 13 runners, including former Jahangirnagar

University vice-chancellor Prof Anwar Hossain and seven other independents, were cancelled in Netrakona, said RO Shahed Parvez.

In Rangpur, independent Zakir Hossain, an AL leader who recently quit the post of Mithapukur upazila chairman, had his nomination for Rangpur-5 withheld as he failed to mention that he is accused in a case, said RO Mobasshwer Hossain.

In Pirojpur, 10 candidates' nominations were cancelled.

Seven, including AL nominee for Jhalakathi-1 Bazul Haque Harun, had their candidatures cancelled in Jhalakathi. AL sent a list of its nominees to the ROs where Harun was replaced by BNP's former vice-chairman Shahjahan Omor.

In Sunamganj, candidatures of nine candidates were cancelled at five constituencies in the district, said RO Didar E Alam Mohammad Maksud Chowdhury.

The ROs cancelled the nominations of two each in Jhenidah and Bhola, four in Bagerhat, and three in Narail.

[Our district correspondents contributed to this report]