

REVIEW

Something like an  
Autobiography: Relatable,  
familiar, timely

ZAREEN NAWAR

“When are you going to have a baby?” is the question that Tithi, portrayed by Nusrat Imrose Tisha, is met with, within the initial five minutes of *Something Like an Autobiography*. It is unfortunately safe to say that even in the year 2023, people somehow

find it acceptable to ask this to most married individuals, who especially face such questions after they’ve been married for a good number of years.

Tithi’s mother’s eventual scathing remarks do not help the cause of the film, until the protagonist finally becomes pregnant. Tithi’s husband Farhan, portrayed by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, plays the commendably supportive partner from the onset. He even raises the pertinent question-- “Do we even need a child?”, which in turn reflects the reality of couples who are willing to abstain from becoming parents as they already feel complete without one. Tithi’s assurance of affirming that they are bringing their child into the world solely for themselves and not the society can be said to be speaking for a majority of pairs at large. The film openly speaks for people who are struggling to become parents.

However, the point at which Farhan suddenly has to deal with an ex-girlfriend seems redundant and weird, considering he had already been established as a reliable partner. It could have been a setup for when he ultimately falls prey to being tormented by questionable associates of the influential “oligarch” played by Dipjol. The occurrences leading up to Farhan’s manipulated arrest were gripping, and also implied how standing

up for what he believes in accounted for his time and situation being worsened simply because of the far-reaching exploitative measures of one questionable being.

When Farhan is freed from prison with the help of Iresh Zaker’s character, which was executed as one of the finest performances amongst the smaller roles, the universal truth of devoted parents doing everything and anything for their child is again highlighted through heartfelt and meaningful dialogues; Farhan, after all, had to beg for forgiveness for speaking out against Dipjol’s character to attain bail.

Director Farooki and co-writer Tisha evidently poured much of themselves into creating the film, that felt genuinely personal at least for most of the first half of the entire run-time.

Then again, there were significant occurrences within their well-furnished home that resembled moments or shots from a daily vlog. Farooki’s attempt at

being an actor may have sometimes added to the aforementioned feeling of similitude with a vlog but his performance largely felt rather natural. He could have been just playing himself, instead of his character Farhan. On the other hand, Tisha’s ever-immaculate caliber at sinking into the skin of her characters remains constant with this project.

The web-film does not concoct unnecessary measures of lengthening the story, so it unfolds via an inquisitively linear thread. The cinematography feels homely and relatable, thereby making it accessible and familiar. The subtle hilarious dialogue Tithi and Farhan share after consulting a gynaecologist can easily be seen as those shared by real people. The film does a great job at bringing to the forefront sentiments that most people can relate to and in doing so it speaks on behalf of those that can empathise with the struggles presented on screen.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Norman Lear, iconic  
TV sitcom and movie  
producer, dies at 101



Producer-writer Norman Lear, renowned for his groundbreaking hit comedies like *All in the Family* and *Maude*, which boldly addressed race, abortion, and other social issues seldom portrayed on US television, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 101, as announced by his family.

Lear, a highly influential figure in television, breathed his last at his Los Angeles home due to natural causes. “Surrounded by his family, we shared stories and sang songs until the very end,” the family announced on Facebook on Wednesday.

Lear, a six-time Emmy Award winner for his contributions to television, gained recognition for his advocacy of liberal causes, such as championing voting rights. Remarkably, he remained active in his professional pursuits well into his 90s.



‘Animal’ released  
in 48 halls across  
country

Following its grand theatrical release worldwide on December 1, Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s *Animal* has now been released in 48 halls across Bangladesh from Thursday.

This Ranbir Kapoor starrer film was supposed to be released on the same day of its global release. However, it belatedly received approval to be screened by the Bangladesh Film Censor Board on Tuesday.

After extensive speculation, Action Cut Entertainment, an overseas film import company, acquired the film under the SAFTA agreement. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting approved the deal on November 28.

COUNTRYWIDE



A hanging vegetable garden at Betaga village in Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Vegetable farming  
on hanging beds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Growing vegetables on hanging beds made of bamboo, nets and polythene has turned out to be a boon for farmers under two low-lying unions in Fakirhat upazila.

Bagerhat Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) took the initiative to cultivate different varieties of vegetable on waterlogged barren land in Betaga and Piljong union of Fakirhat upazila.

Primarily, DAE installed 40 such hanging beds on 45 decimals of waterlogged land under Piljong union and 45 beds on 55 decimals in Betaga union.

According to Fakihat Upazila Agriculture Department, local farmers are getting benefit by cultivating different vegetables on a total of one acre of waterlogged land under the project.

Bagerhat DAE started the innovative method of vegetable farming at some fish enclosures, ponds and waterlogged land under the two unions on an experimental basis.

While visiting the areas this correspondent saw many farmers cultivated different vegetables like bitter gourd, sweet pumpkin, cucumber and pepper on their fallow land and the yield is quite good as well.

Pradeep Kumar, sub-assistant agriculture officer at Betaga union, said they first made some three-feet-long and three-feet-wide bamboo frames and installed those at different corners of waterlogged lands, using nets and bamboo poles.

They later set a piece of holed polythene inside it and put two-third of organic fertilizer and one-third of soil on the hanging beds before planting the vegetable seedlings there.

Farmer Alauddin Masadi of Bayarapara village union said usually his land remains under water during this time of the year and nothing can be grown there.

This year he installed 24 hanging beds in his waterlogged land and planted saplings of bitter gourd, pumpkin and gourd on those, he said, adding that many of the trees have already started flowering.

Tania Rahman, sub-assistant agriculture officer at Piljong union, said farmers can use the hanging beds for at least two years.

Labour rights critical

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implementation were vital to bilateral relationship, sustainable and inclusive development, and to support a stable and predictable operating environment for US companies operating in Bangladesh.

“As we look at the readymade garment sector, one of our mission’s priorities here in Bangladesh is a sustainable and broadly shared prosperity realised through improved labour standards,” the US ambassador said.

“This brings me to labour rights, which are critical to the continued growth and sustainability of the readymade garment sector in Bangladesh,” he added.

The US envoy reminded that on November 16, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the new US Presidential Memorandum on “Advancing Worker Empowerment, Rights, and High Labor Standards Globally”.

“This new global labour strategy calls on all US government agencies to

intensify engagements with governments, labour organisations, trade unions, civil society, and the private sector to promote and protect the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining,” he said.

“I again want to thank all of you for being great partners with the United States and great customers of US cotton. I hope today’s event will be beneficial for you and teach you even more about the benefits of including US cotton in your business,” he said.

Transfer of 158 more UNOs

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will hand over their charges to the newly appointed OCs [of the stations concerned] and will take charge of their new stations once the approved transfer list reaches PHQ.”

The EC on November 30 sent letters to the senior secretaries of the public administration and home ministries, asking for the

transfer of all UNOs and OCs across the country. The letters said the transfers would be made with the intention to ensure a free and fair election.

On December 4, the commission approved a public administration ministry proposal for the transfer of 47 UNOs, who served at their current workplace for over two years.

With this, it has so far approved the transfer of 205 UNOs. The list involved those who served their station for over a year.

Meanwhile for the OCs, this was the first transfer list and it involved those who worked at their current station for over six months, public administration ministry and PHQ officials said.

AL leaders can run

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certainly back its nominees first.

“Independents [not nominated AL leaders] have been allowed to take part so that the polls are competitive. What do we do if they [independents] stay ahead [of the party nominees] with people’s votes?”

About the new LC condition set by a US garment buyer, the road transport and bridges minister said the US would not be able to do it unilaterally even if it wants to.

“The United States’ friends in Europe, Asia and the Pacific are no longer in favour of taking any harsh decision against

Bangladesh.

“We have friends abroad... They also have all information about Bangladesh. They know under what circumstances Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is holding this election to protect the continuity of constitutional rule,” said Quader.

Garment factory owners are concerned as a US clothing retailer recently said it will not “process transactions involving any country, region, party” sanctioned by the UN, the US, EU, or the UK.

The retailer mentioned it in a Letter of Credit issued last month for an apparel exporter in Bangladesh.

The AL general secretary yesterday expressed concern

that the BNP may intensify its “covert attacks” ahead of the January 7 national election.

“Since they have targeted even the poultry chicks, they may widen the targets of covert attacks,” said Quader, referring to the Wednesday night’s incident in Sirajganj where a lorry carrying poultry chicks was burnt.

He said, “With the polling day getting closer, they [BNP] are becoming more desperate.”

Quader, however, said the BNP would not be able to thwart the election.

AL presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak, joint general secretaries Mahbul Alam Hanif and AFM Bahauddin Nasim, among other central leaders, were present at the briefing.

JP wants no AL candidates

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There are discussions in the political arena that the JP may quit the race at the last moment if the party finds it difficult to ensure win for its top leaders.

The AL and the JP have already announced the names of their candidates in 298 and 287 constituencies respectively.

In the 2018 national polls, the AL did not field any candidates in 26 constituencies from where JP nominees ran. The JP won 21 of those seats.

The opposition party’s nominees lost security deposits in all 145 constituencies where candidates from both the JP and the AL contested.

Speaking at a press briefing at the JP chairman’s Banani office

yesterday, Chunnu claimed they did not discuss seat-sharing with the AL and that there was no need for it.

“We believe the polls results would be astonishing this time like those of the 1991 national polls if the voters were able to go to the polling centres and cast their ballots freely.”.

The JP leader said the results in 1991 were astonishing because nobody expected the BNP to win, but the party did.

“There are a lot of anti-Awami League voters in the country. We want to capitalise on those voters to bag more votes in favour of our party.”

Chunnu said they discussed with the AL how to conduct the elections peacefully so that voters

can go to the polling stations.

He said the AL has assured that it will extend all-out cooperation in holding the elections in a free and fair manner. “We felt assured. But we will observe the situation in the coming days.”

Asked whether the JP would quit the race at the last moment, Chunnu said his party does not have any history of boycotting polls.

Meanwhile, Obaidul Quader at a press conference at the AL president’s Dhanmondi political office yesterday said they had a meeting with the JP to discuss holding the parliamentary polls in a free, fair, and peaceful manner.

He said the JP will run independently.

Moscow against any  
sanctions from US, West

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US and its allies attempted to influence Bangladesh’s internal political process, “ostensibly under the banner of ensuring transparency and inclusiveness”.

At a briefing in Washington on Wednesday, John Kirby, US national security council coordinator for strategic communications, however, described Russia’s statement as “classic Russian propaganda”.

“I’ll just tell you that it’s absolutely false, and the Russians know it’s false.”

He said the US wants what the people of Bangladesh want -- free and fair polls -- and will continue to work with all sectors of the Bangladeshi society to ensure that democracy is upheld. Mantsytskiy, about the

Indo-Pacific, said the concept of a “free and open Indo-Pacific region” promoted by the US has destructive potential rather than a unifying one. “Its true goal is to divide the states of the region into ‘interest groups’ such as QUAD and AUKUS, and weaken the multilateral principles of the regional system of interstate relations in order to establish its own dominance.”

The regional architecture should be built on the principles of indivisibility of security, rule of international law, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, and non-use or threat of force.

“Unfortunately, we have recently witnessed

persistent attempts by extra-regional forces to reformat the existing order to fulfil their own narrow, selfish objectives,” he said.

About bilateral relations, he said Bangladesh is Russia’s second largest trade partner in South Asia after India. Even the Covid-19 pandemic could not hinder it in 2021 and the trade volume reached a historic height of \$2.97 billion.

The trade faced setbacks due to sanctions against Russia, but it is now going up again,” he said, adding, “Russian companies are ready to participate in various joint projects in Bangladesh, in sectors such as ICT, pharmaceuticals, space, geological research, and maritime, railway and air transport.”