

SVF, CHORKI, ALPHA-i partner up to produce 'Domm', Redoan Rony at the helm

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Curiosity was at its peak at a 5-star hotel in the capital, as celebrities, journalists and corporates eagerly waited for a big announcement. And big it was – as host Mousumi Mou called up representatives of entertainment giants SVF, Chorki and Alpha-i. It was announced that the three esteemed companies will produce their upcoming film *Domm*, with ace director and Chorki CEO Redoan Rony at its helm.

Chanchal Chowdhury, three-time National Award winner and one of Bangladesh's most popular actors, will play the lead in the film, which will supposedly be inspired from true events.

Moreover, another big announcement is coming on December 11 at the same venue, with more surprises at the fray.

This is Rony's first theatrical release after seven years. "True events always inspire me," said the director at the event. "I needed a script that had 'Domm' (Fortitude), and I am excited to be working on it. The extraordinary mental



(From Left) Shahriar Shakil, Mahendra Soni, Redoan Rony, Chanchal Chowdhury, and Zaraif Hossain
PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

will make another film, and now, he has used that as an excuse to reel me in!", laughed the actor.

Chanchal believes that the massive collaboration will open up new horizons by instigating interest in both Bengalis.

SVF Director & Co-Founder Mahendra Soni said, "We at SVF are taking another significant step to deepen our relationship with the entertainment industry of Bangladesh by venturing into movie production. We are not just creating films; we are fostering a community and a culture that celebrates Bangla cinema. Our goal is to ensure that Bengali language films reach every corner of the globe, and to continue delivering projects that stand tall on international standards."

President and Strategic Head of Chorki, Zaraif Hossain said, "When I was brought the concept of Chorki, I immediately told Rony that I was on-board, but only if we thought on a bigger scale. We wanted to bring Bangla

content to 300 million Bangla-speaking people worldwide."

Zaraif continued that Chorki has reached people across 190 countries in the world. "We don't know Korean or Spanish, yet we watched series like 'Squid Game' and 'Money Heist'.

In the same vein, we want to take our Bangla content to the world.

After that, Managing Director of Alpha-i, Shahriar Shakil stated, "Bangla cinema is a huge untapped market, and has a lot of potential worldwide, we have not even seen the tip of the iceberg. Alpha-i is a 10-year-old company, and we have always wanted to work with the best talent across the board. We are keen on working with Chorki, with which we have successfully collaborated on 'Surongo', and SVF, which distributed the film in India."

While it is yet to be seen how this amalgamation of three leading entertainment companies plays out, hopes are high that their partnership will be beneficial for Bangla cinema.



Redoan Rony introduces the script writers of the film.

strength of an ordinary person can instantly rescue them from any terrifying danger. In this film, I am trying to convey this story."

SVF, Alpha-i, and Chorki have admittedly collaborated in hopes of bringing Bangla Cinema to a yet more international audience. In reaction to taking up yet another exciting project, Chanchal Chowdhury shared that his relationship with the director spans almost 20 years. "Rony is like a younger brother to me. At a point, I kept pestering him about when he

Ranveer to play antagonist in Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Brahmastra 2'?



Following the release of *Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva* (2022), there have been ongoing rumours regarding Ranveer Singh's potential portrayal of Dev in the film's second instalment directed by Ayan Mukerji.

According to a report from News18, Ranveer has recently given the nod to play the character of Dev, who was unveiled as the antagonist in the concluding moments of *Brahmastra*.

"Ranveer Singh has been confirmed for the role of Dev and has officially signed on. The script for the second part is currently in development, and the film is scheduled to commence production in 2025," as per the source.



Rawnak Hasan aides co-artiste battling with cancer

Rawnak Hasan, General Secretary of Actors Equity Bangladesh, is earning accolades for his compassionate gesture of generously donating his entire prize money of BDT 1 lakh from a quiz programme on a private TV channel to support his co-artiste Afroza Hossain, who is battling cancer.

The actor said that he is really happy to donate the prize money to his dear colleague Afroza *apa*, who is undergoing treatment in India.

Many celebrities are praising the actor for selflessly contributing the entire sum to assist his fellow artiste.

Diagnosed with cervical cancer last year, Afroza Hossain's deteriorating condition, including the spread of cancer to her spine, prompted her transfer to Mumbai on December 3 for advanced treatment.

COUNTRYWIDE

Schoolground remains waterlogged for months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Academic and co-curricular activities at a government primary school in Kaliganj upazila are being badly hampered as the schoolground remains under stagnant water nearly four months a year.

As a result, students of Sreerampur Government Primary School are facing serious difficulties in attending their classes and they cannot even play on their waterlogged schoolground.

Teachers and Students at Sreerampur government primary school under Kaliganj upazila is in trouble due to water logging at the school ground for long.

The institution, which was established on 25 decimals of land in 1953, has a total of 150 students and eight teachers.

During a visit to the institution this correspondent saw the school was built on a low-lying land.

Besides, there is an Eidgah on the west side of the school, while piling work for construction of a power greed station is going on the east side.

Locals alleged that the situation is prolonging this year due to huge piles of earth, extracted from the construction site, kept in front of the Eidgah.

Subrata Roy, an assistant teacher of the school, said kids are being deprived of playing any kinds of physical sports as the playground of the school remains waterlogged for several months a year.

Head Teacher Ummehoney said they have been facing such a situation from June to October every year as the school was built on a low-lying land.

Head Teacher Ummehoney said they have been facing such a situation from June to October every year.

The school compound needs to fill with earth immediately to get rid of the trouble forever, she added.

Maymuna Khatun, a Class III student of the institution, said, "We have to take off our shoes before crossing the waterlogged schoolground to reach the classrooms." Upazila Primary Education Officer Hasan Mahmud said as the school ground is too low, they will fill it up with earth as soon they have allotment in this regard.



The waterlogged playground of Sreerampur Government Primary School in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

People's mandate crucial for dealing with unjust int'l pressure

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"For example, the two Asian giants, China and India, which are adversaries to each other, compete to promote their economic interests in neighbouring Bangladesh and in some other South Asian countries, thus putting Bangladesh in a difficult balancing position," he continued.

He further said the more a government has legitimacy in the eye of its own people through popular mandate, the higher its capacity will be to achieve an alignment of the country's interest with those of the ruling regime itself.

"Concomitantly, an authoritarian and repressive regime will feel more constrained to do so. Such a politically weak government is also more likely to succumb to the pressures of foreign governments and the multinational companies backed by them to accept exploitative economic deals."

It is not easy for such a country to diversify either its export bundle or the destination of export. Bangladesh typically exemplifies this contrast in trade relationships with the industrialised West vis-à-vis that with China.

While China is the largest source of its imports (neighbouring India being the second), its exports predominantly consist of readymade garments mainly produced for the markets in the industrialised West.

"Navigating external economic policies in an increasingly complex global order will not be easy for the LDCs," Mahmud

said.

A major challenge is how to conduct economic diplomacy so as to have an appropriate balance between the industrialised West and the emerging China bloc, which now includes Russia as well. The rise of regional powers further complicates the scenario.

"The challenge for the LDCs is how to align the political interests of their ruling regimes with upholding these global humanitarian values and also with a strategy of securing maximum global economic benefits for the country."

"The second challenge is with the quality of economic management and performance."

Once a developing country is able to raise the efficiency of its industries across both export-oriented and import-substituting ones, it can afford to go for trade agreements with reciprocal tariff concessions rather than seeking one-sided trade preferences.

"Vietnam, for example, has forged numerous bilateral trade and investment protection agreements with numerous countries including Japan, UK, EU, and most recently, the US," the economist explained.

"The western powers, particularly the US, could ignore the human rights issues of communist Vietnam since they were not offering any non-reciprocal trade preferences and also because of the geopolitical strategy of neutralising the deep trade relations of Vietnam with China."

Moreover, he added, the

recently signed US-Vietnam partnership agreement will allow Vietnam to access technologies related to AI, microchips and semiconductors, in which countries like Malaysia and India are also interested.

"These are all important lessons, particularly for Bangladesh, which is poised to graduate from the LDC status and, in a few years' time, will no more be able to claim trade preferences on the basis of such a status."

BNP announces

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detained and five cases filed against 529 named and many other unnamed activists in the 24 hours preceding yesterday evening.

BNP leaders said Dhaka Metropolitan Police had been informed about today's human chains.

BNP allies like the Ganatantra Mancha, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote, will organise human chains at Karwan Bazar, Bijoynagar, Purana Paltan, and on Topkhana Road.

Meanwhile, the BNP has outlined programmes to pay homage on Martyred Intellectuals' Day on December 14 and celebrate the Victory Day on December 16.

BNP leaders will visit the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the capital's Mirpur to pay tributes to the martyred intellectuals.

On Victory Day, the party will pay respect to the freedom fighters at the National Memorial in Savar.

The leaders will also pay tribute at the grave of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman.

Begum Rokeya's dream fulfilled

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Nazmun Ara was the first woman justice in the High Court division of the Supreme Court. Later, she became the first woman justice in the Appellate Division as well.

"I wish I had made a woman the chief justice at that time. And she was on my mind. But there is so much conservativeness in some areas of our society. It takes time to break them. This is why I couldn't do it at that time. I still have this regret," Hasina said.

She said economic self-reliance is the biggest concern for a woman.

Referring to the international conference on "Women in Islam", arranged by OIC in Jeddah in November, the PM said that had Begum Rokeya been alive now, she would have been happy that women's rights are being ensured in Islamic countries and that they are not being confined behind the veil.

She said the Saudi Arabian government has now come forward to ensure women's rights. So, nobody can confine women behind the veil in the name of Islam anymore, she added.

Talking about gender equality, Hasina said girls have surpassed boys in terms of success rate in the recently published HSC exam results.

The PM said an initiative is required now so that the larger or equal number of boys achieve success in the exams.

"If we want to maintain gender equality, we will have to pay attention to

boys, not girls. The girls are moving forward."

The women and children affairs ministry organised the event on the occasion of the 143rd birth and 91st death anniversary of Begum Rokeya, a pioneer in women's education and empowerment.

The PM handed over the Begum Rokeya Padak 2023 to five noted women for their outstanding contributions towards society, women's education, and women's empowerment.

"Had Begum Rokeya been alive now, she would have been happy that women rights are being ensured in Islamic countries and that they are not being confined behind the veil."

Sheikh Hasina Prime minister

The five are the first female vice-chancellor of Buet Prof Khaleda Ekram (posthumous) of Bogura for women's education; noted reproductive health expert Dr Halida Hanum Akhter of Rangpur for establishing women's rights; Kamrunnesa Ashraf Dina of Netrakona for her contributions to the socio-economic development of women; Ronita Bala of Thakurgaon for rural development; and Nishat Mazumder (mountaineer) of Lakshimpur for her contribution to awakening of women.