



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## Are producers pushing big-budget films towards Eid?

**The movie titled Dewaler Desh, starring Sariful Razz and Shobnom Bubby is set to release during Eid-ul-Fitr too. Directed by Mishuk Moni, this film is funded by the government and marks his directorial debut.**

ZAHID AKBAR

In 2023, a significant portion of the big-budgeted films screened in Dhaka primarily comprised those released during Eid. Throughout that period, numerous individuals within the cinema industry remarked that movies in Dhaka were predominantly scheduled around Eid. Outside of these festive seasons, production houses seemed hesitant to release big-budget films.

So, are the releases of Bengali films with extensive budgets becoming exclusively centered around Eid timings? Films released at other times of the year, outside the Eid holidays, seemed to lack the ability to create a buzz of discussions around them. This trend is thus leading production houses to opt for Eid releases, with the aspiration for films to spark discussions regardless of their commercial success.

The release of movies during Eid-ul-Fitr invariably carries considerable pressure because no films are released in the month leading up to Eid, owing to Ramadan. Movies

that manage to release during Eid often experience a lucrative box office turnout, despite facing competition from numerous other films released during this festive season. Given this situation, the likelihood of new films achieving commercial success is relatively low.

Consequently, producers tend to hesitate in releasing new productions during this period.

The year 2023 truly saw some of the most discussed film releases especially incorporating films released during the Eid holidays. Some of the films worth mentioning include two expensive Shakib Khan starrers namely *Leader: Amic Bangladesh* and *Priyotoma*, the Afran Nisho starrer pricey film *Surongo*, *Prohelika* featuring Mahfuz Ahmed, and another big-budgeted film *Kill Him* starring Ananta Jalil. However, only *Priyotoma* and *Surongo*

managed to attain commercial success during both Eid festivals.

As of the first two months of 2024, the few movies that have been released failed to evoke attention from audiences at large and the profits earned by their production houses are

uncertain.

On the other hand, productions that are yet to release their respective films this year are intently preparing to bring them to the screen this upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr, with one notable example being the high-budget Himel Ashraf directorial *Rajkumar*, featuring Shakib Khan in the lead role. The final portion of the movie is currently being filmed in the United States and it is being produced by Versatile Media.

*Omar*, starring Sariful Razz, is amongst the films scheduled for release during this Eid-ul-Fitr. The movie also features Shahiduzzaman Selim, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Nasir Uddin Khan, and Arfan Mredha Shiblu, with direction by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Razz.

The movie titled *Dewaler Desh*, starring Sariful Razz and Shobnom Bubby is set to release during Eid-ul-Fitr too. Directed by Mishuk Moni, this film is funded by the government and marks his directorial debut.

A definitely costly production *Netri The Leader*, starring Ananta Jalil and Barsha, is scheduled for release during Eid-ul-Fitr. Barsha will portray the female lead in the film. Directed by South Indian filmmakers Upendra Madhav and Ananta Jalil himself, this film has been jointly produced by Bangladesh and Turkey.

Other films expected to release during Eid-ul-Fitr include *Esha Murder*, starring Azmeri Haque Badhan, and *Deadbody* featuring Ziaul Roshan in the lead role. However, it's worth noting that additional movies may be added to or removed from this list at the last minute.



## Rock & Roll Hall of Fame unveils 2024 nominees



The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame has unveiled its list of 2024 nominees, encompassing a diverse range of genres including pop, hard rock, hip-hop, and R&B.

The 15 acts vying for induction into the prestigious institution are Mary J Blige, Mariah Carey, Cher, Dave Matthews Band, Eric B & Rakim, Foreigner, Peter Frampton, Jane's Addiction, Kool & the Gang, Lenny Kravitz, Oasis, the late Sinéad O'Connor, Ozzy Osbourne, Sade, and A Tribe Called Quest.

The names of the honourees will be disclosed in April, with the annual induction ceremony scheduled for the fall.

## Shabnur announces two more films



Upon her return to the country, renowned actress Shabnur previously made the thrilling announcement about featuring in *Rongona*, directed by Arafat Hossain. The actress is set to star in another film, titled *Matal Hawa*, under the direction of Chayanika Chowdhury.

In a recent development, another movie has been announced starring Shabnur at the inaugural ceremony of *Rongona* at Dhaka Club on February 10. This movie, titled *Ekhono Bhalobashi*, is set to again be directed by Arafat Hossain.

Under the banner of MS Films, *Rongona* will also feature veteran actor Fazlur Rahman Babu, Boroda Mithu, and many others. The film creators are keeping the star cast opposite Shabnur secret to surprise everyone with the announcement.

## COUNTRYWIDE

### BAMBOO CRAFTSMEN

## Clinging to tradition, struggling to survive

MD AMINUL ISLAM

People involved in producing bamboo-made crafts in different upazilas of Mymensingh are struggling to survive due to increased production cost and availability of plastic products.

The authorities concerned should take necessary initiative to improve the financial condition of the craftsmen by creating a favourable market in and outside the country, experts said.

While talking, Prof Dr Khandaker Mostafizur Rahman, dean of Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), said people still relies on some bamboo-made items for household and agricultural works as they are yet to find any perfect alternative.

Prof Mostafizur said during his stay in Germany's Stuttgart and Frankfurt he witnessed a huge demand for Bangladeshi bamboo crafts, especially shopping baskets.

A bamboo-made basket is being sold for Tk 2000, which is then barely sold at Tk 200 in Bangladesh.

Dr Mohammad Saidur Rahman, professor of Agricultural Economy at BAU, said the government should come forward and provide financial support to the craftsmen, still clinging to their ancestral profession, in order to revive

the traditional crafts.

That would surely create more work opportunities and open a new horizon for non-agricultural people, he added.

It has become difficult to continue the ancestral profession nowadays as selling prices of bamboo-made products does not match with its production cost, said Pramod Karmakar, a craftsman from Biska village in Gouripur upazila.

"Though I've been involved with this profession since my boyhood, I am struggling to survive as it is very hard to earn Tk 200 daily from this profession at present," lamented the 60-year-old craftsman.

Another artisan Paresh Das of the village said a craftsman can make two medium size baskets a day and can hardly make a profit of Tk 200.

Abu Hanif of Subornakhila village in Muktagachha upazila said usually their business is comparatively better during the Aman and Boro harvesting seasons.

Hanif, however, said most of the bamboo craftsmen are unable to go for large-scale production due to lack funds and worker crisis.

Currently, some 1,000 families from different areas of Gouripur, Muktagachha, Phulpur, Tarakanda, Ishwarganj and Trishal upazilas are engaged with the profession, he added.



Bamboo craftsmen are struggling to take their ancestral profession ahead as buyers prefer for cheaper plastic items. The photo was taken from Modhyabazar area in Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

### BNP leader Quayum released

FROM PAGE 12

was a registered refugee under the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and demanded an immediate cease to any plans of deporting him.

Quayum's son Navid Tanvin Ananta earlier said his father was a "victim of political persecution" that began in September 2015 when an Italian national named Cesare Tavella was murdered in Dhaka that year.

He said that immediately after the Tavella murder, ISIS claimed responsibility. In the middle of 2016, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also found ties between the militant group "neo-JMB" and the killing.

However, the detective branch had ignored ISIS's claims and Rab's statement and continued the court proceedings against Quayum and his brother, he added.

### BNP chalks out six-day programme

FROM PAGE 12

people have been powerless. People's power has been seized by the Awami League," he alleged.

The BNP leader said, "Prices of commodities reached an intolerable level. Those with middle-class or lower-class incomes cannot afford food."

The BNP and like-minded parties boycotted the January 7 national polls. To protest the maiden session of this parliament on January 30, the party organised black flag marches in the country.

### SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

## Philippine accuses Chinese vessels of 'dangerous manoeuvres'

AFP, Manila

The Philippine Coast Guard yesterday accused Chinese vessels of "dangerous" manoeuvres during a nine-day patrol near a reef off the coast of the Southeast Asian country.

The Philippine vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua was sent in early February to patrol the waters around

Scarborough Shoal, a rich fishing ground in the South China Sea, and deliver provisions to Filipino fishermen and ensure their safety.

The reef has been a flashpoint between the countries since China seized it from the Philippines in 2012.

Since then, Beijing has deployed patrol boats that Manila says harass Philippine vessels and prevent

Filipino fishermen from reaching the lagoon where fish are more plentiful.

During the patrol, Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) vessels "performed dangerous and blocking manoeuvres at sea against BRP Teresa Magbanua four times, with the CCG vessels crossing the bow of the PCG vessel twice", the Philippine Coast Guard said in a statement.

## Conflict of interest takes back seat

FROM PAGE 1

In his affidavit, he mentioned his profession as a businessman in the apparel sector.

Other members of the committee - Sheikh Helal Uddin, Sheikh Afil Uddin, Shariful Islam Jinnah, Mahmud Hasan, and Sultana Nadira - also own businesses.

Former foreign minister AK Abdul Momen is the chairman of the JS body on foreign affairs ministry while former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal is the chairman of the JS body on finance ministry.

Likewise, former textiles and jute minister Golam Dastgir Gazi, former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, former planning minister MA Mannan, former agriculture minister Abdur Razzaque, former fisheries minister SM Rezaul Karim, former state minister for CHT affairs Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, former minister of expatriates' welfare Imran Ahmed, former state minister for housing Sharif Ahmed, former state minister for youth and sports Zahid Ahsan Russel are chairmen of the JS body on the ministries they had led.

Shamim Osman, a member of the standing committee on labour ministry, owns the garment factory "Wisdom Knitting

Mills" while another member of the committee SM Al Mamun is involved in ship-breaking yards.

Golam Kibria Tipu, a member of the parliamentary standing committee on shipping, have several launches.

Nizam Uddin Hazari is a member of the parliamentary watchdog on the expatriates' welfare ministry. He is involved in the manpower export business.

Abdur Rauf is a member of the standing committee on the power, energy, and mineral resources ministry. He has a filling station.

Mohammad Ali is a member of the standing committee on LGRD ministry. He is a contractor.

Asked, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Ittekkharuzzaman told The Daily Star, "In a parliament almost totally controlled by the ruling party, the prospect of effectiveness of the standing committees is utopian, if anything."

Nevertheless, the formation of the committees could have reflected a little more political acumen to avoid the potentially crippling effects of conflict of interest, he said.

"The chairpersonship or even simple membership of former ministers in the committee of the same

ministry will be the most obvious predicament against any prospect of independent and objective committee work in case of allegations of corruption or other irregularities of the ministry during the former minister's tenure."

He also said members having business interests in the matters of the committees will most likely use their position to capture the proceedings in their own business interest rather than to serve the committee's objectives meaningfully.

Asked, Nizam Ahmed, a former professor at the Chittagong University and a parliamentary affairs expert, said making former ministers chiefs of different JS bodies related to the respective ministries will create problems in ensuring accountability and transparency.

"It is normal that the former ministers, who are now heads of different standing committees, will try to suppress unwanted issues of the ministries that had taken place during their time," he also said.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar echoed him.

Chief Whip Noor-E-Alam Chowdhury said the former ministers have been made chairmen of the committees as they have work experience

in the ministry, and they can use their experience to make the parliamentary committee dynamic.

"There are many businesspeople, anyone can own a business," he said.

SM Rezaul Karim, former minister for fisheries and livestock and now the chief of the JS body on the same ministry, said, "I don't think there will be any conflict of interest."

"Anyone can make mistakes during work and everything can be discussed in the JS body as it is not comprised of only its chief. There are other members in the committee as well," he said, adding, "Therefore, it would not create any obstacle to discussions about any unwanted or undesired incidents that took place in the ministry."

Offensive

FROM PAGE 12

"Four plans have been approved since October 7 - that's 3,700 housing units," Challands said.

Ismail al-Thawabta, the director general of the Government Media Office in the Gaza Strip, has told Al Jazeera that the humanitarian situation in the northern Gaza Strip is beyond the catastrophic stage.

"Some families receive only half a meal within 48 hours," he said.