

## People are calling it the 'greatest climax' in Bangladeshi content: Shihab Shaheen

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RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Shihab Shaheen has masterfully woven countless love stories—from the heartbreaking tale of *Mayashalik* to the bittersweet phases of love in *Chuye Dile Mon*—and he delicately portrays the depths of love and how at the end of the day—love conquers all. With his latest creation, *Kacher Manush Dhure Thuiya*, Shaheen decides to showcase the intricacies of long distance relationships and how an embrace can dissolve the anguish within hearts.

Social media has been flooding with reels and screengrabs of the web-film, as the younger generation easily identifies themselves in Farhan and Sharmin. When asked about the reception, he said "I am really astonished with it. Students who are living abroad are inboxing me about how they could relate to the problems. I just saw a video where a boy celebrated his



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CHORKI



PHOTO: ARANYA KASHYAP

them, they were engulfed by a whirlwind of emotions. Though Sharmin attempted to escape, a single embrace washed away all the turmoils of their relationship.

"When we were shooting this scene, we played stock music to help the actors ease into the emotions. Fortunately or unfortunately, rain unexpectedly started, enhancing the scene visually but also causing disruptions to the shooting process. Both Pritom and Farin were navigating through a whirlwind of emotions as they transitioned in and out of their characters. However, when 'Farewell Love' played on loop, they were able to reconnect with the intended emotions," explained the director.

Usually, we see loud climaxes with violence or action and thus, the director was worried whether silence would resonate with the audience or not. "This scene is where the film transforms into a novel, leaving the audience to imagine the dialogue through the emotions portrayed," Shihab elaborated.

Violence took a back seat in this web-film, a fact evident in the introductory scene where Farhan chooses to flee with Sharmin instead of resorting to physical confrontation with the stalker.

"Violence had no place in this story," the director explained, echoing the sentiments

expressed by the protagonist in a dialogue: "Look at me, I don't have muscles, and you want me to fight them?"

The only semblance of negativity in the project, he noted, was manifested in Sharmin's verbal outbursts towards Farhan. "Her character needed to release pent-up frustration, having traversed a dark and negative phase in her life. Despite repeatedly calling Farhan, upon witnessing her brother's responsibilities, she comes to the realisation of her mistakes and how negativity engulfed her," added the director.

The film ended with the dialogue, "Sometimes all you want in life is just a hug." There was an interesting story behind the use of this words. "We were brainstorming with Chorki about what the story could be, we contemplated the idea of the characters drifting apart, only to find solace in each other's embrace at the end," explained the director.

Shihab elaborated on how his research in Australia shed light on the profound longing people have for physical connection. He emphasised that virtual interactions through mobile phones pale in comparison to the transformative power of a simple embrace. "Ultimately, I tried to convey through my project, whether to those living abroad or together, to embrace your loved ones because that's what makes us human in the end," he concluded.

## Kenneth Mitchell, 'Star Trek' and 'Captain Marvel' actor, dies at 49



Kenneth Mitchell, famous for his roles in the series *Star Trek: Discovery* and portraying Carol Danvers' father in *Captain Marvel*, passed away at the age of 49 after bravely fighting a five-year battle with ALS.

Mitchell passed away on Saturday, as announced in a statement from his family posted on X and Instagram. He is survived by his wife, Susan, and their two children.

In 2018, the actor received a diagnosis of ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a neurological condition leading to muscle weakness and paralysis. Mitchell had been utilising a wheelchair since 2019.

## Anupam Roy to tie the knot with singer Prashmita



Popular Indian singer Anupam Roy is preparing to exchange vows with fellow Bengali vocalist Prashmita Paul.

The duo, deeply rooted in the music industry, will unite in matrimony on March 2, as confirmed by Anupam himself to Anandabazar Patrika.

Their union, fueled by a mutual passion for music, has long been evident through their collaborative work as professional musicians, as per several Indian media reports. Anupam expressed his joy and anticipation, stating, "Yes, Prashmita and I are set to marry. While the celebratory details are yet to be finalised, we intend to honour traditional customs and share our vows amidst the presence of our loved ones. I am feeling happy and hopeful."



anniversary by playing 'Megh Balika'. I am really happy that we could touch people's hearts with it. Many people called the finale the 'greatest climax in Bangladeshi content.'

There is a saying: "When words fail, silence prevails," and this sentiment was beautifully depicted in *Kacher Manush Dhure Thuiya*. The overwhelming weight of Sharmin's frustration simply melted away as she met Farhan's longing gaze. As rain poured over

## NEWS

### 5 sections can put journos in trouble

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with the publication, transmission, etc. of defamatory information by paying a fine.

The judge said this while speaking as the special guest at a workshop titled "Cyber Security Act and Court Reporting" organised by the Law Reporters Forum at the Supreme Court Bar Association's South Hall yesterday.

Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif said, "We have seen tremendous intolerance among the two political parties since 1991. They don't feel that they have any way other than arrest and torture if any criticism is made."

**"We have seen tremendous intolerance among the two political parties since 1991."**

JUSTICE SHEIKH HASSAN ARIF

The judge said that journalists may become targets and victims when opposition political parties are suppressed because they may be perceived as supporters of particular political parties.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told the workshop that journalists can not be punished if they do their jobs properly.

### Music legend

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Hindi cinema and Indian pop.

He started his career with the release of a ghazal album titled "Aahat" in 1980 and subsequently recorded many hits like "Mukarrar" in 1981, "Tarrannum" in 1982, "Mehfil" in 1983, "Pankaj Udhas Live" at Royal Albert Hall in 1984, "Nayaab" in 1985, and "Aafreen" in 1986.

After his success as a ghazal singer, he was invited to appear and sing for a film by Mahesh Bhatt, "Naam". Udhas rose to further fame for singing in the 1986 film "Naam", in which his song "Chitthi Aayee Hai" became an instant hit. He did playback singing for many Hindi films after that. Albums and live concerts around the globe brought him fame as a singer. In 2006, Pankaj Udhas was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award.

### 34 eminent personalities

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In line with the recent events, AKM Saiful Majid, the current chairman of Grameen Bank, called a press briefing and claimed that the chairmanship of these institutions has been changed, the statement said.

The statement claimed that AKM Saiful Majid, in his letter, revealed his nomination for the chairman position of three organisations instead of Dr Yunus.

The statement said these non-profit organisations established by Dr Yunus are working to improve the fate of marginalised people. According to the revised article of association, Grameen Bank does not have the authority to change the post of chairman of these institutions.

The statement said that in case of any dispute, Grameen Bank could have taken the matter to court. Instead, the process by which efforts are being made to capture the institutions is illegal, immoral and distasteful.

"We condemn the one-sided, reckless, and defamatory allegations made by Grameen Bank Chairman Majid about Dr Yunus at the press conference," the statement added.

According to the statement, Dr Yunus has been harassed by various government institutions in the

### Sweden to join Nato

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Sweden was kept waiting as Turkey and Hungary, which both maintain better relations with Russia than other members of the US-led alliance, raised objections.

Turkey withheld ratification on Sweden's membership demanding tougher action against militants from the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK) it said had made a home in Sweden.

Sweden changed its laws and relaxed rules over arms sales to assuage Turkey. President Tayyip Erdogan also linked ratification with US approval of sales of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey, with Ankara now expecting the United States to work on securing the US Congress' endorsement.

Hungary's foot dragging was less clear in nature with Budapest mostly venting its annoyance over Swedish criticism of the direction of democratic development under nationalist premier Orban rather

name of summons, investigation, and interrogation. He is facing criminal charges related to civil matters concerning labour laws, and there is an attempt to expedite their resolution at an unusually rapid pace. Besides, various campaigns are continuing against him from different levels of the government.

"We think that there is no scope to look at the recent attempts to seize institutions separately from these events," it added.

Dr Yunus is respected globally for his work to improve the conditions of the poorest and most neglected people and has brought rare honour to Bangladesh.

The recent activities against him are sending a negative message to the world, the statement reads.

The signatories of the statement include human rights activist Hamida Hossain, former caretaker government adviser Hafiz Uddin Khan, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder, Sujan chief Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyer Dr Shahdeen Malik, Sara Hossain, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Professor Ali Riaz, Professor Swapan Adnan, Professor Firdous Azim, photographer Shahidul Alam, Dhaka University professor CR Abrar, Professor Asif Nazrul, and Professor Shahnaz Huda, among others.

Orban—who has refused to send weapons to neighbouring Ukraine and repeatedly criticised Western sanctions against Russia—on Monday again urged a ceasefire in Ukraine.

The accession of Sweden, which has not been at war since 1814, and Finland is the most significant expansion of the alliance since its move into Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

While Sweden has ramped up cooperation with the alliance in recent decades, contributing to operations in places such as Afghanistan, its membership is set to simplify defence planning and cooperation on Nato's northern flank.

Sweden also brings resources such as cutting-edge submarines tailored to Baltic Sea conditions and a sizable fleet of domestically produced Gripen fighter jets into the alliance. It is hiking military spending and should reach Nato's threshold of two percent of GDP this year.

### A violation risking the lives of women

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However, she continued to suffer for two more months with unbearable pelvic pain while the bleeding continued.

Unfortunately, Mithila's case is not unique.

The comment sections of YouTube videos discussing medication abortion shows a concerning trend—numerous couples are desperately opting for MRM kits to terminate pregnancies without consulting doctors and exposing themselves to physical danger.

What increases the risks is that the medications, which are not to be sold without prescription, are available over the counter in many pharmacies.

Many experience prolonged bleeding for up to five months, leading to hemorrhagic shock, severe anaemia, pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility and even death.

**WHAT IS MRM**  
In Bangladesh, abortion is generally illegal under the 1860 penal code.

However, menstrual regulation—a procedure of regulating the menstrual cycle when menstruation is absent for a short duration—was introduced in 1979 in the family planning programme as a backup method to support contraceptive failure.

The government introduced MR medication in 2014, initially permitted within nine weeks of a missed period. In 2021, the DGFP's National Technical Committee approved extending MRM up to 10 weeks of a missed period.

Currently, the drug is widely recognised as an abortion medication and 12 pharmaceutical companies produce it under various names, and they are available over-the-counter in pharmacies.

This correspondent recently purchased a similar kit from a dispensary in Mirpur without being required to provide a prescription.

Dr Raunak Jahan, assistant professor of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital's Gynaecology & Obstetrics department, said, "The kit includes two drugs—Mifepristone and Misoprostol.

Mifepristone blocks the hormone needed for pregnancy to happen while the second pill—Misoprostol—causes the uterus to contract and then flush out the foetus.

Also a member of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh, Dr Raunak stressed, "It is important to consult a doctor, as it

entails some specific conditions and criteria.

"Neglecting professional advice may lead to complications, particularly in cases of ectopic pregnancy [when a fertilised egg grows outside of the uterus], where MRM kit is ineffective and can pose life-threatening risks if appropriate procedures are not promptly undertaken."

She added, "Moreover, MRM is not suitable for everyone—especially for those who are dealing with chronic health conditions like cardiac, renal, or liver issues, or taking certain medications such as blood thinners or steroids, or have hypersensitivity."

The potential side effects of the medicines include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, high temperature, pelvic pain, fainting, headache, dizziness, and asthenia (abnormal weakness).

According to Bangladesh National Comprehensive Menstrual Regulation and Post-Abortion Care Services Guidelines, MRM has the potential to greatly enhance safe abortion access.

However, without safety measures, doctor's consultation and risk assessment, taking the medication could result in dire consequences.

**THE CONSEQUENCES**  
Data from Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) showed that from 2015 to 2019, nearly 50 percent of pregnancies were unintended in the country, leading to 60 percent of them being terminated through abortion.

DGFP documented around 800,000 yearly cases of menstrual regulation, but only approximately 150,000 were officially recorded.

Dr Raunak's department admits about 40 patients daily, with 5-6 facing incomplete abortions due to uncontrolled use of the MRM kit.

"These patients come in a state of shock with severe bleeding, requiring emergency procedures such as D&C or Manual Vacuum Aspiration to remove the foetus.

"Uterine perforation risks arise when such procedures are performed by untrained officials at hospitals or clinics."

She further said, "Even more alarming is that many don't seek help. They endure the bleeding, become anaemic, and consider everything is okay. They do not realise the internal impacts can be life-threatening."

Naripokkho's Project Director Samia Afrin, who conducted research

on MRM services in 2018, noted that despite the medication needing to be taken within 10 weeks of pregnancy, many women lack the knowledge of how to count pregnancy weeks.

**DANGERS FOR RURAL WOMEN**  
Under the DGFP's maternal and child health department, MRM kits are distributed among women while family welfare visitors are given training for counselling. However, some anomalies were noticed in recent years in several districts last year.

A 2023 study by Marie Stopes Bangladesh in Sylhet's Habiganj, Moulvibazar, and Sunamganj districts revealed that kits were not supplied to the union family welfare centers in these districts last year.

Monjun Nahar, head of advocacy at Marie Stopes Bangladesh, said, "We were surprised to discover no demand for MRM in these districts. We found out that due to the taboos surrounding abortion, women made discreet purchases from pharmacies through their husbands. These pharmacies lack strict monitoring, including counselling, selling with prescription, necessary follow-ups, or referrals to health facilities."

"These women end up at a health facility with permanent damage to their uterus."

Samia Afrin highlighted significant challenges in government health facilities—insufficient training, social and religious barriers, inadequate MRM kit supply, negative behaviour by staffers, and a lack of monitoring.

Dr Raunak, based on her experience in Narsingdi and Manikganj, noted a significant number of cases with uterus perforation. "Due to the taboo, many seek procedures in other upazilas or inexpensive hospitals, leading to complications. When unable to control bleeding, they are referred to us, often leaving insufficient time for preparation."

She believes sexual and reproductive health and rights education is a necessity to stop child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Dr Md Muniruzzaman Siddiqui, director (MCH Services), MCH Unit, DGFP, said they are aware of pharmacies selling MRM kits illegally.

"With the assistance from Association for Prevention of Septic Abortion, instructions for MRM kits for drug sellers are currently in the printing process."