

‘MAHARAJA’ is a new experience in non-linear storytelling

Nithilan Swaminathan's debut film 'Kurangu Bommai' (2017) introduced a unique storytelling style around an abandoned bag of money. Seven years later, he returns with his second film, 'Maharaja', which was released in theatres on June 14 and premiered globally on Netflix on July 12.

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

This film marks Vijay Sethupathi's 50th venture and features Anurag Kashyap, a significant figure in independent filmmaking. The most crucial spoiler is that you must set aside all distractions, including your phone, to fully concentrate on this movie.

Maharaja's story begins with a shocking accident, which might seem like a typical opening. The narrative then takes a few more minutes to introduce the protagonist, Maharaja, a barber who is also a devoted father. His daughter, Manju, narrates their everyday life, portraying a vulnerable father, a common hook in modern Indian cinema. The Maharaja-Manju family includes a third member, Lakshmi, a dustbin that suddenly gets stolen. To recover the stolen dustbin, Maharaja files an FIR at the police station. This unusual complaint leads to a mystery that transforms the film into a crime thriller.

Nithilan expertly lays the foundation of familial bonds and emotions through the characters in the first half, showcasing his remarkable ability to evoke human emotions. The character of Maharaja is vividly brought to

life by Makkal Selvan's (Vijay Sethupathi) impressive mannerisms and attitude.

The first half is well-paced, featuring unexpected twists that build up to the interval, leaving the audience eagerly

anticipating the second half. Nithilan truly shines in the latter half, packed with even more twists and surprises, proving that the first half was merely a prelude. His brilliance extends to creating a heroic persona for a non-human object, a talent evident in



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

his debut film. Transforming a simple, dirty dustbin (Lakshmi) into the core object of the show is remarkable.

The director's storytelling technique is exceptional, crafting a narrative that keeps everyone in suspense. The plot twists and turns are impeccably timed, causing the audience to question everything they believe. The story's depth, along with its exhilarating pace, ensures that there is never a dull moment.

We witness the political reality of the subcontinent through dialogues like "People who don't have education become the mafias" and "If someone is paying Rs 7 lacs for a dustbin, it means he has millions to hide." These lines resonate, especially with us, Bangladeshis, who can relate to recent scandals ('Goat Scandal' etc). The story brims with humour, struggle, and many familiar elements.

You'll find yourself questioning why someone would be so desperate for an old

dustbin, even though Maharaja provides ample justification. In the end, you realise that the dustbin (Lakshmi) wasn't that important, but by then, you're already engrossed in the film, trying to piece together the puzzles involving Selvam's role, his demeanour, and his origins, as well as the different appearances of the dustbin in various locations. Editor Philomin have done a tremendous job as the edit is the heart of this cinema. That non-linear rough cut has made this cinema a brainstorming experience.

Maharaja is not a flawless film. The slapping sounds, awkward lip-sync in dubbing, and low-quality Hindi dubbing are quite noticeable. The numerous plot twists and non-linear storytelling might need to be clarified for some. The appearance of snakes and Maharaja's unrealistic physical power lack logic.

The film doesn't feature any lip-sync songs or background songs, but it excels with its background music. The suspense score, dominated by jazz music, leaves a lasting impact.

The cinematography in the film is mostly wide-frame inclusive; even a single person's frames are wide too. Most of the scenes involve multiple characters, so they had to use wide frames. Interestingly, Nithilan employed five cinematographers for the cinematography.

Vijay Sethupathi's portrayal of Maharaja was a tour de force. He brought complexity and intensity to his character, making it both compelling and relatable. Anurag Kashyap as Selvam took the audience on a rollercoaster ride. As the antagonist, Kashyap stole the show. Though his emotional appearance while getting arrested was not up to the mark, he somehow made up for it in the ending. With limited screen time, Sachana delivered an impressive performance as Jyothi, Maharaja's daughter.

This movie is not just a film; it's an experience. It's a testament to what cinema can achieve when storytelling, acting, and technical prowess come together.

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Release date for 'Dorod' finalised

Anonno Mamun directorial pan-Indian film **Dorod** has officially set its release date for September 6, hitting cinema screens across Bangladesh and India. In this psychological thriller, Bollywood actress Sonal Chauhan co-stars alongside Shakib Khan. The film's initial teaser and first look have already been unveiled, garnering significant interest from film enthusiasts.



"Our goal is to make a mark not only in Bangladesh but also in the global market with the film. There is a sizable Bangladeshi community in the Middle East, and they are our target audience," disclosed Mamun.

Canadian PM Trudeau joins Diljit Dosanjh on stage



Indian musician Diljit Dosanjh made history by selling out Toronto's Rogers Centre, with nearly 50,000 attendees. Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau attended the event on Saturday. Sharing the moment on Instagram, Diljit wrote, "Prime Minister @justinpjtrudeau came to witness history in the making: we sold out the Rogers Centre!"

Trudeau, dressed in a white t-shirt and brown trousers, met Diljit before the show. The singer was thrilled to meet the Canadian PM, and they shared a hug. Trudeau also met with Diljit's team and crew, joining them on stage.

COUNTRYWIDE

People suffer as bridge collapses in Ishwarganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Thousands of people of several villages have been facing serious trouble since the bridge on Kanchamatia river in Ishwarganj upazila collapsed on Friday.

Villagers said hundreds of people of different villages under four unions as well as motorised vehicles used to ply on the risky bridge every day.

However, no casualties were reported when the vulnerable bridge at Saheb nagar village in Sohagi union collapsed on July 12 afternoon, they said.

According to sources, Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) constructed the concrete bridge in 1999.

Ahmed Ali, a resident of Sohagi village, said several thousand residents including students of different villages under four unions of the upazila are in great misery since the bridge collapsed on Friday afternoon.

Moreover, farmers of the area, which is famous for vegetable cultivation in large scale, are counting losses as they are unable to transport their produce to the nearby markets since collapse of the important bridge, Ali said.

Rokeya Begum, former member of Sohagi union parishad (UP), said some 40 students of her area including her

two daughters could not attend their institutions in the last two days due to the broken bridge.

Although the bridge was in a vulnerable state for the last several years, local UP did not take any step to repair it in all these years, Rokeya alleged.

Now villagers are crossing the river on rafts made from banana trees, spending Tk 10 for each trip, she further added.

Sohagi UP Chairman Kadir Ahmed Bhuiyan said although the bridge was constructed nearly 25 years ago, it had been in a dilapidated condition for the last four years due to plying of heavy vehicles.

Plying of overloaded trucks could not be stopped due to lack of proper monitoring, resulting the collapse of the bridge, said the chairman.

About 1,000 students of eight educational institutions of the locality are the worst sufferers as they are facing untold suffering while crossing the river, he added.

Ishwarganj LGED Upazila Engineer Aysha Akter said a proposal to construct a new bridge under the '100-metre Bridge Project' has been submitted recently.

They have visited the spot and steps will be taken soon to mitigate the sufferings of locals, she added.

Argentina's glorious era carved into granite

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2018 World Cup had left the team and one of their brightest ever stars, Messi, devastated.

These heartbreaks, however, had set the stage for an incredible reversal of narratives.

The turning point came with Argentina's victory in the 2021 Copa America, materialising against hosts Brazil amid an audience-less arena during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. It was their first major tournament win since 1993, following 10 Copa America editions in which they reached the finals four times.

This pivotal breakthrough instilled belief in the squad, and under the continuous guidance of coach Lionel

Scaloni, Argentina went on to end a 36-year wait for World Cup glory.

Since then, Scaloni had been preparing his side for a Messi-less reality, evident in their performances during the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, which was reiterated in the just-concluded Copa edition.

In the USA, the team showcased their depth of character with Messi being light years away from his signature best, playing to their strengths and subduing their opponents who came out all guns blazing in the initial phases of the match, as Colombia and Ecuador found out.

At the packed Hard Rock Stadium, Argentina faced a physically superior, well-drilled Colombia – coming on the back of a 28-match

undefeated run – but emerged superior through the courage and tenacity that a battlefield demands.

In the 66th minute, Messi was left crying profusely after an ankle injury forced him off the field. However, with the game finely poised at 0-0, Messi's teammates rose to the occasion, seemingly playing as if they had put their lives on the line to see their 37-year-old maverick playmaker smile at the end of the night, in what could well be his last outing in a major event.

"Leo is the greatest player in history. He wants to continue playing because he doesn't want to leave his teammates," Scaloni remarked. This sentiment was echoed by midfielder Rodrigo De

Paul, who noted, "He always wants to be there, but the fact that he's part of this team is the best thing for us."

Eventually, it took Lautaro Martinez, who started on the bench despite being the tournament's top scorer, to strike in extra time to secure a 1-0 victory. Martinez had also carved a redemption arc for himself, having been criticised right and left for massively misfiring in Qatar, leading to an overburdened Messi.

The triumph was not just about Messi, though. It marked the fitting end to two 36-year-old stalwarts: winger Angel Di Maria and defender Nicolas Otamendi. Di Maria, who announced his national retirement prior to the match, received special praise from his

coach: "His story is like a movie because of how it ended."

Scaloni, reflecting on their 'triple crown' journey, said: "I don't know if it marks an era, but it's true this team never ceases to surprise. They overcame the difficulties of a very difficult match, with a very complicated opponent and without a good first half."

From the depths of despair to the heights of glory, Argentina's redemption story is a testament to perseverance and the indomitable spirit of camaraderie. Rest assured, with the rock-solid foundation in place, even the skeptical fans of the Sky Blues and Whites would bank on the team to bring forth further fond memories.

People cross this broken bridge on Kanchamatia river in Mymensingh's Ishwarganj upazila amid risk, since it collapsed on Friday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Go for a time-bound roadmap

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through abuse of power in the name of being associated with her or by individuals in other high positions in the government".

He called her statement "timely and promising", especially

that action was taken against the individual; that such bad elements must be removed whether far or near; that taking action against corruption does not tarnish the government's image; and that zero tolerance against corruption will

continue.

Iftekharuzzaman said the PM's declaration to hold the corrupt accountable is significant for the government and the relevant institutions.

Saying the PM's statement debunked the often-heard motivated

impression that taking action against high-level corruption damages government's reputation, he added, "In this context, we urge the government to adopt a specific time-bound road map for the meaningful and effective implementation of the

PM's zero tolerance pledge and AL's election manifesto.

"By so doing the government can open the road to address growing public concerns about the enormous depths and breadths of corruption and impunity."