

Censor board shouldn't exist

TANZIKA AMIN



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Following a hiatus of nearly six weeks, Tanzika Amin is back on set, shooting for a new series on Maasranga Television. Directed by Nazrul Islam Raju, this drama highlights the complexities of city life.

Tanzika revealed that her role has an interesting angle—the character is a girl who's eager to leave the country, introducing a subtle yet distinct variation to the storyline.

Regarding her return to filming, the actress shared, "I spent some time abroad in London. Upon coming back, I noticed significant changes in the country. After settling in, I resumed shooting. It feels great to be back on set."

The *Bakul Fuler Mala* actress has also begun working on a new web-series. She mentioned that all the details have been finalised, but she remained tight-lipped about the director and the title of the story.

In the meantime, the former Lux star is eagerly anticipating the release of her film, *Omimangshito*, directed by Raihan Rafi. She shared, "I completed the movie last year, and it was submitted for censorship, but it has been held up."

Tanzika Amin, visibly frustrated, expressed, "After submitting the film to the censor board, it was shuffled from one desk to another, causing significant delays. We put in a tremendous amount of effort to complete the project, only for it to get stalled at the censor board

in the end." She added that with the changes happening in the country, everything seems to be starting afresh. When asked if *Omimangshito* would now finally go through the censorship process, she confidently responded, "It will definitely go to the censor board and be released. I firmly believe that."

The actress shared that the film's narrative centres around a couple who are both journalists. She takes on the role of the female lead, a character named Neeru.

Reflecting on her experience portraying a journalist, Tanzika mentioned, "I had played a journalist in a drama many years ago, but stepping into the shoes of a female journalist in a film after so long was a refreshing experience. The role brought its own set of challenges, which made it all the more rewarding."

When asked about her experience working on *Omimangshito*, the actress shared that the film was a challenging journey. She recounted various intense moments during the shoot that left her with physical scars. "I poured my heart and soul into this project. Even after cameras stop rolling, I found it difficult to shake off the story and character—I was completely absorbed," Tanzika explained.

With growing curiosity surrounding the film, some have speculated that it mirrors the tragic story of Sagar-Runi. Addressing this, Tanzika clarified, "The film portrays a story of barbarism, reflecting the many brutal realities in our society. It's the story of a journalist couple, and it's undeniably a heart-wrenching story. However, it isn't based on any specific individual's life."

When asked about the debate surrounding the need for a censor board, the actress expressed a strong opinion, stating, "I believe the censor board shouldn't exist. Filmmakers should

have the freedom to tell their stories as they envision them, without interference. A director's role is to bring a wide range of narratives to the screen, and they shouldn't be hindered by censorship. Films that were previously blocked, such as *Saturday Afternoon*, should now see the light of day."

The artiste further emphasised the importance of books and films as educational tools, saying, "People gain knowledge and insights by engaging with literature and cinema. Just as there are stories of brutality, there are also stories filled with positivity. If directors are constrained, we won't see the productions of quality work."

Reflecting on the present situation, she added, "I'm optimistic that something remarkable is on the horizon. So far, 99 percent of developments have been positive. Let's see how things unfold."



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Dhaka's theatre troupes unite to support flood victims with charity shows

The capital's theatre community has come together to support flood victims, with troupes such as Ethic, BotTola, and Anuswar, deciding to donate the proceeds from their performances to aid those affected by the disaster.

Ethic returned to the Dhaka stage on Saturday (August 24) with the play *Haari Phatibe* at the Nilima Ibrahim Auditorium of the Bangladesh Mahila Samity at 7 pm.

Meanwhile, BotTola will revive their popular play *Bannayetherium* on August 30 at 6pm at the Mahila Samity in celebration of their anniversary. The troupe has pledged to donate all proceeds from this performance to aid children in flood-affected areas.

Putul finally finds flood-hit family



Renowned singer Saja Sultana Putul has finally located her sister, Sanjida Akhter Kona, and the rest of her family members after days of searching amid the devastating floods in the country, with the help of the community.

Though facing a shortage of drinking water, they are safe, the singer informed yesterday. Putul expressed deep gratitude on social media, particularly to Lops Sharkar, who located them.

The ongoing floods have impacted 5.1 million people across 12 districts. Communication blackouts, especially in Feni, left many families, including Putul's, unable to reach loved ones. As the waters begin to recede, Putul hopes for her family's safe return and urges compassion for flood victims during this crisis.

NEWS

Hasina made accused in 12 more cases

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Rahim, an accused in the BDR carnage case, died in jail on July 29 of that year.

Advocate Abdul Aziz, son of deceased Abdur Rahim, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Akhtaruzzaman.

Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, the then public prosecutor of the BDR mutiny case, and former lawmakers Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Sheikh Helal, and Mirza Azam are among the accused in the case.

Hasina and 48 others were sued in a case filed over the death of university student Sheikh Ashabul Yamin at the Savar Bazar bus stand during the quota reform movement on July 18.

The victim's uncle, Abdullah Al Kabir, filed the case with a Dhaka court. In a viral video, Yamin, a student of the Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), was seen being dropped on the road by the law enforcers from their armoured van. He was still alive at the time.

One Masud Rana filed a case with another Dhaka court against Hasina and 24 others over the death of his brother-in-law, Babu Mollah, in the Hatirjheel area on July 19.

Hasina and 21 others were sued over the death of Golam Nafiz, 17, at the Farmgate area of Tejgaon on August

1. Rafiqul Islam filed a case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Nurul Huda Chowdhury.

Nasir Uddin filed a case with a Dhaka court against Hasina and 18 others over the death of shop employee Jasim Uddin, 35, in the Uttara Paschim area on July 18.

Upon separate hearings, the four magistrates recorded the statements of the complainants and asked the officer-in-charges (OC) of the police stations concerned to register the complaints as the First Information Report (FIR).

Yesterday, Rizia Begum, 36, filed a case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Saddam Hossain against Hasina and 33 others over the death of his nephew journalist Mehedi Hasan near the Kazla Toll Plaza over Hanif Flyover in Jatrabari during quota protests on July 18.

Babul Mia, 42, also filed a case with the court of the same magistrate over the death of one Jisan against Hasina and 26 in Matuail on July 20, while Mamunur Rashid, 34, filed a case against Hasina and 27 others over the death of his brother-in-law Yusuf Mia Sanoar in Shani Akhra area on July 20.

Another case was filed against Hasina and 13 others over the death of Mahamudur Rahman Soikot, 19, in Mohammadpur on July 19.

Besides, 30-40 unnamed police officers and members were also accused.

In Narsingdi, Angur Mia, the brother-in-law of the slain Jaman Mia, filed a murder case against Hasina and two others with a local court.

The court directed the Madhabdi Police Station officer-in-charge to record it as an FIR.

Local Awami League leaders and activists, at the behest of the named accused, opened fire on a peaceful student protest on July 21. Jaman was shot while overseeing the protest and later succumbed to his injuries on July 25 at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Rangpur, a murder case has been filed against 150 individuals, including Hasina and her sister, Sheikh Rehana, with a local court over a clash between student protesters and law enforcement agencies during a student movement in Rangpur on July 19.

A shop worker, Momdel Hossain, who was forced to amputate his left leg from the knee, filed the case. The court asked Kotwali Police Station to record it as an FIR.

In Pirojpur court, Hasina and 13 others, including five Rab members, were sued in an abduction case filed by Babul Hawlader, father of Sunny Hawlader, who was a victim of enforced disappearance in 2013.

The then Rab director general Mokhlesur Rahman was among the accused.

Now Social Islami Bank freed

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The new board was constituted as per section 45 of the Bank Companies Act, 1991 to protect the interests of depositors and ensure good governance, said the BB letter to the SIBL managing director.

The move to dissolve the board comes after a group of SIBL officials requested the BB governor to do so following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5.

Alam is said to be a close associate of Hasina.

The group and its associates took out Tk 4,200 crore from the bank,

which came under S Alam's control in 2017, according to central bank documents.

However, the actual amount taken is in the neighbourhood of Tk 15,000 crore, which would be about 41 percent of the bank's total outstanding loans at the end of last year, according to the bank's officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The amount given to S Alam and its associate companies has left the bank with a deficit in its current account balance with the central bank for more than a year.

To plug the deficit, the central bank provided special liquidity support to the lender without any collateral on the orders of former BB governor Abdur Rouf Talukder.

As of August 7, the bank faced a current account deficit of Tk 2,877 crore with the central bank.

The liquidity support was stopped after Ahsan H Mansur took charge in the middle of August.

At the end of 2023, SIBL had Tk 9,568 crore in default loans but it showed only Tk 1,644 crore, according to a recent BB investigation.

UN calls for stepping up

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The UNHCR welcomed Bangladesh's renewed commitment to the refugees, set forth by the interim government's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus. "We echo Dr Yunus's call for continued solidarity from the international community through consistent financial support and helping to ensure their 'eventual repatriation to Myanmar, with safety, dignity and full rights'."

"Bangladesh's humanitarian spirit, at a time of transition for the Bangladeshi people, deserves global appreciation," the statement said.

A dignified and sustainable return to Myanmar remains the primary solution to this crisis, the UN agency said, calling on the international community to demonstrate the political will to make this possible.

Highlighting the ongoing conflict between Myanmar forces and rebels in Rakhine, the UNHCR also called on the Bangladesh authorities to ensure that civilians fleeing the violence in Myanmar are allowed access to protection in Bangladesh.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also called on all parties to the conflict in Myanmar to end the violence and ensure the protection of civilians, said his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric in a briefing.

Guterres also appealed to strengthen regional protection efforts, provide access to conflict-affected communities and further support host countries.

Julie Bishop, the UN secretary-general's special envoy on Myanmar, is engaging all stakeholders, including regional actors, to move towards an inclusive Myanmar-led process for sustainable peace and national reconciliation, Dujarric said.

These are important steps to create conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable return of the Rohingya people to Myanmar, he said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that the ongoing humanitarian crisis and human rights violations in Myanmar are making life even harder for many of the country's ethnic and religious minority groups, especially the Rohingya people.

In a statement yesterday, he said the US stands with the survivors of the Rohingya genocide and is committed to providing life-saving assistance to affected members of Rohingya communities and those affected by the crisis.

Over the past seven years, he said, the US has contributed nearly \$2.4 billion and is also conducting extensive documentation of the atrocities and abuses committed against Rohingya and all civilians.

"Our support for the people of Burma in their aspirations for a democratic, inclusive, and peaceful future is unwavering, as are our calls on all parties to protect civilians from harm."

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the country continues to support international accountability for human rights violations and other abuses.

In a statement, it called on the Myanmar regime to take a different path — cease violence, engage in dialogue and grant safe and unimpeded humanitarian access.

"We support ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis through the work of the ASEAN Chair and Special Envoy and consistent with the Five Point Consensus. We continue to support the people of Myanmar and their aspirations for a return to the path of democracy."

Interim govt to be given

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According to him, Bangladesh has to clean up all the rubbish of the past and build a truly democratic country — a task completed by the former caretaker government led by Justice Latifur Rahman in just three months before it organised a fair election.

"We want to allow the interim government a reasonable time to reform all the institutions of the state to hold an acceptable election. But the time will not be indefinite," he said.

The BNP secretary general blamed India for the ongoing floods and criticised the neighbouring country for its position on sharing water from the common rivers with Bangladesh.

"Parts of the country have been affected by severe floods that were not witnessed in the last 15 years. This terrible flood happened because India opened their dams without any prior alert," he said.

Fakhrul also alleged BNP leader M Ilias Ali became a victim of enforced disappearance because he stood up to

India's water-sharing policy.

"The bilateral contract of sharing transboundary river water has not been established yet. They (India) are using water aggression as a weapon. Protests against this water aggression started from Sylhet which was led by M Ilias Ali. As a result, he was forcefully disappeared," he said.

Asked about the whereabouts of Ilias, he said, "We are not sure whether he is alive or not. We are not given any specific answer from the organisations involved but we are keeping up pressure to know what happened to all the people who faced enforced disappearance. We have earlier submitted all details to the UN. A UN investigation team arrived in Bangladesh to investigate the matter. We are hopeful."

Fakhrul claimed around 700 BNP leaders and activists were subjected to enforced disappearance while more than 1.45 lakh cases were filed against over 6 million BNP activists in its struggle for democracy since 2012 — which he said was "unbelievable".

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was freed through the mass movement but she never bowed to the power, Fakhrul said and added now the party is battling legally several cases against its acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Fakhrul accused Hasina of attempting to establish a one-party rule. "Sheikh Mujib was a leading figure in the liberation movement of the country and was in the government from 1972 to 1975 with people's support. But he decided to initiate a one party rule, formed BKSAL and dissolved all other political parties. Sheikh Hasina followed in his footsteps and finalised the preparation for a one-party system, but failed in the face of the resistance of the general students."

The BNP secretary general promised to repeal the Digital Security Act, which is now the Cyber Security Act, if the party forms the government after the election.

"In the previous regime, people could not speak out for fear of the Digital Security Act. Journalists were suppressed by this law. Now people have regained freedom of speech," he said.