

‘Now I can finally portray Yasmin’

“I was very young when Yasmin’s murder happened,” Mim explained. “I felt a deep connection to her story when I finally read the script last year. I couldn’t believe that such cruelty was possible. The script touched me deeply. Bringing Yasmin’s life to the screen felt like an important responsibility.”

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

It all began with a script that made her cry. When Bidya Sinha Mim first read the story for *Ami Yasmin Bolchhi*, a film based on the tragic life of Yasmin Akhter, the Dinajpur girl whose rape and murder by law enforcement sparked national outrage, she knew it was a project that mattered.

However, despite Mim’s emotional investment and the film’s social significance, the project was abruptly cancelled—on the orders of former Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Harun-or-Rashid, infamously known as DB Harun, a high-ranking law enforcement official, who wielded his influence to halt the production before it even began.

“I cried while reading the script,” Mim recalls. “It was such a powerful story, and I couldn’t believe this was happening in real life.” For Mim, the role of Yasmin wasn’t just another character to play; it was a chance to bring light to an injustice that had shaken the country decades ago. But the path to bringing *Ami Yasmin Bolchhi* to the screen was riddled with unseen obstacles—and the most unexpected roadblock came not from within the film industry, but from an official’s interference.

The actress recalled; her voice soft but firm. The story—about Yasmin, a young girl brutally raped and murdered in Dinajpur in 1995’s August 24—wasn’t just another role for Mim. It was a powerful, poignant piece that hit close to home.

“I was very young when Yasmin’s murder happened,” Mim explained. “I felt a deep connection to her story when I finally read the script last year. I couldn’t believe that such cruelty was possible. The script touched me deeply. Bringing Yasmin’s life to the screen felt like an important responsibility.”



The film, which was supposed to be directed by Sumon Dhar, had been in the works for years. It was a project that, according to Mim, needed to be told, not just for its artistic merit but for the social impact it could have. *Ami Yasmin Bolchhi* aimed to shed light on a dark chapter in Bangladesh’s history that sparked protests across the nation and changed how the country talked about women’s safety.

But this vital piece of storytelling never made it to the screen—at least, not yet. And the reason behind it? Not creative differences, budget constraints, or even scheduling conflicts, but a sudden intervention by an unexpected player: DB Harun, an influential law enforcement official.

Mim was in the middle of shooting for another film, *Manush*, in India when she received a call. “I was surprised when I saw DB Harun’s name appear on my WhatsApp,” she said, her tone still tinged with disbelief. “At first, I didn’t understand what it was about.

But then he told me that my director was sitting right in front of him and that the film *Ami Yasmin Bolchhi* couldn’t go ahead.”

The weight of that call didn’t fully hit Mim until after she hung up. “I realised then that this wasn’t just a scheduling issue or a producer’s whim. This was a direct order. The project, this important story, was being stopped by someone outside the creative world. And just like that, the film was cancelled.”

Mim’s frustration was palpable as she recounted the experience. “It hurt. We were under contract. We were ready to bring this story to life, a story that needed to be told. But we were told no, by someone who had nothing to do with the film.”

Director Sumon Dhar also confirmed that the halt came after DB Harun’s intervention.

“The young girl’s rape and murder by law enforcement officers triggered widespread

outrage in the mid-90s, leading to significant protests and calls for justice,” Mim said.

She knew that this project could have reignited that conversation. “I wanted the audience to see Yasmin, not me. I wanted her story to be at the forefront, for people to feel what I felt reading the script.”

But with DB Harun’s sudden interference, the opportunity to tell that story seemed lost. Harun, infamous in law enforcement circles, used his influence to halt the production, citing concerns about the film’s potential impact. Mim, Sumon Dhar, and the rest of the crew were left to grapple with the reality that sometimes, no matter how important a story is, there are forces beyond creativity that can shut it down.

Despite the setback, the actress hasn’t entirely given up hope. In recent conversations with The Daily Star, she hinted that the project might still see the light of day. “I’ve heard that the obstacles are clearing up, and we might finally be able to start production,” she said with cautious optimism. “It’s taken a long time, and I know the producer is currently abroad, but the fact that this project is moving forward at all is a victory.”

Even as she looks ahead to other projects, including her upcoming film *Digonte Phuler Agun*, Mim keeps the story of Yasmin close to her heart. “Some roles you take for the challenge, some for the joy of acting, but then there are those rare ones that feel like a calling. *Ami Yasmin Bolchhi* is one of those stories for me.”

Mim, known for her versatility in films like *Amar Achhe Jol* and *Poran*, has carved out a space for herself as one of Dhallywood’s most respected talents. But this time, her battle isn’t just on the screen—it’s against the unseen powers that tried to silence a story too important to be forgotten.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

NEWS

Shakib fined Tk 50 lakh for stock manipulation

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During the period, Shakib bought 10.6 lakh shares of the insurer and sold 10.2 lakh shares, according to the probe report.

In so doing, Shakib gained Tk 90.33 lakh and had an unrealised gain of Tk 4 lakh in that period.

Unrealised gains mean an increase in the value of an asset or investment that an investor has not sold.

The fine comes after the BSEC decided to cancel the appointment of Shakib, also a former member of parliament, as its brand ambassador.

Shakib’s e-commerce company Monarch Mart was fined by Tk 1 lakh. His business partner Abul Khayer Hiru, also a government official, was fined Tk 25 lakh. Hiru gained about Tk 41 lakh from the manipulation.

Hiru’s father Abul Kalam Mather was fined Tk 10 lakh while he gained Tk 16 lakh. Two business entities – Eshaal Communication and Lava Electrodes Industries –were fined Tk 76 lakh for their gains amounting to Tk 1.33 crore. Hiru’s family has stakes in both entities.

The BSEC also fined Zahed Kamal Tk 1 lakh for his involvement in the manipulation that fetched him about Tk 2 lakh.

Little to show for Tk 65,000cr spent

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2024 report, Bangladesh ranked 29th out of 30 freelancing destinations, falling behind India and Pakistan.

The adviser said many projects had not been completed on time, with frequent extensions causing significant delays.

He stressed the need to ensure justified extensions to the project.

He also recommended cost reductions, avoiding procrastination, and providing regular updates to ensure timely completion.

“If these projects are completed properly, significant progress will be made in the internet and telecommunications sectors, ultimately benefiting the people of Bangladesh,” he said.

BB won’t print taka or sell dollar to tackle crisis

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monitoring, checking daily transitions and all other activities. After taking these steps, the deposits in the crisis-hit banks increased by Tk 400 crore on Monday. It is a matter of great relief. Once the liquidity crisis is over, we will move on to the next course of action.”

If the depositors of Islami banks keep their patience for a year, all problems, including those related to the liquidity crisis, will be solved, Mansur said.

About the foreign exchange market, he said: “The way the dollar market is going, if it continues this way, there will be no more instability in the market. This is the first time that the dollar price in the kerb market is lower than interbank forex market.”

Bad loans are another problem for the country, said Monzur Hossain, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

“If the issue of defaulted loans is not fixed, there will be an imbalance in the monetary policy. The 10-12 percent defaulted loan figure that is currently being talked about is not credible. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly state the amount of defaulted loans,” he said.

AK Azad, former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), urged the governor not to increase the policy rate and interest rate, saying that such a step would hit the

Crackdown

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The adviser emphasised that the use of poly bags has been illegal since 2002, and actions will now be taken to strictly enforce the law in markets as well.

The secretary and additional secretary of the ministry, the director general and directors of the Department of Environment, and the president of Mohammadpur Town Hall Market Traders’ Association were present at the event.

businesses adversely and bring down the country’s export earnings.

In response, Mansur said the 9-6 percent policy rates (the lending and deposit rates respectively) were introduced in the past but it could not increase export; rather it has fuelled inflation.

Talking about previous mismanagement of the Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB), Romo Rouf Chowdhury, the newly-elected vice-chairman of BAB, said if an association is occupied by one man for 17 years, there cannot be an effective association at all.

“We will establish it as an association, make it functional and inclusive. We are going to have some sub-committees. Among them, there will be a subcommittee for reform and a subcommittee for policy.”

The banking sector seems to be the most uncompetitive sector, said Chowdhury, also the chairman of Bank Asia.

Matiur Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo; Fahmida Khatun, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue; Mohammad Abdul Mannan, chairman of First Security Islami Bank; Ali Reza Iltekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank; Aziz Al Kaiser, chairman of City Bank; Humaira Azam, managing director of LankaBangla Finance; Shah Md Ahsan Habib, professor of Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management; and Rushad Faridi, assistant professor of economics at Dhaka University, also spoke.

Govt publishes

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review until October 6, giving families, heirs, and representatives of the deceased the opportunity to verify, correct, or add names, addresses, and other relevant details.

Furthermore, individuals with opinions, suggestions, or additional information regarding the published list are encouraged to reach out to the relevant hospital or the nearest government facility, the notice said.

S Alam’s backdoor takeover attempt

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Founded in 1985 by Mohammed Saiful Alam, a relative of late Awami League politician Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu and his son former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, S Alam Group has grown into one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh.

S Alam is one of the four edible oil importers and processors along with three other firms (TK Group, City Group and Meghna Group) who together control 80 percent of Bangladesh’s cooking oil market, according to import data from the National Board of Revenue.

Globe was the third firm after City Group and Meghna Group of Industries to set up a plant to extract oil and oilcakes from seeds.

The firm, which had a presence in beverage, biscuit and dairy markets, wanted to invest Tk 450 crore to establish a seed crushing and solvent extraction complex to extract sunflower, soybean and canola oils, its Chief Finance Officer Shaker Shamim said in 2017.

Globe Group came into prominence when its subsidiary Globe Bio-Tech Ltd developed a Covid-19 vaccine candidate during the pandemic. It did not finish trials as the pandemic had already ebbed.

GEOL’S LOAN FIASCO
Harunur said the Globe Group of Companies applied to the Islami Bank in 2011 for a loan to import machinery and working capital to set up the edible oil company. The bank disbursed Tk 282 crore to the company in the first phase.

During the construction of the factory, there was a change in the ownership of the bank that stalled the funding.

Globe then invested Tk 1,200 crore from its subsidiaries to complete the project.

The company again applied to the Islami Bank for Tk 1,200 crore as working capital loans after S Alam took control of the board of directors of the Shariah-based bank.

But the bank did not provide the funds without any explanation, said Harunur. Instead, it collected Tk 76 crore from Globe as profit.

Harunur said they were able to meet with Saiful in 2019 after repeated attempts and he promised Tk 1,200 crore as working capital from the bank but it approved only Tk 550 crore.

After contacting the bank for the

rest of the funds, Globe understood that the S Alam chairman forcefully halted the disbursement, said Harunur.

“This move was aimed at making the financial health of Globe Group worse and subsequently grab GEOL and other Globe subsidiaries through a forced auction or other illegal ways.

“We were forced to shut down the company [GEOL] due to a lack of proper financing by the Islami Bank,” said the Globe boss.

The Daily Star tried to reach Islami Bank Chairman Obayed Ullah Al Masud and Managing Director Mohammed Monirul Moula but they did not respond to our phone calls.

S ALAM’S BID FOR GEOL
Saiful asked Globe officials to meet with him in Singapore in October 2022, Harunur said.

“We further requested him to approve the rest of the working capital loans. The S Alam Group chairman rejected our proposal and forced us to sell the shares of the company,” said the Globe chairman.

S Alam had already formed a company named Globe Refined Sugar Industries Ltd without Globe Group’s approval, alleged Harunur.

“I was forced to sign an agreement on April 18 last year to sell the shares of the company [GEOL] and the tenure of the agreement was until September 2023.”

Saiful wanted to buy GEOL at Tk 2,200 crore – Tk 1,900 crore in cash and the remaining Tk 300 crore was supposed to be provided in interest waiver by the Islami Bank, Harunur said.

S Alam paid Globe only Tk 228 crore and repeatedly extended the deadline of the agreement instead of paying the rest of the money, he said.

“When we requested them to pay the rest of the money, S Alam tried to force us to sell the shares of two more units of Globe Group, Globe Pharmaceuticals Ltd and AST Beverages Ltd, but we refused their proposal,” the Globe boss said.

“S Alam had deliberately refrained from paying us the entire amount mentioned in the agreement. Their main objective was to take over Globe Group illegally.”

S Alam men then threatened to start an auction process by declaring GEOL and Globe Pharmaceuticals defaulters through the Islami Bank, Harunur said.

The Globe Group chairman also alleged that Subrata Kumar

Bhowmick, executive director (finance) of S Alam’s Globe Refined Sugar Industries Ltd, was always putting pressure to sell the shares of the company.

The Daily Star tried to reach Saiful and Subrata but none of them responded to our phone calls.

FALSE CLAIMS: S ALAM DGM
Md Moniruzzaman, deputy general manager (DGM) of S Alam Group, was involved in the deal for the sale and purchase of shares of GEOL.

Contacted, he claimed that the allegations brought by the Globe Group boss were “false and fabricated”.

He said they were still unaware of the money damages suit filed by Globe.

“We signed an agreement to purchase the company at Tk 1,900 crore, and Tk 375.25 crore has already been paid to them,” Moniruzzaman told this newspaper this week.

“Since we made an advance for purchasing the company, there was an agreement that around five to six of our employees will be appointed to Globe Edible Oil until the sale was completed but we could not pay the remaining amount due to some reasons,” he said.

But Globe threw the S Alam employees out of the company after the change of the government, said Moniruzzaman.

He said that Globe was trying to take advantage of the current political situation.

Asked why S Alam established a company by using Globe’s brand name, the senior official of the conglomerate said, “We bought the company with brand value because we need it.”

Moniruzzaman also said Globe Refined Sugar Industries Ltd was formed by using Globe’s brand name for a “smooth transition of purchase” of the company.

He claimed they took Globe’s approval for the brand name.

About Globe’s loan fiasco at the Islami Bank, Moniruzzaman said that the Globe Group was a defaulter and that is why they did not get any new loans.

“Their business was not good and they failed to run the company, which is why S Alam proposed to buy it,” he added.

Bangladesh Bank spokesperson Husne Ara Shikha told The Daily Star that they did not know about the damages suit as they were yet to get any documents on the case.