

How ‘Banglalink Niloy’ became the ‘king’ of romantic dramas

ARMIN JOYA

From a reluctant actor to small-screen superstar, Niloy Alamgir's journey has been nothing short of cinematic. Over the years, with unwavering determination, he has emerged as one of the most beloved television actors of his generation. Amid his hectic schedule, Niloy managed to take a brief break from shooting. Braving Dhaka's notorious traffic and heavy rain, he drove himself to The Daily Star for an exclusive photoshoot and interview.

"I have to get back to the shoot as soon as we finish," he said, as excited colleagues—fans of his work—gathered around, eager for selfies with the beloved star. Niloy's latest project, **Kistir Sir**, released on September 23, in a popular telecom commercial for Banglalink 'Desh', which skyrocketed his fame, leading people to refer to him as 'Niloy Banglalink'. "There was no turning back after that. My path was set on television, but in 2019, I decided to give cinema another shot," Niloy continued. "I signed up for Kaushik Shankar Das's film **Punch**, which required a year of physical transformation, as my character was a boxer."

During this intense preparation period, Niloy paused all other commitments. However, after just nine days of shooting, production halted due to the Covid pandemic, once again shattering his cinematic aspirations.

"After the lockdown, Kaushik *da* wanted to resume the film, but by then I was fully immersed in television, and I didn't want to risk losing that momentum," he explained.

Niloy's hard work and passion eventually paid off. "It took time, but I did it!" he remarked, reflecting on his success as a dominant force in the small-screen industry.

The actor credits luck for part of his success, especially with the rise of OTT platforms. As stars like Mosharraf Karim,

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quickly became a top trending video on YouTube within just two days.

His rise to fame began in 2009 when he won a reality show as a young boy. "Part of me always wanted to be a silver-screen star," Niloy reflected. He pursued that dream, making his cinematic debut in **Bailey Road** in 2010. "I appeared in two more films, but neither made much of an impact in theatres. At that time, both the audience and the industry were hesitant to embrace newcomers. There was little room for experimentation or risks with fresh faces. That dream slowly faded," he sighed.

Soon after, Niloy realised that connecting with the audience was more important than the medium. "I made my television debut in 2011 under Chayanika Chowdhury's direction. From there, I worked in various TV dramas and appeared in multiple serials," he said.

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Chanchal Chowdhury, and Afran Nisho transitioned to the digital medium, he noted, "A gap was created, giving those of us still working on television new opportunities."

When asked about his favourite co-stars, Niloy shared, "The audience loves my on-screen pairing with Jannatul Sumaiya Heme the most, and we collaborate frequently. I also enjoy working with Samira Khan Mahi and Tania Brishty."

Niloy's wife, Tasnuva Tabassum Hridi, a brand promoter on digital platforms, is both his biggest fan and toughest critic. She particularly admires the chemistry between him and Heme on screen. "She always appreciates my work and offers suggestions for improvement. Like many viewers, she prefers seeing me paired with Heme," he revealed with a smile.

Over his 15-year career, Niloy has appeared in over 500 dramas, and that number continues to grow as he captivates the nation with his exceptional acting and charm. "I don't know how long this phase will last, but I certainly hope to rule hearts forever," he concluded.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



October Jam
October 3 | 6 pm
The Attention Network



Puppet Theatre: Invisible Stories
October 4-6 | 7 pm
Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



Salsa Sensation by Havana Salsa
October 4 | 7 pm-10 pm
Dhaka Trade Centre

1-MINUTE REVIEW

‘Sector 36’ unravels the horror of the Nithari killings

The film **Sector 36**, available on Netflix, takes on the challenge of portraying one of India's most terrifying crimes while keeping its audience intrigued. This crime thriller, loosely based on the 2005 Nithari serial killings in Noida, offers a gripping retelling of the disturbing case.

It begins with a disturbing scene where Prem (Vikrant Massey), an apparently unremarkable caretaker in Sector 36, Delhi, gruesomely dismembers a young girl's body.

Outwardly, Prem seems like a devoted family man, however, beneath this facade lies his sinister nature, as he finds satisfaction in killing. As the number of missing teenagers grows, Inspector Ram Charan Pandey (Deepak Dobriyal) steps in to lead the investigation.

Equipped with inventive plot twists, the film presents a chilling, unrelenting

narrative that isn't for the squeamish. For those who enjoy crime thrillers, **Sector 36** is certain to deliver.

In his directorial debut, Aditya Nimbalkar presents a hard-hitting look at systemic flaws in justice written by Bodhayan Roychoudhury. However, while Prem's descent into madness is effectively portrayed, the film does an okay job of leaving an emotional impact.

WHAT'S PLAYING

Heavy Is the Crown

Linkin Park's latest single **Heavy Is the Crown** from their comeback album **From Zero** is a high-energy track that harkens back to their earlier sound. Opening with digitised strings, it quickly launches into a powerful guitar riff and drum pattern. At 2:47, it's a compact showcase of the band's hard-hitting style. Mike Shinoda leads on verses, while new vocalist Emily Armstrong delivers intense vocals on the chorus and breakdown.

The lyrics explore the weight of succession, possibly alluding to Chester Bennington's legacy. Musically, it echoes Linkin Park's 2012-2014 phase rather than their earlier style. While Armstrong's screams are technically solid, some listeners might find them less emotionally raw compared to Bennington's. Although polished and energetic, some fans might feel the song lacks the depth and lasting impact of tracks like **The Emptiness Machine**.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story

HBO Max
The Penguin

Hulu
How to Die Alone

Apple TV+
La Maison

Prime Video
The Legend of Vox Machina

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN

Elegance and charisma — these are the perfect words to define the radiant beauty of Kareena Kapoor Khan, who dazzled in a breathtaking vintage Banarasi saree, custom-crafted by Amit Aggarwal, to celebrate her 25th anniversary in Bollywood.

The gorgeous star embraced a reimagined modern saree drape in striking shades of black and gold to create an exquisite off-shoulder gown, showcasing intricate craftsmanship. Shimmering gold Banarasi booti work embellished the drape, cascading effortlessly into pleats that evoked the timeless essence of a traditional saree — blending heritage with contemporary grace.