



# Adnan Al Rajeev's 'risktaking' pays off, lands him in Cannes

SHARMIN JOYA

**Set against the rugged, untamed beauty of Sylhet, filming for *Ali* was far from easy. "We set out to capture images that reflected the raw, scenic beauty of nature, but reaching those places was a battle on its own," he recalls.**

When *Ali* was selected for the Cannes Film Festival, it wasn't just a personal triumph, but a historic moment for Bangladeshi cinema. For Adnan Al Rajeev, the filmmaker behind it, the road to this milestone was anything but straightforward. It was a journey shaped by doubt, discovery, and the quiet courage it takes to start again.

He never set out to make short films. "I was never really interested in making short films," laughs the director. "I used to believe they weren't necessary for me — I was already working prominently in the industry with a tone of voice of my own. But filmmaking is a never-ending journey of discovery."

Last year, while attending Cannes as part of the producing team for the Filipino short film *Radikals*, he found himself drawn into a world he hadn't paid much attention to before. Watching short films on the big screen, he saw something different — pure, fearless storytelling. "They weren't just 'shorts'; they were powerful artistic expressions," he says. "That experience sparked something in me — a desire to explore new forms of visual narrative. I returned home with a different perspective and began studying short films, realising how they challenge and refine a filmmaker's vision. As they say, short films shape how you truly see yourself as a storyteller."

The result was *Ali* — a film born not just from ambition, but from a genuine hunger to tell stories differently, and to challenge himself in ways he hadn't before.

Set against the rugged, untamed beauty of Sylhet, *Ali* features Al Amin and Susoma Ranjan Indrani in the lead roles. Filming, however, was far from easy. "We set out to

capture images that reflected the raw, scenic beauty of nature, but reaching those places was a battle on its own," he recalls.

With little tourism infrastructure, Sylhet's hidden treasures remained just that — hidden. Bikes, boats, and long, exhausting walks became their daily routine. The team endured bad roads, blistering heat, and countless setbacks. Yet, even as exhaustion set in, there was a fierce kind of joy that came from pushing through. "Sometimes," he says simply, "the toughest journeys lead to the most beautiful frames."



The news that *Ali* had been selected for the Official Competition section in the Palme d'Or segment in the 78th Cannes Film Festival — arrived in a way that still feels almost cinematic. At first, they missed the call — an unknown French number flashing on their phones. "We honestly had no idea why anyone from France would be calling," he laughs. It was only later, during a video call with his producers Kristine De Leon and Tanveer Hossain, that the truth began to sink in. Even then, he found himself frozen, blank, struggling to believe it.

He was watching *Black Mirror* on Netflix

at the time — a show about alternate realities and strange, parallel worlds. "For a moment, I genuinely thought I'd slipped into one," he jokes. Tears came soon after.

The first person he wanted to tell was his wife, Mehzabien Chowdhury. "She was in a shoot and couldn't pick up the phone, so I sent her a video message instead. When she finally called back, she screamed so loudly that everyone on set thought something terrible had happened."

But even as this chapter opens, Adnan is already thinking ahead. His new production house, 'katalog', has started its journey.

"katalog" is more than just a company — it's our shared dream. For me, the ultimate goal is to develop my feature film under this banner. I also look forward to being part of Arvin Belarmino's feature projects — not only an incredible filmmaker but also my partner in 'katalog' — and supporting Kyla Romero, a brilliant director and screenwriter, in her feature journey."

Risk-taking has always been part of Adnan's nature. From directing *@18* to producing stories like *Mohanagar* and films like *Priyo Matoli*, and most recently *Chokkor 302*, he has never shied away from telling bold, sometimes uncomfortable stories. But it's not recklessness — it's something much deeper.

"It takes a lot of courage to try, to fail, and to keep trying until you get where you truly want to be," he says. "Taking risks is essential. I trust in my craft. If I fall, I'll rise again."

There's no arrogance in his voice when he says it — just the quiet certainty of someone who knows that the real magic lies not in the destination, but in the journey itself. "And right now, for me, that journey is just beginning," he concludes.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## Court orders AR Rahman to deposit Rs 2 crore in copyright case



The Delhi High Court has issued an interim order directing renowned music composer AR Rahman and production houses Madras Talkies and Lyca Productions to deposit Rs 2 crore in a copyright infringement case filed by Padma Shri awardee and Dhrupad vocalist Ustad Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar.

The case pertains to Rahman's track *Veera Raja Veera* from the film *Ponniyin Selvan: II*, which the court noted was musically "identical" to *Shiva Stuti*, a devotional composition by the late Dhrupad maestros Ustad Nasir Faiyazuddin and Ustad Nasir Zahiruddin Dagar, collectively known as the Junior Dagar Brothers.



## 'Mastul' secures Special Mention at Moscow Int'l Film Festival

Bangladeshi film *Mastul* has received the Special Mention Award (Jury) from the Federation of Film Societies at the 47th Moscow International Film Festival.

Director Mohammad Nuruzzaman was presented with the certificate on Thursday, April 24, local time, for the film's "humane perspective on everyday life."

Speaking from Moscow, Nuruzzaman shared that the film's premiere was met with strong appreciation from audiences, critics, and journalists. *Mastul*, which explores the lives of seafarers, features performances by Fazlur Rahman Babu, Deepak Suman, Aminur Rahman, Arif Hasan, and Sifat Bannya, among others.

# NEWS

## Allegations of corruption

FROM PAGE 12  
in taking money for transfers?" he asked.

"I know that most advisers are not involved in corruption, but some allegations are being raised, and the scale of that corruption is serious," he said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students' movement and their pivotal role in the mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina's regime.

Mentioning graft allegations against student leaders, he added that the students should have exercised greater caution upon becoming part of the government.

Some leaders of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), which spearheaded the 2024 uprising, are reportedly exploiting their influence in various ministries for personal gains, the BNP leader said.

He said his party has deep respect for the students