

Changing the industry, ONE HIT AT A TIME

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Fresh off the announcement of *Andhar*, touted to be the film which will have the highest post-production budget in Bangladeshi history, the ever ambitious Raihan Rafi dropped by The Daily Star for a fresh shoot and a cup of coffee. He seems to have some more surprises up his sleeve.

How did you manage to keep the cast of 'Andhar' a secret for so long?

Well, we have non-disclosure agreements in place – and we are very strict about them. We almost had an incident on the set of *Taandob*, where a crew member was found to be leaking snippets on Tiktok. We handed over the crew member to the police and found many more 'incriminating' footage, unrelated to the film, on his phone. However, it went smoothly with

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Andhar, since the entire cast was adamant on keeping it under wraps.

You mentioned having a huge post-production budget for this film.

Indeed – it will be higher than it was ever before – that too after being filmed in Bangladesh with no additional costs abroad. We built roads, lakes, and built a camp to shoot this film. Chanchal Chowdhury, Siam Ahmed, Nazifa, Tushi, Rehan, Mostafa Monwar, Afsana Mimi, and Gazi Rakayet – they gave their all, and now, it's time for the magic of post-production – which will take about a year.

What about 'Lion'?
Audiences were eager to see the rapport between Sariful Razz and Jeet. When will that be released?

I have quite a few films on the pipeline, so I won't speak for a particular one. We will release a film on two of the following Eids. I have signed with Alpha-i and SVF for further productions.

There was a huge cliffhanger at the end of 'Taandob'. When will you announce the sequel?

I haven't shared it with anyone, but we will announce a sequel this month. Whether it is *Surongo 2* or *Taandob 2*, you'll have to wait and find out!

Will 'Surongo 2' feature Shakib Khan?

(Laughs) It just might.

You've lost a lot of weight. When did you start becoming health-conscious?

After filming *Surongo*, I felt extremely exhausted and uncomfortable due to my weight. It was affecting my work. I made a promise to myself to look after my own body, and I started eating healthier and working out. I quit smoking as well. I have managed to lose 16 kilos, which is quite the feat for me. I would like to reiterate that our bodies come before anything – and I urge everyone to take care of their own health.

How do you come up with the concepts for your films?

It takes at least a year for me to bring one of my stories from the concept board to shooting it. I write the stories beforehand, and later pick what I want to work on after I've given myself time to think about it. I live, breathe, and eat cinema – I have already planned what I will make in 2027.

Drop a message for the audience.

What else can I say but 'thank you'? You are literally the reason that I've been able to do what I love, from *Poromon 2* to *Taandob*. I want to add that my next target is not to adhere to the standards of our film industry, but to meet international standards, as I believe that this is where we should all aim in order to take our films to the world.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSVED

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



'Monkey Trial'

Nov 10 | 7:15 pm onwards
Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA



Ali Azmat & James - Legends Live in Dhaka

Nov 14 | 5 pm-11 pm
United Convention Centre, Purbachal



'Sound of Soul'

Nov 28 | 3 pm-11 pm
Swadeshi Arena, 300-feet Expressway



TV TALKIES

THE WITCHER: Season 4

Netflix's *The Witcher* is back with its highly anticipated fourth season, the second-to-last chapter of the hit fantasy series based on Andrzej Sapkowski's novels. The season continues after the dramatic events of Season 3, with Geralt, Yennefer, and Ciri separated across a war-torn Continent. The season, adapted mainly from *Baptism of Fire*, explores how unlikely alliances form among outcasts and warriors as political tensions, magical conspiracies, and monstrous threats escalate. *The Witcher: Season 4* has consistently held the No 1 position on Netflix in Bangladesh last week, reflecting its widespread popularity. It ends on a dramatic cliffhanger, setting the stage for the final Season 5. All episodes are streaming exclusively on Netflix.

WHAT'S PLAYING

'Hate Me' by ELLIE GOULDING & JUICE WRLD



Few collaborations have captured heartbreak with such cinematic clarity as *Hate Me*. Ellie Goulding's crystalline vocals slice through the haze of Juice WRLD's verses; half-plea, half-defense – in a track that pairs pop polish with emotional rawness.

The music video amplifies that

tension. Goulding drifts through shifting projections of herself, trapped in a digital loop of obsession and memory. Juice WRLD, seated under stark lighting, exhales clouds of smoke between lines; each breath heavy with weariness, each lyric delivered like a confession he's tired of repeating. The camera – unfiltered

and unhurried, as though the song itself is trying to catch up to his thoughts.

Released in June 2019, *Hate Me* still resonates across streaming platforms, its mood undimmed by time.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix

Death by Lightning

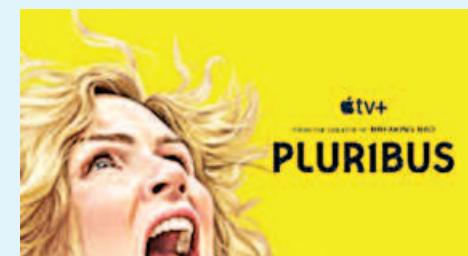


Hulu

All's Fair



Apple TV+
Pluribus



Chorki
Tomar Jonno Mon



Hoichoi
Anusandhan



STYLE STATEMENT

SYDNEY SWEENEY

The gorgeous Sydney Sweeney always brings her A-game when it comes to fashion, and this look is no exception. Recently, the actress stunned in a chic, shimmery silver dress that radiated pure star power. The metallic ensemble, adorned with shimmering star motifs, perfectly captures the essence of her celestial allure. Every detail from the dazzling heels to the star-shaped jewels – exudes confidence, charisma, and a touch of ethereal magic.

