

‘AATKA’: Raba-Nidhi swing at the bleachers

SHARMIN JOYA

Their creative journey began with a professional collaboration on the song *Jao Janina*, and soon they started shaping their work together on the web project *Khub Kachheri Keu* released last year. Raba Khan and Arafat Mohsin Nidhi not only share a personal bond, but their professional connection has grown even stronger over time. The real-life couple has been collaborating creatively for many years.

Last year, their debut web film, *Khub Kachheri Keu*, was highly appreciated by fans of the romantic genre. This time, they reunited for another project—a web series—marking their second collaboration with Chorki. The six-episode horror-comedy series, titled *Aatka*, was written by Raba and directed by Arafat, and released on January 15 on Chorki. The production features a star-studded cast including Abul Hayat, Rosey Siddiqui, Mousomi Nag, Sunerah Binte Kamal, Arosh Khan, and Shohel Mondol.

In conversation with The Daily Star, the duo shared their experiences, memories, and upcoming plans.

Raba begins, “The reason I wanted to make this web series is that it’s a story I’ve had in my head for many years. When I read the full script, I realised I had managed to write something so substantial. Interestingly, during pre-production, when the first draft was printed to share with the costume and art departments, I saw how thick it had become. I usually write on my phone, so until it was printed, I hadn’t realised its full size. Seeing it like a book made me feel a mix of disbelief and pride—wow.”

Arafat adds, “The experience was incredible. Unlike a standard 100- or 110-minute film, a series allows the story to breathe, to explore multiple characters. In this one, we had eleven prominent artistes—a true star cast—and working with them was eye-opening. Watching them bring Raba’s writing to life, especially senior artistes performing their first major scenes, was a masterclass in itself. Each episode felt like a complete experience, not just a sequence of shots.”

Raba continues, “This is probably my sixth fully written script, dialogues included. The story had lived in my head for years—I’d never actually written it down before. I’d discussed it countless times with Arafat and my brother Fahad, and I knew this project would require a big budget and full commitment from everyone—it had to be a web series. Each character has a special bond with me, and every scene carries a memory. On set, everything felt seamless. Even shooting the climax on day one felt completely natural. We were all so emotional—literally in tears. Special thanks to Arafat for creating the background score live while we shot the scene. Challenging, yes, but beautifully executed—I was utterly happy.”

Arafat emphasises the importance of having the writer on set. “Contemporary writers staying on set is invaluable. A writer ensures the original intent of the character is maintained during dialogue delivery. There’s no need to improvise because the writer can instantly rewrite if a scene is missing or the story flow isn’t working. During *Aatka*, Raba rewrote entire scenes on the back of the script to maintain narrative flow. She can explain the characters better than a director can, often at a much deeper level.”



He adds, “Working with veterans like Abul Hayat taught me what it means to stay grounded as an artiste, to remain humble. Every rehearsal, every interaction, was a lesson. And collaborating with artistes I grew up admiring—people like Saberi Apa, Arosh, and Mousomi—was surreal. It’s rare to get such an aligned ensemble where everyone truly understands the story and characters.”

Discussing their creative partnership as a couple, Raba laughs, “We’ve been

working together for many, many years. If you ask who’s the bossy one, it’s definitely me, but he’s far more of a collaborator than I am. Our connection is intuitive. In fact, the title *Aatka* came from our shared vocabulary. Both our families are from Old Dhaka and Mymensingh, and it’s a word we often use to describe something getting stuck. It perfectly fits the story—a family drama with comedy, horror, and

fun elements.”

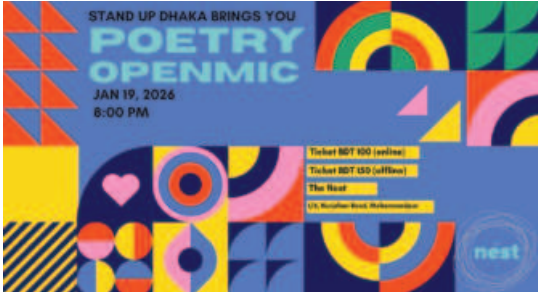
Raba also expresses excitement about Arafat’s transition from music to filmmaking while acknowledging his musical legacy: “While I love musician Arafat, and he has an established body of work as a musician, I am really looking forward to Director Arafat and the special theme he composed for this project.”

Arafat concludes, “For me, *Aatka* isn’t just a series—it’s the magic of collaboration. From Raba’s writing to the ensemble cast and my music, every element has been an opportunity to learn, experiment, and grow. The care and craft we put into it, I hope, will resonate with the audience too.”

Sharing his upcoming projects, Arafat revealed that he is composing background scores and songs for Eid films including *Prince*, *Rakkhosh*, and later Raihan Rafi’s *Andhar*.



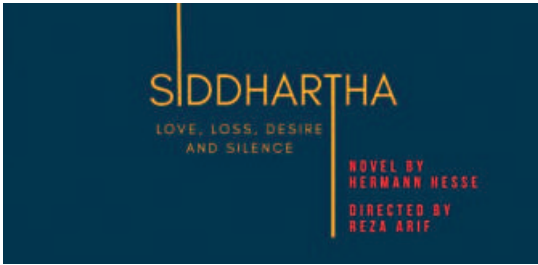
OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



‘Poetry Open Mic’
Jan 19 | 8 pm onwards
The Nest



‘Café de Volte’
Jan 23 | 5 pm onwards
Studio Theatre Hall, BSA



‘Siddhartha’
Jan 24 | 7 pm onwards
Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

WHAT’S PLAYING



‘Golden’ by KPop Demon Hunters

Golden emerges as the sonic heartbeat of KPop Demon Hunters, fusing glossy K-pop maximalism with a cinematic, shadow-tinted edge. Built on soaring hooks and razor-sharp beats, the track mirrors the film’s central tension — the dazzling allure of idol stardom colliding with a hidden world of supernatural warfare.

What makes *Golden* stand out is its sense of scale. The production is polished and stadium-ready. Vocals glide between confidence and vulnerability, reinforcing the song’s themes of resilience, unity, and power reclaimed.

As both a pop anthem and a narrative device, *Golden* works effortlessly beyond the screen.



STYLE STATEMENT Ariana Grande

At the *Golden Globes Awards 2026*, Ariana Grande took a striking turn away from her recent pastel-heavy red-carpet streak, arriving in a dramatic black Vivienne Westwood couture ball gown. The sculpted, off-shoulder silhouette—cinched tightly at the bodice before erupting into a voluminous skirt. The textured fabric and trailing ribbons added movement and tension. Styled with a sleek high ponytail, minimal jewellery, and soft yet sharp makeup, Grande allowed the dress to command attention.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix

Agatha Christie’s Seven Dials



Hulu

Tell Me Lies



Apple TV+

Hijack



Hulu

A Thousand Blows



Chorki

Aatka



TV TALKIES

His & Hers

His & Hers is a sharp and engaging TV drama that blends journalism, crime, and emotional tension. Released on Netflix in 2026, the thriller follows two estranged spouses, a detective and a news reporter, who are drawn into the same murder case, each suspecting the other. The series keeps the pace tight, the twists effective, and the emotions raw. With its layered storytelling and gripping suspense, *His & Hers* quickly climbed into Netflix’s Top 10, proving its strong audience appeal.

