Want to take our films beyond borders: MEHAZABIEN

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After earning acclaim at home and abroad with her two films already, Mehazabien Chowdhury is all set for her third big-screen project, ***Opolok***. Rehearsals for the film are underway, with shooting expected to begin soon.

The film will see her reunite with Afran Nisho, her frequent co-star from television dramas, for their first on-screen pairing in cinema. Directed by Adnan Al Rajeev, it also marks the filmmaker's feature debut.

Describing ***Opolok*** as a love story, Mehazabien said, "Alongside love, the film explores human emotions, the complexities of relationships and some very familiar feelings associated with life. I find the story beautiful and particularly relatable."

While her character offers considerable scope for performance, the actor prefers to keep its details under wraps. "I would rather not reveal too much at this stage. I want audiences to discover the character when they watch the film in theatres," she added.

"I want to work in different stories and portray diverse characters, especially those that allow me to discover new aspects of myself as an actor and leave a lasting impression on audiences"

Mehazabien has previously worked with Adnan on a few advertisements, but ***Opolok*** will be their first film together.

"I really like his storytelling approach, visual sensibility and the care he puts into his work. He is very focused and has a clear idea of what he wants to communicate. Since this is his first feature film, the project carries a special emotional significance for him. I hope we can create something beautiful for audiences together," she said.

The film will also bring Mehazabien and Nisho together after nearly four years. Their television collaborations have earned considerable affection from viewers, who have long hoped to see the duo reunite.

"We have not worked together in quite some time, but audiences have always wanted us to collaborate again. Finally, that opportunity has come, and on the big screen this time. It is certainly very exciting," she said.

Recalling their years of working together, Mehazabien described Nisho as a skilled, hardworking and dedicated co-star. "We have done so many dramas together, and audiences have given our pairing so much love. Over the years, we have developed a good understanding of each other's work. Although the medium is different this time, I hope audiences will enjoy seeing us in a new light and continue to shower us with affection."

As for the roles she hopes to explore, Mehazabien has no intention of limiting herself to a particular genre or character type.

"I want to work in different stories and portray diverse characters, especially those that allow me to discover new aspects of myself as an actor and leave a lasting impression on audiences," she said.

For her, the impact of a performance matters more than screen time. "What matters is not how much screen time I have, but how deeply my presence affects the audience."

Her larger ambition is to be part of films that endure beyond their release.

"My dream is to be part of good cinema and stories that people will remember for years. Our stories, emotions and culture have immense strength. I want to take them beyond our borders and reach international audiences as well," she said.

With preparations for ***Opolok*** progressing, Mehazabien hopes to begin shooting soon, seeking the audience's blessings for the entire team.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Hrithik Roshan becomes first Indian actor to attend LACMA gala



Actor Hrithik Roshan attended the 15th annual LACMA Art + Film Gala in Los Angeles on November 7, reportedly becoming the first mainstream Indian actor to attend the prestigious event.

Roshan joined international figures including Kim Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, Nicole Kidman, BLACKPINK's Rosé, Anya Taylor-Joy, Andrew Garfield and Michelle Yeoh. He wore a custom tuxedo by Italian luxury fashion house Brunello Cucinelli.

The 2026 gala, co-chaired by Leonardo DiCaprio and LACMA trustee Eva Chow, honoured visual artist Vija Celmins and filmmaker Denis Villeneuve, director of the ***Dune*** films. Hrithik's appearance marks a notable moment for Indian representation at the international gathering.

Presented by Gucci, the annual charity event brings together figures from art, film, music and fashion. Proceeds support the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's film-related programming, exhibitions, acquisitions and educational initiatives.

Events

'Inkography: A Chromatic Silence'



Alliance Française de Dhaka presents ***Inkography: A Chromatic Silence***, a solo art exhibition by Zain Eiffel. Moving beyond traditional colour palettes, the showcase relies on intricate ink drawings, stark tonal contrasts, and expressive lines to articulate complex narrative and emotional landscapes.

Date: Friday–Wednesday | November 13–18, 2026
Time: 3:00pm–9:00pm (Opening Day: 6:00pm)
Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

NEWS

UGC drafting rules for foreign univ campuses here

FROM PAGE 12

would be mandatory, although its form has yet to be decided. Partnerships with Bangladeshi universities are among the options.

The UGC wants tuition fees to remain affordable but has yet to fix a ceiling or determine scholarship requirements.

It is also considering requiring parent universities to send faculty members to their Bangladesh campuses alongside locally recruited teachers. The ratio has yet to be decided.

Other proposals include allowing students to transfer midway through their programmes to parent campuses abroad, offering joint and dual degrees, and facilitating student and teacher exchanges.

Abedin said credit transfer arrangements must be clearly defined before admission, warning that students who complete two years in Bangladesh could face financial losses if parent universities recognise only one year's credits.

He also said foreign institutions should operate on a non-profit basis, as local private universities must under the Private University Act 2010, and reinvest any surplus in Bangladesh.

He also suggested scholarships for disadvantaged students and partnerships between foreign and Bangladeshi universities.

APUB Secretariat Director Belal Ahmed said the association had not yet been consulted and called for private universities to be included in discussions before the policy is finalised.

EXISTING RULES DIFFER

Existing laws set different requirements for local private universities and foreign university branches and study centres.

Under the Private University Act 2010, local universities seeking initial approval must have at least 25,000 square feet of floor space, three faculties and six departments.

They must also maintain reserve funds of Tk 5 crore in Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan areas, Tk 3 crore in other metropolitan areas and Tk 1.5 crore elsewhere.

To obtain a permanent charter, they must establish campuses on at least one acre of land in Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan areas, or two acres elsewhere.

The law also requires universities to reserve 6 percent of admission places with fee waivers -- half for children of freedom fighters and half for poor and meritorious students from remote and underdeveloped areas.

Universities must also use their general funds to cover institutional expenses.

The 2014 regulations governing foreign universities, meanwhile, require branch campuses to have 25,000 square feet of floor space and study centres 10,000 square feet, in either owned or rented premises.

The required reserve funds are Tk 5 crore for branch campuses and Tk 1 crore for study centres.

Unlike the rules for local universities, the regulations have no permanent land requirement or international ranking threshold.

They also allow surplus funds to be shared among foreign universities, local representatives and entrepreneurs.

APUB wants the new policy to address these disparities so that foreign institutions do not receive preferential treatment.

PAST ATTEMPTS, NEW PUSH

In 2007, the UGC identified 56 unauthorised institutions operating as purported foreign university branches or affiliated centres amid allegations of degree-selling. Four challenged the decision in court.

The government introduced regulations for foreign universities in 2014 but suspended the approval process in November 2016.

The UGC later considered amendments, including a proposed ban on study centres.

A study centre linked to Monash College, approved in 2021, drew objections from APUB. Malaysia's UCSI University, meanwhile, opened a branch campus in Dhaka in 2023.

In March this year, the UGC cited the 2014 regulations when ordering unauthorised branches and study centres to suspend operations and apply for approval by April 25.

Mamun said bringing reputed foreign universities to Bangladesh could help reduce spending on overseas education and attract students from neighbouring countries.

He advocated "brain circulation" rather than "brain drain", with Bangladeshis studying abroad maintaining ties with the country.

The proposed policy would also cover Bangladeshi universities seeking to open campuses overseas.

The UGC also plans to launch a "Study in Bangladesh" portal, set up international offices, coordinate with relevant ministries and create a database of foreign students.

Prof Mamun said foreign campuses would be monitored to ensure their academic standards remained comparable to those of their parent universities.

"I hope we can finish it this year," he said.

Another day

FROM PAGE 12

upazila. The incidents took place in the Chandra area along the Dhaka-Tangail highway, one early in the day and the other in the evening, said Kaliakair Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahidul Islam.

Meanwhile, crude bombs exploded in several parts of the capital, including Banasree, Mohakhali, Dhaka University campus and in front of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court.

At DU, a crude bomb exploded on a road near the Teacher-Student Centre in the evening. Students detained two men suspected of involvement in the blast, beat them and handed them over to police.

Sub-Inspector Mainul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station said the two men were being held there. A bag was also found at the scene, he said, adding that police had cordoned off the area and were awaiting the bomb disposal unit.

In Banasree's G Block, a crude bomb exploded around 7:00am. Police arrested two men, identified as Srabon Sardar, 20, and Robin, 27, in connection with the incident.

OC Saiful Islam of Khilgaon Police Station said the two were active members of the banned Chhatra League. Legal proceedings against them were under way.

In Mohakhali, two men on a motorcycle hurled a crude bomb from the flyover, said OC Md Salauddin of Banani Police Station. The bomb exploded, but no damage was reported.

In the evening, another crude bomb exploded in front of the CMM Court. Police detained two men, identified as Faisal and Sukumar Halder, at the scene.

Police seized their motorcycle and recovered an unexploded crude bomb, said Mahbubuddin Mahmud Sohel, deputy commissioner of the DMP's prosecution division.

Another person was arrested in Shyampur, according to a DMP update.

Contacted around 8:30pm yesterday, DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media) Akhter Hossain said police had arrested at least 19 people in the previous 24 hours in connection with recent blasts and attacks.

Many of those arrested were linked to Awami League, he added.

G7 ministers press Rubio on Iran, Ukraine at Paris talks

AFP, *Paris*

G7 top diplomats yesterday began a two-day meeting in Paris with European foreign ministers set to press US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to ensure any settlement in the war with Russia is fair to Ukraine and steer clear of any new escalation with Iran.

The meeting of ministers from the leading industrialised nations of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States provides Europe and its allies with a chance to air concerns with their US counterpart.

Russia's war against Ukraine following the February 2022 full-scale invasion of its neighbour is grinding towards its fifth anniversary. And Washington is still not ruling out new attacks against Iran even after the defeat of President Donald Trump's Republicans in last week's midterm elections.

The meeting coincides with US-mediated talks with Moscow and Kyiv in Abu Dhabi, scheduled for today and tomorrow, on ending the Ukraine war.

Europe is concerned that Kyiv risks being forced to accept disadvantageous conditions and that the United States could offer Russia new security guarantees over the heads of the Europeans.

"For Europe, it is clear: we do not need to establish a new security architecture for Europe," said German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul as he headed to the talks, adding Europe "must have a place at the table".

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Sunday that Europeans would be represented at the Abu Dhabi talks, with France also participating.

Trump stoked fears of a US pivot toward the Kremlin by predicting a "very big" deal with Russia involving not only Ukraine but "all of Europe".

But before leaving for Paris, Rubio said the post-war security infrastructure of Europe is "one of the key topics that's been raised repeatedly in every conversation any time negotiations have been discussed".

"We obviously have to get past the conflict to get to that point," he noted.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga will be joining the talks in Paris for a session on Ukraine today.

Confront

FROM PAGE 12

minister Sheikh Hasina was also briefly discussed at the meeting.

Salahuddin told lawmakers that Bangladesh and India have an extradition treaty and that the government would take necessary steps under the agreement, in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and established procedures, if Hasina seeks to return to the country.

The discussion came against the backdrop of a recent interview Hasina gave to Reuters, during which she expressed her intention to return to Bangladesh and surrender before a court.

Media reports published yesterday also claimed that she had applied for a new passport and national ID at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi. The government, however, has yet to verify the reports.

Iran war

FROM PAGE 2

JD Vance was also scheduled to meet with the Qatari leader, according to a US official.

Iran yesterday defended a proposal to restart peace talks in as few as two days as the most reasonable offer on the table, after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called some of Iran's conditions "outrageous and ridiculous".

In a separate development, Saudi authorities, earlier yesterday, sent a text message to residents of the capital Riyadh briefly warning of an aerial threat, before lifting the alert minutes later.



An anti-smog gun sprays water amid smog and air pollution in Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS