

# ACE OF HEARTS

With a career spanning over twenty-years, Ferdous Ahmed has become a household name. With hit films, like 'Kusum Kusum Prem' and 'Ek Cup Cha' in his repertoire, he has left a mark on the showbiz industry. In this week's interview with Rafi Hossain, Ferdous talks about his career and how he managed to work in both Dhaliwood and Tollywood.



## || COVER STORY ||

**Rafi Hossain:** Welcome to *Uncensored with Rafi Hossain*. Today, we are here with the one and only, Ferdous Ahmed. I have been wanting to ask you something for quite some time now. Rituparno Ghosh once told me that he wanted to cast you for a role in one of his films. Supposedly, you were to play a very unique role in that film. Can you tell us about that?

**Ferdous:** I was first asked to work with Rituparno Ghosh on the film, *Chokher Bali*. I was supposed to play the role of the Behari in that film. But, when Aishwarya Rai joined



to when you started, has the industry moved forward or backward?

**Ferdous:** In some cases, we have moved backwards. For instance, many cinema halls are now being broken down. When I got into the industry, there used to be around 1,300 cinema halls. Nowadays, we only have around one-fifty. In Kolkata, many cinema halls were torn down to make room for cineplexes. That's what was needed to happen here as well.

**Rafi:** How was your experience while producing films?

**Ferdous:** I worked on three films as a produc-

the project, I was told to start shooting my parts fifteen days before her. This caused a problem, since I was very busy at the time. I couldn't commit to the film, and after discussing this with Rituparno Da, I backed out. He also wanted to cast me as a bold character in another one of his films. I was one of the very first people he told about it. He really wanted me to be the one to take on that role, and I even agreed to join the cast. Unfortunately, he could not finish the story before his untimely passing.

**Rafi:** Do you think that if you had done 'Chokher Bali', it would have been a huge turning point in your career?

**Ferdous:** Perhaps it would have been, but the thing is, I was already committed to quite a number of films at that time. I would not have backed out of *Chokher Bali*, had it been a matter of just one film or so. If *Chokher Bali* failed, I wouldn't have a place to come back to as I would have had to step out of a large number of films. That's why I think that sticking to those films instead of *Chokher Bali* was a smarter move on my part.

**Rafi:** You have been acting in movies in both Kolkata and Dhaka since the beginning of your career. Do you see any major difference in these two industries?

**Ferdous:** If you had asked me this question a few days ago, I would've said that the industry here is a little technologically backdated. Now, however, we have the same technology here. Another way in which we are different is that we copy films a lot. The industry in Kolkata also copies films, but they have a lot of new and unique storylines as well. Moreover, people are more interested towards content-oriented films in present times. Our industry lacks that. With time, perhaps we will be able to find a solution for that issue.

**Rafi:** You've had a very long career. Compared

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er, and I have to say that if you only want to produce films to make money, I'd suggest taking the risks into account – there are plenty. You need the passion for film production. Many people can't differentiate between a producer and a financier. A producer isn't just there to make money; they are passionate about films and are helping a good story make it onto the silver screen.

**Rafi:** Something that really astounds me is that no matter what the budget is, films in Bangladesh put no money into publicity. Why do you think that happens?

**Ferdous:** Not just publicity, the film's costumes don't have any budget either. For some reason, producers in this country think that when they're done making a movie, cinema hall owners will just come to them to buy the rights to screen their movie. That's not how it works anymore. You need to

promote your film before it gets released. I must say that alongside promotion, producers need to start putting more budget into costumes.

**Rafi:** Ever since the start of your career, you have been loved by the audience in Kolkata. What do you think is the reason behind it?

**Ferdous:** Once, a senior actor in Kolkata told me that I have this look that really fits their industry. Perhaps that's why they accepted me as one of their own.

Around the time *Hotath Brishti* was released, I did unique films, as well as mainstream ones. So, I feel that's another reason why I was popular there. I consider myself to be very fortunate to have been able to work in both the Bangladeshi and Kolkata film industries simultaneously since the beginning of my career.

**Rafi:** Throughout your career, what is the worst scandal you had to face?

**Ferdous:** I have never had to face any serious scandal with any actor. I have a very friendly relationship with everyone whom I have worked with. Basu Chatterjee once taught me that if anyone tries to pin me to a scandal, I should laugh it off. That's how it will die down. I see many celebrities claiming to be just friends with another celebrity. But, after a few days, they end up getting married. I'm not like that. When I say that I'm just friends with someone, that is the ultimate truth.

**Rafi:** From both Dhallywood and Tollywood, who are you close to?

**Ferdous:** Purnima, Moushumi, Rituparna and Rochona are some of my closest friends. I have worked with them several times and I love their company. I'm also good friends with Popy. Shabnoor is probably one of my best friends. All of them helped me become who I am today, and I'm grateful to them for that. Without their help, I never would've been able to be the Ferdous everybody knows and loves. I also consider Riaz and Shakib as close friends. So is Jeet. I can make friends very easily.

**Rafi:** Ferdous, thank you for giving us your time. It was a real pleasure talking to you.

Transcribed by Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

