

THROUGH THE EYES

ALI RAJ

With a career spanning over almost fifty years, actor Ali Raj made his television debut in 1970's 'BTV' drama, 'Bhangoner Shobdo Shuni'. He earned widespread fame after the release of his film, 'Shot Bhai'. After that, Ali Raj, who was previously known as W. Anwar, marked a spot for himself in the Bangladeshi film industry.

THE FIRST STEP

My journey as an actor began with working in theatre. But, it took a turn for the better when I started working for BTV, which, back then, only showed black and white telefilms. I worked in a telefilm, called *Dhakaye Thaki*, with Tarana as my co-star, and became a favourite of Nayak Raj Razzak and his family. He wanted to make a film, called *Shot Bhai*, and wanted me to act in it. So, he gave me a proposal to which I agreed, after giving it some thought.

UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES

Over my career, I have made lots of fun memories. My whole life is filled with anecdotes of wonderful experiences. A few of my favourite memories are with actor Humayun Faridi, who was only five years older than me. While working together in *Ayna* and *Bhangoner Shobdo Shuni*, whenever we rode the rickshaw together, our fans would often notice us. I remember the times when neither of us were financially independent and enjoyed the simple things

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in life, like a cup of tea and shingara in the BTV canteen. I cherish the time I shared with him.

MOTIVATORS OF LIFE

I come from suburban areas. I used to participate in stage plays back in fourth grade. I always dreamed of coming to Dhaka and performing in TV dramas. Finally, I achieved my dream. At that time, Anwar Hossain Bulu used to be the cameraman of BTV. He helped me a lot, and was a friend of mine. He even made all the arrangements for my interview. His contribution to my success is far greater than anyone else's. My success story would be incomplete without mentioning my family. They were really supportive and encouraged me a lot. It would've been impossible for me to become a successful

actor without their encouragement. I'm truly grateful to them.

TURNING POINT

I personally feel that every film that I've done has been a turning point for me. We must bear in mind that no one makes bad films on purpose. Everyone is always positive about their film's success, even though that doesn't happen all the time. Moreover, we, as an audience, judge a film based on its popularity. A film can often be promising, but a few bad reviews discourage us from watching it, and it ultimately becomes a flop.

LEISURE

I don't have leisure time. I'm always working. I get a call whenever there is a talk about a new film, and I say yes to it if I find it's suitable for me. But, if I ever get some time off work, I spend it with my family.

READING INSPIRATIONS

My favorite writer is Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. There was a time when I used to read his books a lot. I was a big bookworm once. But, I don't have that practice anymore due to the shortage of time.

FAVOURITES FROM THE FIELD

From present day actors, I really like Zahid Hasan, Chanchal Chowdhury and Mosharraf Karim. But, my overall favourites are Afzal Hossain, Abul Khayer, Anwar Hossain, Asaduzzaman Noor and Ferdousi Majumdar. Their acting has always inspired me. I got the opportunity to work with Anwar Hossain, and I consider myself lucky to have been able to do that.

PREFERRED ROLES

Actually, my roles don't depend on me, but rather the directors. I have played all kinds of characters, be it a villain, a comedian or a romantic soul. I did intense roles as well. I'm comfortable with all of them. I have gained a lot from my life, and have no regrets.

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Transcribed by Reina Ahmed
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