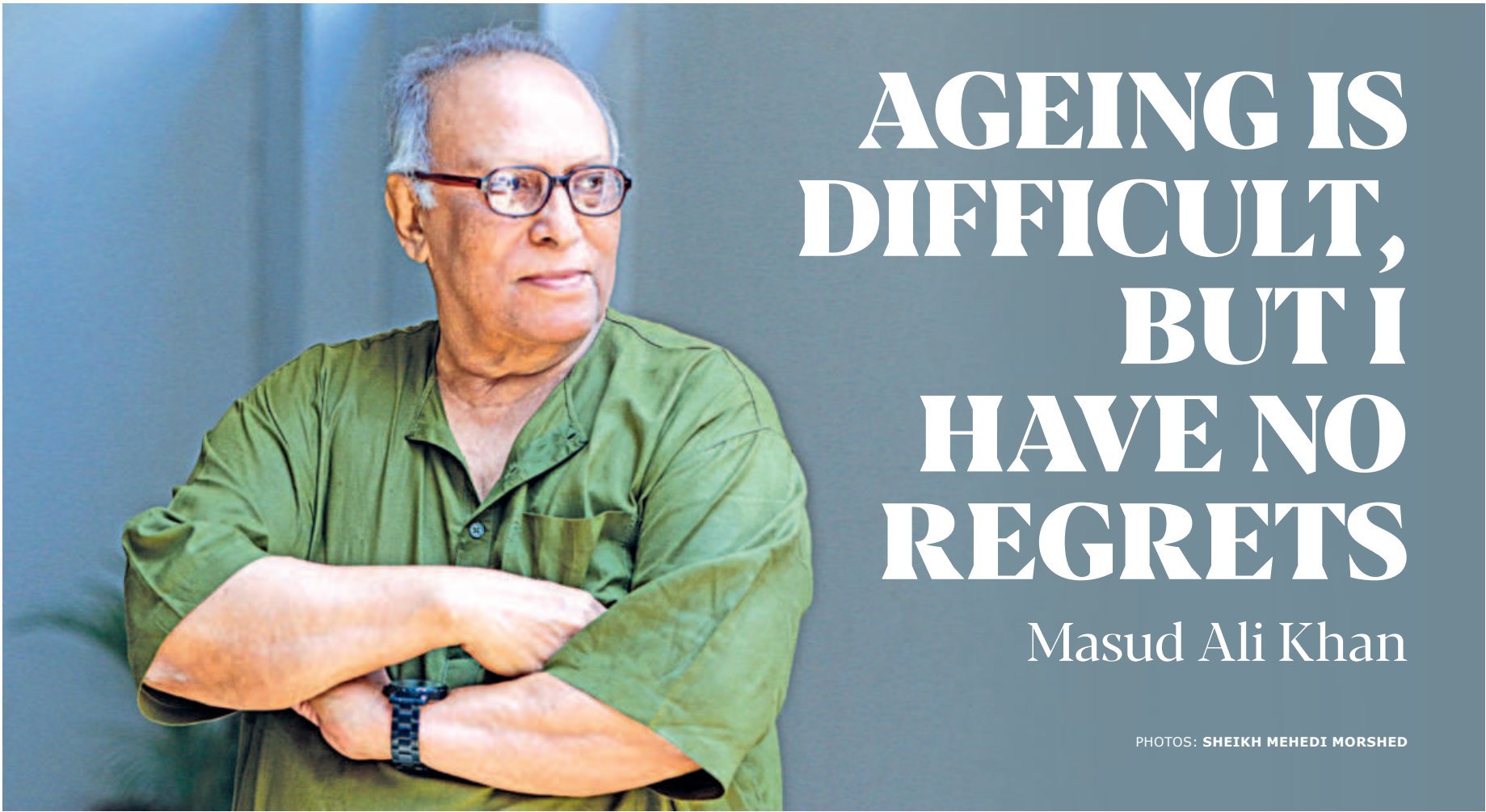




AGEING IS DIFFICULT, BUT I HAVE NO REGRETS

Masud Ali Khan

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

I don't care about my age. It is definitely a big deal that I am alive, because I am grateful that the Almighty has kept me alive. Thinking about my age makes things more difficult and is saddening.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Masud Ali Khan is a timeless figure in the arena of showbiz. The renowned actor came to the forefront of the entertainment industry through his many timeless dramas such as *Kul nai Kinar nai*, *Ei Shob Din Ratri*, *Kothao Keu Nei*, and many more.

He also worked in some critically acclaimed films, and was also a presence on the stage at one point. However, now, the actor has been away from the world of acting for some time. The artiste will turn 93 on December 1.

With the artist's birthday drawing closer, The Daily Star spoke with Masud Ali Khan to see how the artiste has been doing.

Do you have any regrets in life?

No, I don't have any regrets. I don't really worry about what I could not achieve. Rather, I am happy with what I have got. I believe that God has showered me with the love of the masses. How many people get this sort of love in their life? This is probably the greatest achievement of an actor's life. I am grateful to the Almighty for still keeping me alive and to the people for

giving me so much love and respect.

How long has it been since you were last able to work as an actor?

I haven't been able to act for four years now. The last thing I was able to be a part of, was an episode of *Ityadi*, one year ago. But I have not worked in a drama or series for four years. I really want to act; however I am no longer able to. Having spent my entire life acting, it is difficult to stay away from it, particularly because so many people I know are involved in this profession. It does sadden me quite a lot that I am no longer able to act.

How do you spend your free time?

Eight years ago, I fell and broke my hip. Since then, I have been stuck home a lot and don't get to go anywhere. So, most of my time is spent at home. In order to pass the time, I usually read books, watch television, read the newspaper, listen to music and so on.

Are there any specific musicians or bands that you listen to time and time again?

Yes, Manna Dey is one of my favourite artists, so I find myself listening to his songs over and

over again. For a long time now, his voice and music make me gravitate towards it.

December 1 marks your birthday. 92 years of your life has already passed, what are your feelings about this?

I don't care about my age. It is definitely a big deal that I am alive, because I am grateful that the Almighty has kept me alive. Thinking about my age makes things more difficult and is saddening. Someday, we all have to leave this world behind. Whoever is born, must die. But I try and avoid thinking about my age.

How often do you visit your village?

I visited my village after quite a long time recently. The reason I went to the village, is because I wanted to feel good. However, I felt worse after going there. None of my childhood friends are alive anymore. All of the people around my age are no longer here. There are no relatives either.

I only found one person, called Mujib Mia. He is a year older than me and is like an older brother from the village. I shared many stories with him. But, to be honest, there is no one else I can think of.

Taylor Swift sweeps American Music Awards with six wins

Pop superstar Taylor Swift dominated the American Music Awards on Sunday, winning six awards she was nominated for, including the most prestigious Artiste of the Year at the world's largest fan-voted ceremony.

The singer thanked voters for supporting her after releasing four original albums and two re-recordings in the last three years.

"I cannot express how unbelievable it is to me that I still do this and that you still care," she said on stage at the awards show in Los Angeles.

In the Artiste of the Year category, the 32-year-old singer triumphed over formidable names including Beyonce, Harry Styles, The Weeknd, Drake, Adele and Bad Bunny.

She has been making new versions of albums from her past after a dispute with her former record label.



I fought corruption and beat it: Nipun

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for actress Nipun Akter to perform the duties of General Secretary of Bangladesh Film Artistes' Association (BFAA).

The apex court also suspended the High Court verdict that declared Zayed Khan's candidacy as valid. Speaking to The Daily Star after this momentous verdict, Nipun said, "I cannot put into words how I am feeling today. I fought corruption and was able to beat it. This feeling alone is amazing. Now, I can freely work in the Film Artists' Association. I will finally be able to do all the work that I was wrongfully prevented from doing."



NEWS

Bright meteor

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shower, which is currently active.

"But this bolide belongs to another swarm that is also active at the same time -- the northern Taurids," the organisation said on its website.

"The Taurids do not produce as many meteors as the Leonids but the Taurids occasionally produce very powerful meteors, like this one," it added.

Stop sale

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to tackle challenges ranging from violent extremism to illegal fishing to human trafficking.

Japanese Ambassador Ito Naoki said Japan is already working on improving infrastructure, developing economies, and strengthening security in the Bay of Bengal as part of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).

Japan will play a larger role for the development, peace and stability of Bangladesh and in the region, through FOIP, he said.

Naoki said FOIP does not exclude a country. It wants to ensure transparency in international financing, openness, and projects based on true need of any country.

Bangladesh shares the values of free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific, he said, adding, "We should not allow the Rohingya population to destabilise the region."

UK High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson said the UK has a historic relationship with Bangladesh and that is now evolving more into one involving trade and investment as the country has made significant economic progress.

He said the key for Bangladesh is to continue to grow maintaining rules-based international trade as its economy is largely dependent on exports.

Dickson stressed the need for improving the country's institutional quality so that foreign investors come here and invest and be comfortable.

He said the key to institutional quality is improving democratic system, which includes fair and transparent elections.

"I hope that is what we will see next year. That is very much in the country's own interest."

In search of cheaper homes

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(CAB), house rent in Dhaka has shot up by 15.90 percent in the last three years (2019-2021).

CAB data shows the rent of a 1,200 square feet house in the capital was Tk 24,590 in 2019, which increased to Tk 26,520 in 2020 and Tk 28,500 in 2021.

There is, however, no survey or data by any organisation on how many people have moved to cheaper homes over the last one year.

The Daily Star talked to 23 residents of Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Kalyanpur, Moghbazar and Azimpur -- five major areas where a large number of people from limited income groups reside -- and found that 16 of them were shifting homes, while seven others were considering it.

Residents of these areas say they have been seeing a spike in the number of 'To-Let' signs hung on the gates of many houses in their neighborhoods for the past seven to eight months.

Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Eastern Housing in Mirpur, said, "People shift homes mostly in December and January, but we're seeing a comparatively higher number of To-Let signs for the past seven months or so, which is unusual."

A few movers have said they too were witnessing a rise in the number of people shifting homes.

Redoan Hossain, owner of Bengal Movers, said, "For the last six to seven months, we are seeing a rise in the number of people shifting from areas with higher rents to those with lower ones."

A MOVE TO READJUST EXPENSES

Several tenants told this newspaper that they were forced to move as they could no longer keep up with daily expenses despite cutting back on purchases of some food and non-essential items.

Farzana Mahbuba, a mother of two, had to shift to a low-rent flat on Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur from Mohammadia Housing in July. The rent of the three-bedroom flat is Tk 18,000 a month.

Her previous home had four bedrooms, and the building had a lift.

"I had to pay Tk 24,000 as rent and other service charges. Moving to the new flat saves me Tk 6,000, which I can now spend on buying essential commodities," said Farzana, who left her job four years ago.

She runs her family with the money her husband sends home from abroad and whatever savings she had.

Rafiqul Alam, who sells electronics in Old Dhaka's Nawabpur, is facing a similar situation.

He had to move to a smaller, two-room flat in Khilgaon's South Goran area on October 1, as he could no longer meet his expenses with a monthly income ranging between Tk 22,000 and Tk 25,000.

"The rent of the new flat is Tk 10,000. I used to pay Tk 12,500 for the previous one ... Apart from my family expenses, I need to take care of my elderly parents living in the village ... The Tk 2,500 that I'm saving after moving to the new flat is helping me cover other costs."

Shamim Ahmed, a private job holder in Mirpur, said, "If the prices continue to rise, we will have no option but to shift to our village homes ultimately."

EFFECTS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Ghulam Rahman, president of CAB, said many of the Dhaka dwellers are being compelled to move to cheaper housing and this is having a negative effect on their quality of life.

He suggests reining in the prices of essentials and creating more employment opportunities as ways to ease the burden on people.

"The government enacted a law to regulate house rents a long time ago. But it did not make any difference," Ghulam said.

In 1991, Bangladesh enacted the House Rent Control Act to ensure house rents are affordable, giving some restrictions on the increase of rent.

Iran intensifies deadly crackdown in Kurdish regions

AFP, Paris

Iranian security forces were using heavy weapons to suppress protests in Kurdish-populated regions in Iran's west yesterday, intensifying a crackdown that has killed a dozen people over the last 24 hours, rights groups said.

The Kurdish-populated provinces of western and northwestern Iran have been major hubs of protest since the onset of the movement sparked by the death in September of young Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested by morality police in Tehran.

PM lauds military

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development, but the pandemic, the war and sanctions have put the country largely into trouble. Economic recession is now seen everywhere, including the UK, the US and Europe, she added.

"In this situation, our economy still remains vibrant and is moving. But with cooperation from all, we would definitely be able to overcome this situation," said Hasina.

Focusing on her government's steps to modernise the armed forces, the PM said she has developed every force and built up every institute so that the army, navy and air force can move keeping up with the rest of the world as the Armed Forces of Bangladesh are working in the UN peacekeeping missions.

Now Bangladesh is the largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations, she added.

PM's Security Affairs Adviser Major Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and the chiefs of the three forces were present.

Children's author

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Channel One from 2007 to 2008 before becoming the chief executive officer of several television channels towards the end of his career.

He was also the host of "Hello Apnake Bolchhi," the country's first live show.

For his contributions to children's literature, Imam received Bangla Academy Literature Award (2001) and Shishu Academy Children's Literature Award (2012), among others.

As a children's author, he visited Japan in 2004 at the invitation of the Japan Foundation.

Another SP- rank

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Earlier, the ministry sent two additional deputy inspector generals and three SPs into retirement on October 18 and October 31.

On October 16, the government also showed information and broadcasting secretary Mokbul Hossain the door on the same ground.

Like the previous orders, the latest circular invoked section 45 of Bangladesh Service Rules, 2018.

According to the section, upon the president's approval, the government can send an employee, who has completed 25 years of service, into retirement for public interest, without showing any specific reason.

Dhaka seeks Moscow's help

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In reply, Lavrov assured Momen he would talk with Myanmar.

Lavrov was scheduled to visit Bangladesh Wednesday, mainly to attend the 22nd IORA Council of Ministers meeting, to be held in Dhaka Thursday.

Russia is a dialogue partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) while Bangladesh is the current chair of the group.

Momen highlighted the role of the Soviet Union in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and said that Dhaka will always remember it with gratitude.

Among other things, the two ministers also discussed the cooperation between Bangladesh and Russia in the United Nations and other international organizations.

The Russian foreign minister greeted the Bangladesh prime minister on behalf of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

On Sunday, Momen said the increased activities of Russia due to the situation in Ukraine might be the reason behind the revised decision taken by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

"I can understand it. They are very busy. Their activities due to the war have increased to a large extent.

Maybe for that reason he is unable to come," Momen told reporters after attending a programme in a Dhaka hotel.

The foreign minister said the Russian side in a diplomatic communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed that the Russian foreign minister is unable to come.

The IORA Council of Ministers meeting, to be hosted by Bangladesh, will be preceded by the 24th meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, to be held on Tuesday-Wednesday.

The IORA is an inter-governmental organisation aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region through its 23 member states and 10 dialogue partners.

IORA member states are Australia, Bangladesh, Union of Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The 23 member states of IORA and 10 dialogue partners are expected to join the ministerial and senior official meetings.

China reports more Covid deaths as infections surge

AFP, Beijing

China reported two new deaths from Covid-19 yesterday, both elderly Beijing residents, as several major cities persisted with strict virus curbs despite a much-touted recent loosening.

The last major economy wedded to a zero-Covid policy, Chinese authorities have continued to impose snap lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines in response to emerging outbreaks.

Despite the central government this month announcing its most significant easing of the measures so far, authorities in many areas have stuck to hardline curbs as the number of new cases has spiked.

Yesterday's deaths involved a 91-year-old woman with a history of stroke and Alzheimer's disease, and

an 88-year-old man with a history of cancer, bronchitis and stroke, local authorities said.

On Sunday, Beijing announced China's first Covid fatality since May, an 87-year-old man whose mild case worsened after he contracted a bacterial infection.

New cases in the capital jumped to 962 yesterday from 621 the day before, as authorities maintained a patchwork of restrictions in an effort to extinguish emerging flare-ups.

Nearly 600 areas of the city are currently "high risk", a designation that typically requires residents to isolate for several days in their housing units or move to state quarantine facilities.

In some neighbourhoods, schools have been ordered to move classes online and office employees told to work from home.