



## The rise of Chorki

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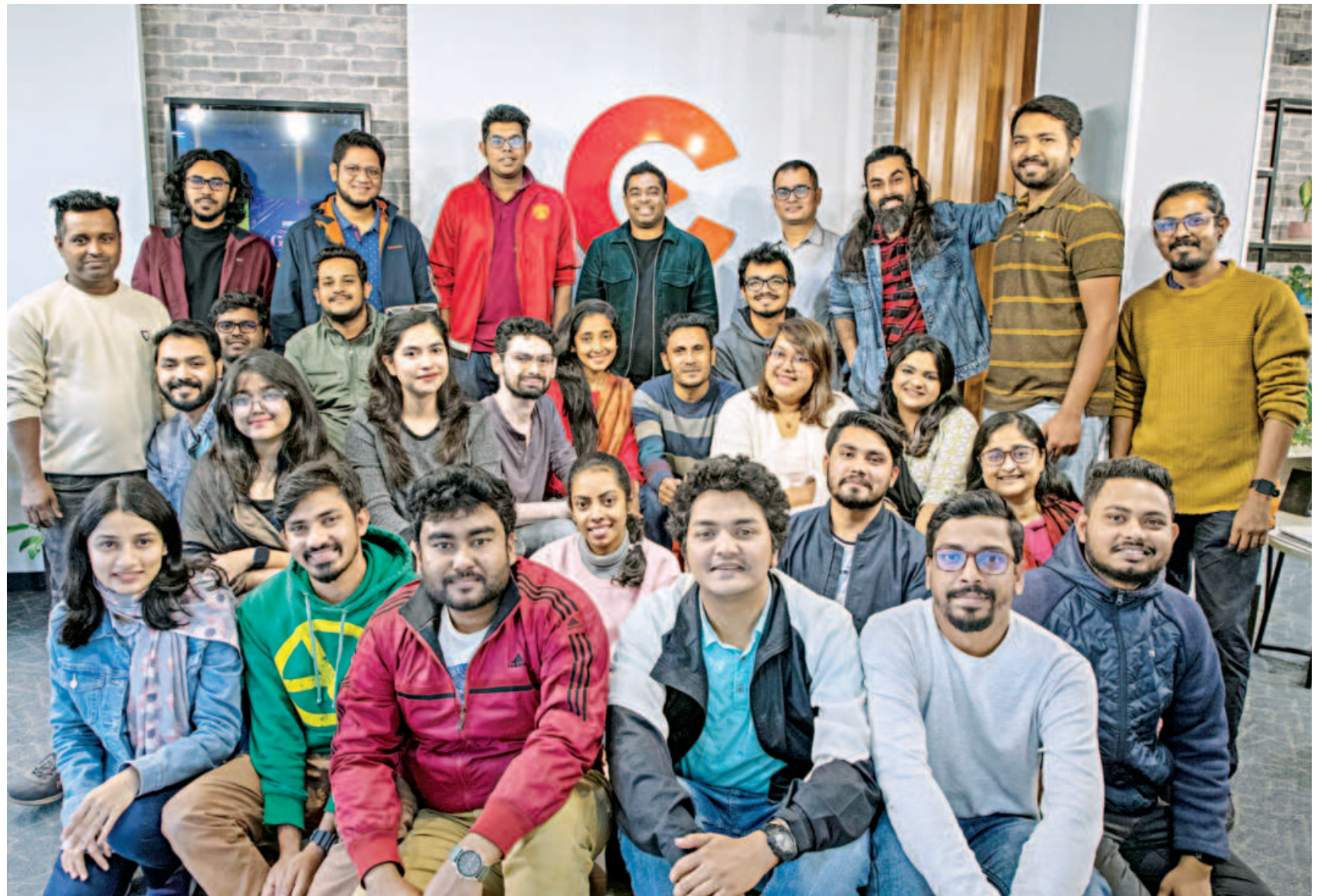
As the COVID-19 pandemic forced the world to adapt to the 'new normal', the entertainment industry experienced a breath of fresh air when Chorki, one of the most promising over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms of recent times, began its journey on July 12, 2021.

It began with Shihab Shaheen's "Morichika", a Chorki original web-series that blessed Afran Nisho and rejuvenated his career. Another notable project at the beginning of Chorki's journey was Robiul Alam Robi's cherished anthology series "Unoloukik"—where acting genius Asaduzzaman Noor gave the audience a once in a lifetime encounter. Over time, Chorki raised its own bar as it had promised audiences.

Redoan Rony, who currently plays the role of Chief Executive Officer of the streaming platform, informed us that Chorki was not his first attempt in digitising entertainment.

"Being a filmmaker who comes from a CSE background, I have always wanted to merge my passion with my professional skill set. While Chorki was not my first attempt in bringing the two together, it was definitely my first success, one that inspires me to work against my failures whenever some new idea pops up in my restless mind," shared Rony, who made his first foray into the world of streaming with Popcorn Live—an extension of his production company of the same name—but had to close it down due to not having enough funds.

"For any new concept to flourish, it is essential for your investors to have faith in you. So, if I have to thank someone for Chorki's rise to success,



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Matiur Rahman

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that would be Matiur Rahman, the Director of Mediastar Limited—a concern of Transcom Group—and Simeen Rahman, CEO of Transcom Group, and Zeraif Ayaat Hossain. They believed in me and offered me more than I had asked for. Also Javed Sultan Pias, CBO of Prothom Alo helped me a lot to develop the business strategy for Chorki," noted Rony.

Though Rony's first attempt had failed, he decided to carry on with the most valuable lesson he had learned. "In this industry, you have to respect the fact that the audience is not just investing their money, but also their time. So, they will only stick with your platform if you promise premium content and consistency," added Rony.

What had sparked as an idea, needed to be manifested into existence and for it to work, a huge investment was necessary. Even though the prospect of streaming platforms in the global market was huge, it was a challenge to convince investors to pour their hard-earned money into an idea. That's where the Transcom group stepped in.

Asked about why Transcom considered Rony's idea as a good investment, Matiur Rahman said,

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"Chorki was expected to not only bring revenue for Transcom, but also to revive artistes, directors, and others associated with this line of work, during one of the toughest times this generation had seen, the COVID-19 pandemic. I simply wanted to support young minds who look to bring about positive change. This initiative turned out to be a blessing, not just for the audience, but also for the industry," he added.

With the financial side sorted, what came next, was ensuring that the promise of premium quality content was met.

At the time, a significant portion of the Bangladeshi audience had lost faith in local productions, and were turning to foreign OTT giants like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. In an attempt to slowly reignite their faith in local OTT, Chorki prioritised the demands of the audience. However, it was easier said than done.

"Bangladesh is the land of stories.

Growing up, stories have been a big part of our culture. We just wanted the world to see the power our tales have. Simultaneously, we wanted our stories to be narrated in our context. Thus, we still aspire to keep up with our ideology of Chorki being a platform that showcases local talent for a global audience," asserted Rony.

Asked about the content selection and curation process, Adar Rahman, Content Officer and Al-Amin Hasan Nirhar, Creative Producer of Chorki mentioned how they insist on following their four-step process: pitching, screenplay development, shooting, and, finally, making necessary edits.

"Regardless of how big the creator might be in the industry, the process is the same for anyone who wants to work with Chorki," asserted Nirhar.

"While we often see how artistes are picked on the basis of their existing fame, we prefer to give opportunities to the faces that have been underappreciated. However, that certainly does not mean we prioritise artistes that are outside of the limelight. We believe in picking the right artiste for the right project," added Adar.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4