

'HIS LOSS IS IRREPAIRABLE'

Legends remember Bangla cinema's 'Mia Bhai', Farooque

He identified as a freedom fighter and a true patriot first, and an actor second. Akbar Hossain Pathan, known by his stage name Farooque, passed away yesterday at 8:30 am, leaving behind the cultural arena in grief. We reached out to some of his colleagues, who remember him fondly.



Babita

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

We created magic on screen: Babita

I met Farooque a long time ago. Although I had heard he was very moody, he was so friendly on set. He was dedicated to making scenes more beautiful and dialogues more impactful while shooting. We formed an excellent bond while working together.

The news of Farooque bhai's death ruined my morning. I never thought I would hear such devastating news.

Together we have made hit films like "Noyon Moni". We created magic on-



Uzzal

screen, which is why people still love our on-screen chemistry, even today.

We also did "Golapi Ekhn Trainee" together. This film received a lot of appreciation and reached the masses in our country. Now, these are all but memories.

Though Farooque may have left this world, his legacy lives on through the movies he starred in, which remain beloved by generations of Bangladeshis.

The nation mourns the loss of one of its greatest cinematic treasures, and his memory will continue to inspire and entertain for years to come.

Please pray for him: Alamgir

I am deeply hurt, I cannot say much. I will pray for his soul, I will pray that the Almighty forgives him. Once someone is gone, they never come back - and I will earnestly request my fellow



Alamgir

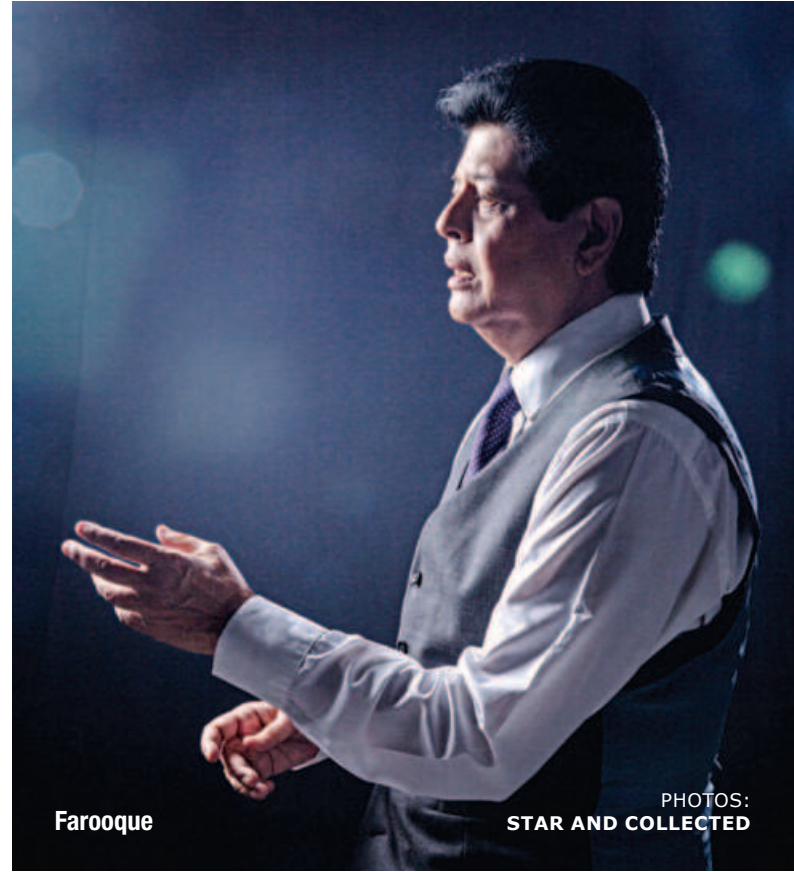
Bangladeshi people - please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. He was a good man, his contribution to the Bangladeshi film industry will never be forgotten, and neither will his love for the country.

Our 50-year friendship was priceless: Uzzal

Both Farooque and I have known each other before our independence, since 1970. We started our acting career in that same year. Farooque debuted with "Jolchhobi" while my first film was "Binimoy." Our friendship, which blossomed in the initial year of struggle turned into strong friendship, which lasted till his death. We had such strong



Rozina



Farooque

PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

love for each other, I just can't believe he is no longer with us.

Our friendship is like the golden era of Bangladeshi cinema - truly pure and priceless. We were both part of politics, but had completely different opinion. Nevertheless, this didn't affect us as our bond was too strong to be affected by it, we truly put ourselves before any arbitrary opinion.

We both had our offices in Kakrail, that too in the same building. Our rooms were nearby, and so we had many wonderful conversations there. We have talked about how we can improve our film industry, and reach out to more people. We even took part in organisations such as Shilpi Samity and Film producers association. We have dedicated our entire life to film industry.

Farooque and I used to address each other as 'tui', and never had to use the word 'apni' as our relationship was never formal.

The eighties were the best period of our life, and the most glorious period of the film industry. We gave our heart and soul for the sake of it. I can't believe he has left the world, leaving me alone to fend for myself. My heartiest condolence for the evergreen actor, and his family. May the Almighty bless him with eternal peace.

He was a brother to me: Rozina

We first acted in the film, "Chokher Moni", directed by Narayan Ghosh Mita. We collaborated on many popular films under his direction.

We shot the film on a cold winter night. However, Farooque bhai provided

me with all kinds of support to help me shoot in the harsh weather. He was not only a fellow artiste, but also a brother to me.

Apart from his talent as an actor, Farooque was also known for his bravery and love for Bangladesh, and its great leader, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was not afraid to speak out against injustice, and was known for his simplicity.

We have so many memories together in this one life. They are making me nostalgic and melancholic now. I am still asking myself, is he really gone?

I will never get to call him 'Dulu' again: Sohel Rana

When I was a student of Dhaka University, Farooque was a first-year student of Jagannath College. I was involved in Central Chhatra League politics, while he was involved in College Chhatra League politics. Our relationship was developed while doing the politics based on the ideologies of Bangabandhu.

It's hard to believe that he is no more. He had great respect for me, and vice versa. He was very dear to me. Interestingly, many would not know that his nickname was Dulu. I used to



Sohel Rana

call him by that name.

He has given a lot to the industry. His bold dialogues in social cinema were well received by the audience. At this point, the news of his demise broke me mentally. Dulu, may you rest in peace, wherever you are.

COUNTRYWIDE

MOULVIBAZAR POWER SUB-STATION Construction work goes on at snail's pace

MINTU DESHWARA

Construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation sees very slow progress, much to the inconvenience of the consumers.

Meanwhile, the earth filling work of the project has not been completed since the project started three years ago.

Construction of other infrastructures like control room and installation of transformers will be done after completion of the earth filling work.

According to the sources at the project site, the government decided to construct Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation to provide uninterrupted power supply to Moulvibazar town and Srihatta Economic Zone and reduce load shedding.

In 2019, a total of over 5 acres of land was acquired at Raishree village in Sadar upazila for construction of the power substation, under the supervision of the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources.

Jointly funded by the governments of Bangladesh and China, the project is being implemented through the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Limited (PGCB) and it is scheduled to be

completed by June 2025.

Local people said although the earth filling work of project started in 2021, only half of the work has been done so far.

According to Moulvibazar Electricity Development Board, there are about 30,000 electricity consumers in Moulvibazar town and its suburb areas while the demand of electricity is 14 MW.

Currently, electricity is being supplied in those areas through 40-kilometre-long Moulvibazar-Fenchuganj line and 28-kilometre-long Moulvibazar-Srimangal line.

But, those lines often get damaged even after a slight rain or wind. Taking this into consideration, the government has decided to construct a grid substation in Moulvibazar town.

Moulvibazar Electricity Development Board Executive Engineer Habibur Bahar said construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation is going on slowly due to various complications. Even if the work is done at a faster speed now, it will take at least two and a half years to three years to complete the entire work, he said, adding that now we are worried about completing the work within the stipulated time.



Construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation at Raishree village in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila is going on at a slow pace. PHOTO: STAR

The passing

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Born in Old Dhaka in 1948, Farooque made his silver screen debut with the film "Jolchhobi" in 1971. He went on to win the hearts of millions across the nation with memorable performances in films like "Lathial", "Noyon Moni" and "Golapi Ekhn Train-E".

Throughout his five-decade-long career, he appeared in over 150 films, a majority of which earned incredible commercial success.

"Nagordola", "Shurjo Songram", "Ghor Jamai", "Matir Putul", and "Trishna" are just a few of those.

He was lovingly called "Mia Bhai" by fans and colleagues - derived from the Chashi Nazrul Islam film of the same name, in which he had acted.

Considered by many to be the one of the most prolific actors of his time, Farooque's acting prowess earned him the National Film Award for "Best Supporting Actor" in 1975.

In 2016, he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Farooque was a devoted patriot with a rebellious spirit.

He was involved in the Six-point movement in 1966 and was also involved in the first resistance in Malitola after Operation Searchlight on March 25, 1971. He fought under guerilla legend "Nader Gunda".

In an earlier interview, when asked why he became a freedom fighter, Farooque had said, "I was once slapped by Pakistanis for speaking in Bangla when I was six years old. It was one of the worst things to have happened to me, and what later led me to join the Liberation War."

Successful in his political career, Farooque

was also the MP-elect from Dhaka-17 as a ruling-Awami League candidate in the 2018 elections.

After falling ill, Farooque was taken to Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital on September 13, 2020. A month later, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and returned to Dhaka after treatment.

In March 2021, he was taken back to Singapore and was admitted to the ICU. He remained in hospital for over two years for treatment, before passing away at 8:30am yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Mohammed Shahabuddin in separate condolence messages have expressed their sorrow at the actor's demise.

"His contributions in the film industry, as well as our politics, will never be forgotten," Hasina said in her statement.

Shahabuddin said, "This [Farooque's death] is an irreparable loss to the cultural sector of Bangladesh."

Farooque's body will be brought to Dhaka by air today, after which he will be taken to his Uttara home around 9:00am.

At 11:00am, his body will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar for well-wishers and colleagues to pay their final respects.

His namaz-e-janaza will take place at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation after Zuhr prayers.

His body will then be taken to Gulshan Azad Mosque for his second namaz-e-janaza and then he will be laid to rest in his hometown in Gazipur's Kaliganj.

The actor is survived by his wife Farhana Pathan, daughter Fariha Tabassum Hossain and son Rowshon Hossain Sharot.

JP doubtful of EC's control

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the police neutral," Awal said. The CEC said that they have not faced any pressure from the government over any elections till now. Police also played a neutral role, he added.

"If they maintain such a neutral stance, it will be possible for the Election Commission to conduct elections in a better way."

Earlier, Mujibul told reporters that they were worried about whether the upcoming city polls would be free and fair.

He said it is the EC's responsibility to make

sure that no political party can have influence on the elections. The commission should also have to ensure that no candidate can take any advantage by using the administration and the voters can exercise their franchise freely, the JP leader added.

He said they told the EC that the JP mayor candidate in Barishal city had sent a letter to the CEC alleging that the returning officer was working in favour of the nominee of a particular political party. "[He [Jatiya Party candidate] sought withdrawal of the

returning officer."

Mujibul also said that the ruling Awami League mayor nominee in Sylhet city was violating the electoral code of conduct by seeking votes even before the start of the electioneering. "The CEC has assured us that the matter will be taken care of."

The CEC said that many allegations of breaching the electoral code of conduct are raised, but the EC cannot take all those into consideration. What matters to the commission at the end of the day is how the election is held, he added.

Cyclone Mocha

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my family and I are living under the open sky," said Abdul Haque, a resident of the island.

People there are also suffering from an acute crisis of drinking water.

Around 300 families of Jaliapara depend on a single deep tube well, which has been dysfunctional since Saturday morning due to load-shedding.

"We are now having to boil saline water to make it drinkable," said Laila Begum, of Jaliapara in Shahporir Dwp.

Visiting the area yesterday morning, a correspondent of The Daily Star saw many people busy

repairing their houses and shops.

They alleged that traders were overcharging them for the material needed for repair work, as the demands are now high after the cyclone.

Shafiqul Alam, of the same area, said, "I am trying to repair my partially-damaged grocery shop. Normally, we can buy 100 bamboo pieces for Tk 3,500, but the traders are now charging us Tk 5,000."

Trader Jafar Alam, however, denied the allegation and said the price hike was due to a crisis of bamboo.

Meanwhile, Saint

Martin's Island was still out of electricity till the filing of this report at 8:30pm last night, as electric cables and utility poles were damaged in the cyclone's impact, Mujibur Rahman, chairman of Saint Martin union parishad, said.

M u h a m m a d Shaheen Imran, deputy commissioner in Cox's Bazar, yesterday visited the island and handed over 1,000 sacks of rice as relief.

He also announced that cash and tin sheets will be distributed among the victims.

(Our Cox's Bazar and Chattogram correspondents contributed to the report.)

Conflict intensifies

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the mayoral candidate and seeking votes for him.

Central Awami League leaders who hail from Barishal, including party advisory council member Amir Hossain Amu, presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Barishal Sadar constituency lawmaker and State Minister for Water Resources Colonel (ret'd) Zahid Faruk, were sidelined in the district politics

because of Sadiq and his father.

Now they are consolidating their grip on local politics, sources said.

About the current political situation of Barishal, senior AL leader in the city Tarun Chanda told The Daily Star that with this party nomination, a political polarisation has been made in Barishal. "In future, pro-Amu group will get political mileage while pro-Hasnat group will lag

behind."

Shah Sajeda, former convener of Sacheton Nagorik Committee, a platform of civil society member, said, "Barishal city dwellers are now out of the culture of fear that had long been prevailing in the city."

Meanwhile, pro-AL student body Chhatra League yesterday dissolved its convening committee for Barishal city Chhatra League.