

# The many faces of SHAHED ALI

**SHARMIN JOYA**

In his career of 26 years, he has donned variety of roles and continuing to win over the audience with his acting skills. Shahed Ali started his acting career on the stage with the popular theatre troupe Prachyanat. From the small screen to films and web, he has the experience of working in all the mediums of entertainment. Today marks the birthday of this actor. We caught up with him to know about his latest web series *Sharey Showlo*, upcoming ventures and more.

**Happy Birthday! What are your plans for today?**  
Thank You! I don't really have any special plans for today. I am shooting outside Dhaka for a new project. My friends and family members are wishing me over the phone. It feels good to work on my birthday, because it makes me feel that I was born to work and I am lucky enough to have the pursue my career in my most desired profession.



**Yesterday 'Sharey Showlo' was released, where you played the role of Gaffar. Tell us about your journey in the project.**  
The project has been directed by Yasir Al Haq, a young and talented director. He gave his best effort to from his side and made sure all the crews gave their best for this project. The script and its directorial pattern are very unique and well made. Rest is up to the audience, **You played an important role in Vicky Zahed's 'Punorjonmo', one of the most popular multiverse series we have. How was your experience working with him?**  
I have worked with him in many projects of different genre. One thing I really appreciate about him is that he gave me the full creative freedom while working, which I probably never got from any other director so

far. He is one of the very few directors who actually made me work in a variety of roles.

**You have worked in all of the mediums of entertainment. What is your observation about the industry in Bangladesh?**  
We still need a lot of improvement in all the mediums of entertainment. Consider theatre, we still cannot form a combined team in this arena. Individually everyone is trying to establish their own ground. This has made the entire thing more complicated. Freshers are not getting enough opportunity to build their ability. What we lack most is team spirit. Similarly, in other mediums we lack professionalism. For instance, a producer isn't someone who just invests money, but is responsible for taking important decisions for a project. Whereas, in our industry, their job ends up deciding the amount they will give to the crews, and

bargain as much as possible. The audio industry is dominated by a few people, who have literally stopped giving any chances to newcomers. Thus, in every medium, we are not giving enough space to newcomers. We need to work on our judgement for the proper growth of the industry.

**From film to television and OTT, you are busy everywhere. How do you make time for theatre?**  
I have to make time for the stage, because I feel it is my responsibility. I have been with the theatre since 1997, the experience of getting live reaction from the audience is something that no other medium can actually give.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



## Akshay Kumar finally gets his Indian citizenship

Akshay Kumar, who was brutally trolled for having a Canadian passport, has legally renounced his Canadian passport to reclaim his Indian citizenship on Monday.

The actor rushed to Twitter to share a photo of his Indian citizenship documents, expressing his excitement about the 77th anniversary of India's independence.

He filed for Indian citizenship in 2019. However, the procedure was halted owing to the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Pink Floyd song reconstructed from patients' brain waves



Scientists have reconstructed a Pink Floyd classic from the recorded brain waves of patients who were undergoing epilepsy surgery while listening to the song.

Researchers at University of California, Berkeley, US, used AI to decode the brain signals, recreating the 1979 hit *Another Brick in the Wall, Part One*.

This is the first-time scientists have reconstructed a song from the recordings of brain activity, read an article published in the Independent quoting the study authors.

Analysis of song elements revealed a new region in the brain that represents rhythm – which, in this case, was the guitar rhythm.

# COUNTRYWIDE

## UNUSABLE BRIDGE

### Two decades on, still no approach roads

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**

Several thousand people have been suffering immensely since a concrete bridge at Dilbarnagar village in Sreemangal upazila remains without approach roads for over two decades now.

As a result, nearly 5,000 local residents, especially fruit and vegetable growers, have to go through untold miseries every day as it is the shortest way to reach Jerin, Daluchhara, Phulbari, Dilbarnagar, Puran Bari and Radhanagar.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw there is no connecting road on either side of the bridge, built over a dried-up streambed.

Moreover, people were seen crossing the dry streambed by walking beneath the bridge.

Locals said the bridge was constructed in 1999-2000 fiscal year in order to facilitate movements of the people living in Jerin, Daluchhara and Dilbarnagar Puran Bari area.

Shamsul Haque, a lemon orchard owner in Radhanagar, said the then chairman of Sadar Union Parishad (UP) Mohammad Afzal Hossain built the

bridge, without taking steps to construct the connecting roads.

One of the residents of Dilbarnagar Mukundo Das said they were getting frustrated as the connecting road on either side of the important bridge has not been built in the last 23 years.

Another villager Syed Ahmed said they have to suffer a lot while carrying their produces, including lemon, pineapple and banana, to nearby markets in the upazila headquarters as there is no alternative.

Shahadat Hossain, a student at Mohajirabad High School, said they have to go to school amid risk as it becomes quite unsafe to walk beneath the bridge during the monsoon.

Contacted, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Upazila Engineer Yusuf Hossain said they have a plan to complete the unfinished bridge work within this year.

Sreemangal Union Parishad Chairman Bhanu Lal Roy said the bridge was built without any guard walls on both ends. They would need a funding of Tk 20 lakh to build the guard walls before constructing the approach road, he said.



This concrete bridge at Dilbarnagar village in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila lies without approach roads for over two decades.

PHOTO: STAR

## HSC exams

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to prepare and that many were infected with dengue.

A total of 13,59,342 students have registered for the HSC and equivalent exams. Of them, 6,88,887 are boys and 6,70,455 are girls.

A total of 11,08,594 students will sit for the HSC exams; 98,031 for Dakhil; and 1,52,717 for vocational tests under the technical education board.

The number of examinees has increased by 1,55,935 compared to last year.

## Pak court

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regard to suspension of Khan's conviction has been fixed for August 22," Khan's lawyer, Naeem Panjutha, said in a post on messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Panjutha said he hoped the Islamabad High Court, which will take up the plea, would grant Khan bail.

## Beijing won't

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are ready to share their experiences with Bangladesh, he said.

Mannan said he expects China to support Bangladesh in the post-LDC period after 2026 by providing duty-free facilities to Bangladeshi products.

China is also interested in investing in solar power and electric vehicles in Bangladesh, he said.

After construction of the Padma Bridge, there are more scopes for investment and development in the country's southwestern region.

"We assured the Chinese envoy that we consider China as a very important friend. We have got Chinese support in the past and are getting it now. We hope to have more support in the future too," Mannan said.

## Over 13 lakh hit by floods

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In Chattogram, the flood has badly affected at least 850,235 people, and damaged 28,070 houses and nearly 723 kilometres of roads. It has also claimed 22 lives in the district, according to DRRO Saifullah Majumder.

Agricultural land and produce worth Tk 186.30 crore and fisheries resources worth Tk 69.38 crore were damaged, he added.

Chandanaish is one of the worst flood-affected areas in Chattogram.

Contacted, Mahmuda Begum, upazila nirbahi officer of Chandanaish, said, "We have been preparing a list of flood-affected people. We will distribute relief assistance to them in the next week."

Tofail Islam, divisional commissioner of Chattogram, said, "We have already issued directives to

all the officials concerned to provide necessary assistance to the flood victims."

In Rangamati, some 6,812 houses and over 62 kilometres of roads have been damaged.

"The highways under our department have been damaged on 44 spots in Rangamati," said Sabuj Chakma, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department in Rangamati.

At least 71 government primary schools have been

## Act now to stop encroachment

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Beel from encroachments and illegal earth filling and construction of structures there.

The HC bench also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain why their inaction to protect Arial Beel should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC asked them to issue show cause to encroachers, asking why

they should not be ordered to remove the structures already constructed at the water body and to remove the soil that has been used to fill it, Deputy Attorney General Kazi Mynul Hassan told The Daily Star.

The HRPB submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC on August 14 based on a report published in The Daily Star

## US rights bodies urge sanctions

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International Republican Institute participated in it.

In 2021, the US imposed sanctions against Rab and some of its top officials for human rights violations, and in May this year, it announced a visa policy restricting visas for those involved in vote rigging.

"We believe that until impartial and effective accountability mechanisms are adopted by the Government of Bangladesh to investigate and address such violations, the US must not lift the existing sanctions and must consider additional sanctions against other security forces, such as the Detective Branch and Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, that partake in similar violations throughout Bangladesh," said Kristi Ueda of the Robert F Kennedy Human

Rights.

As seen in the lead up to the 2018 election, the Bangladesh government continued its efforts to close civic space ahead of the January 2024 election through its targeting of civil society organisations, human rights defenders, journalists, and others considered critical of the government, she said.

These individuals and their families have been subjected to retaliatory arrests, harassment, and intimidation by state officials, who have enjoyed impunity for their misconduct, she added.

Freedom of expression and free press continue to erode in Bangladesh.

In the first half of 2023, human rights organisation Odhikar documented 151 attacks on journalists, Ueda said.

Also, the government

attacked media outlets, ordering the closure of 191 websites it accused of publishing "anti-state news" in January 2023.

The government's attempts to stifle critical voices have become increasingly brazen, with the prime minister criticising the nation's leading daily newspaper, calling it "an enemy" to Awami League, "an enemy of democracy," and "an enemy of the country's people" after the newspaper published a report on high food prices.

In addition, Bangladesh has severely curtailed the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. The treatment of Odhikar is emblematic of the ongoing targeting of human rights defenders and organisations for doing their important work, she said.

The US must emphasise to Bangladesh that should they want to address the human rights violations underlying the sanction designations, then going after those who are documenting and exposing these violations instead of holding perpetrators accountable does nothing positive for their human rights record, Ueda said in her written statement.

The US must stress that an open civic space is necessary for a functioning democracy, especially in the lead up to the January 2024 election. Bangladesh must ensure an enabling environment for journalists, human rights defenders, and organisations to conduct their important work without fear of harassment, intimidation, and reprisals.