



Sohanur Rahman Sohan



Nadira Begum



Mohan Khan



Syed Salahuddin Zaki



Shafi Bikrompuri



Rajib Ashraf

STARS WE LOST IN 2023

ZAHID AKBAR

In 2023, the entertainment industry witnessed the unfortunate demise of several luminaries. While they may no longer remain with us, their legacies endure through their creative works. Their remarkable contributions will continue to resonate in the domains of film, television dramas, dance, and music.

Farooque

Akbar Hossain Pathan Farooque, a renowned actor, Member of Parliament, and valiant Freedom Fighter, breathed his last on May 15, 2023 whilst undergoing treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

Farooque, adoringly known as 'Mia Bhai,' was born on August 18, 1948, in Dhaka. He made his first film debut in 1971 with the film *Jolchhobi* directed by H Akbar. Subsequently, in 1973, he played a role in the Liberation War-themed film *Abar Tora Manush Ho* directed by Khan Aatur Rahman, and in 1974, he appeared in director Narayan Ghosh Mita's film *Alor Michil*.

Farooque's notable filmography includes *Sareng Bou*, *Lathial*, *Sujon Sokhi*, *Nayanmoni*, *Mia Bhai*, *Golapi Ekhon Trainee*, *Din Jai Kotha Thaakey*, *Sokhi Tumi Kar*, and *Shurjogrohon* amongst others.

Farooque earned recognition for his exceptional talent, receiving the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor in 1975 for his outstanding performance in the film *Lathial*. In 2016, his illustrious career was further celebrated when



Bulbul Mahalanobish

he was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Film Awards.

In the 2018 eleventh National Parliament Election, Farooque was elected as a Member of Parliament from the Awami League, representing the Dhaka-17 Constituency.

Sohanur Rahman Sohan

Filmmaker Sohanur Rahman Sohan passed away on September 13, 2023. The director peacefully departed in his sleep at his residence.

Sohanur Rahman Sohan directed several popular movies, including *Keyamot Theke Keyamot*, *Amar Desh Amar Prem*, *Shojon*, *Amar Ghor Amar Behesht*, *Ananta Bhalobasha*, *Swami Chintai*, *Amar Jaan Amar Pran*, *Poran Jai Joliya Re*, *Koti Takar Prem*, *The Speed* and so on.

The debut film directed by filmmaker Sohanur Rahman Sohan was *Biswas Abiswas*. Through Sohan, stars like Salman Shah, Moushumi, Popy, and Erin Zaman were introduced to the industry.



Zeenat Barkatullah

Additionally, he served as the director for Shakib Khan's debut movie *Ananta Bhalobasha*.

Syed Salahuddin Zaki

Renowned filmmaker Salahuddin Zaki, born on August 26, 1946, passed away this year on September 19, at the age of 77. He gained fame for directing the movie *Ghuddi* released in 1980, which won him the National Film Award for Best Dialogue Writer.

Zaki, a distinguished figure in the film industry, received the Ekushey Padak in 2021. Throughout his career, he produced several films, including *Laal Benarasi* and *Ayna Bibir Pala*. His contributions left a lasting impact, and he won the hearts of audiences



Mita Chowdhury

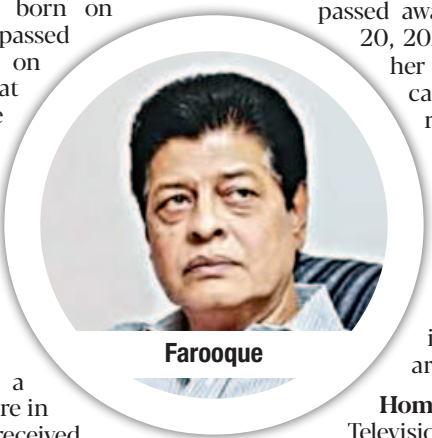
with his cinematic work.

Zeenat Barkatullah

Ekushey Padak-winning dancer Zeenat Barkatullah, honoured for her exceptional contributions to dance, passed away on September 20, 2023, at 72. Besides her illustrious dance career, she was also recognised for her acting talents and received the prestigious Ekushey Padak in 2022, acknowledging her significant impact on the arts.

Homayra Himu

Television drama actress Homayra Himu passed away on November 2, 2023. She entered the acting scene in 2006 through stage plays, making her television debut in the drama *Chayabithi*. In the same year, she also appeared in a



Farooque



Homayra Himu

TV serial titled *Private Investigator*. Additionally, she garnered attention for her roles in numerous dramas such as *Bari Bari Sari Sari*, *Housefull* and *Gulshan Avenue*. Notably, she recently acted in dramas like *Chapabai*, *Guinness Book E Nam*, *Bou Birodh*, and more shortly before her passing.

Rajib Ashraf

Rajib Ashraf, the lyricist behind Arnob's popular song *Hok Kolorob*, passed away on September 1, 2023, at the age of 38.

He also penned notable songs such as *Naam Chilo Na*, *Prokrito Jol*, *Ghum*, *Dhushor Megh* and *Rod Boleche Hobe*, to name a few.

Shafi Bikrompuri

Filmmaker Shafi Bikrompuri passed away on October 18 while receiving treatment at a hospital in Bangkok. He had been unwell for an extended period.

A luminary in the world of cinema, he left an indelible mark through his direction, production, and cinematic

presentations. Notable works in his repertoire include *Arunodoyer Agnishakkhi* and *Rajdulari*, amongst others, showcasing his talent.

Bulbul Mahalanobish

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste Bulbul Mahalanobish who was also a poet, author, musician, and stage performer, passed away on July 14. On July 17, she was honoured with state tributes and floral farewells.

She held key roles in organisations like Jatiya Kabita Parishad, Kochikachar Mela, Udichi, Sector Commanders' Forum, and Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra Shilpi Parishad.

Mita Chowdhury

Renowned actress and prominent dramatist Mita Chowdhury passed away on June 29, 2023, while undergoing cancer treatment in London.

Mohan Khan

Director and playwright Mohan Khan, known for his contributions, passed away on May 30. He directed his debut drama which aired on BTV. Over his long career, Mohan Khan has directed over 500 tele-fictions and written around 200 of them. *Titir o Shankhachil*, written by him, is one of the most memorable television dramas ever produced for BTV.

Nadira Begum

Bhavaya artiste and Freedom Fighter Nadira Begum passed away on November 6 this year while receiving treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. She was 73 years old.

NEWS

AL coordinated, BNP less so

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behaviors of over 600 partisan Facebook pages and groups likely affiliated with AL and BNP.

"Partisan content is often shared by unassuming groups and pages that do not bear the party's name or disclose their association. Group or page names can, hypothetically, include 'Good Morning Bangladesh' or 'Our Dhaka'. They typically tend to be partisan actors that are misleading users about the fact that they are partisan and sharing hyper-partisan content," it said.

It also said there is a risk that these influence operations, which are disseminating organic hyperpartisan content, are swaying public opinion.

The report compared how posts made by pro-BNP and pro-AL platforms perform over time to provide evidence of social-media engineering.

"In the first five minutes, the AL and BNP posts organically each saw only one percent of their respective share counts. In the next 10 minutes, no one shared the BNP post, but the AL post saw 25 percent of its total share count.

"About 71 percent of the AL post's shares took place in just three hours ... The BNP post had seen no shares till the three-hour mark."

The report added, "Between the third and 12th hour, the BNP post saw a massive 68 percent of its total share count while the AL post saw an additional 18 percent."

Meanwhile, between the first and third day, the BNP post saw an additional 20 percent shares, while the AL post saw only four percent.

"We find that Awami League has a more centralised [where a bulk of the content is driven by a very small number of mediums] dissemination strategy relative to BNP. The latter tends to have a more decentralised approach, likely driven organically by their supporters."

AL's official verified page, with 3.4 million followers, shared nearly 9,500 pieces of content during the timeframe of TGI's analysis (excluding third-party links). The party shared content every hour of every day, and at least 25 pieces of content for every 24 hours for the past year, said the report.

In AL's case, 91 mediums shared

the same content within a span of 13 days of initial posting, while for BNP, 50 mediums shared within the same time span, the report said.

"Although the BNP formally launched its official, verified Facebook handle, bearing the party's full name, in 2019 -- years after the Awami League did so in 2013 -- the opposition party already had a sizable presence due to unaffiliated influencers with a large following."

The report mentioned that BNP ramped up their social media presence prior to the January 7 election.

"In July, BNP's pages had amassed over 4,500 posts, marking a significant rise from fewer than 3,000 posts in the preceding month. In September, these pages added just under 4,000 posts, but in November, this number almost tripled, surpassing 11,000."

The report recommended transparency for organic partisan content.

"Online constituencies do not know whether a page or group bearing the party's name is formally affiliated with a political party --

operated professionally by an official member or paid by the party," said the report.

"AlthoughMeta [the company that currently owns and operates Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Threads and more] requires pages and groups to categorically disclose whether they are affiliated with a political party or not, the policies are not sufficiently nuanced to differentiate between affiliations [whether it is member of the party or a paid operator] and support," it said, adding, "People can follow a page or join a group without knowing its partisan affiliation, especially when the political party chooses to disseminate their messages through non-partisan names."

"A group, page or verified profile sharing partisan content organically should provide some transparency about their association with the party, especially if they do not categorically bear the party's name. Second, a page or group bearing a political party's name should go through verification to reduce risks of impersonation and misrepresentation," they recommended.

ACC doesn't need to show reasons to sack its employees

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terminated from service on February 16, 2021 under this rule, cannot get his job back following the apex court judgement, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

"An employee should not be terminated by using Rule 54(2) as a tool in the grab of a constructive dismissal," said the seven-member bench of the Appellate Division led by then chief justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

The other six judges are Justice Md Nuruzzaman (now retired), Justice Obaidul Hassan (now chief justice), Justice Borhanuddin, Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Asfaul Islam and Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique.

Earlier on March 16, the same bench delivered a short verdict on an appeal filed by the ACC challenging a High Court judgement that scrapped Rule 54(2) in 2011.

"Selection for termination under Rule 54(2) shall be made fairly

and justly, without any pick and choose, without any bias, without any discrimination under the mandate of the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The parameters of such termination have to be set in accordance with the equality provision of the constitution," the SC said.

An ACC employee usually works with serious cases of corruption and misappropriation of power and position committed by the most powerful stakeholders of the country, including the most powerful businessmen, politicians of the country and bureaucrats of the government.

While exercising the power of termination must remain careful that nobody is victimised at the behest of high-ups.

"The service of an employee of a statutory corporation, public body, national enterprise etc is not like that of a master and servant; rather, the tenure of service and other

terms and conditions are based on the relevant statute and the service regulations. The extraordinary power to terminate any employee with three months' notice or pay in lieu of who has served a long time is always discouraged."

The case of every employee is required to be dealt with on merit by the authorities concerned before they decide to terminate anybody from his job.

"Since the law empowers the authorities with such extraordinary weapon, it should be used only in an extraordinary situation and as a last resort, on consideration of individual merit of each and every case and not otherwise. Without assigning any reason as envisaged in Rule 54(2) does not mean without having any reasons."

The reason for termination must be stated in the note sheet.

"No employee should be terminated from their service against whom any departmental proceedings

have already been initiated and pending with specific charges. In that situation, the authority must conclude the proceedings and punish the accused if any employee is found guilty. Not any other matter," the SC said in the full verdict.

JP to introduce

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every village and providing them with vocational training.

"After the 1990s, people are experiencing unlimited corruption, partisanship ... and money-laundering, and that is why people are deprived of their basic rights."

Chunnu said the party would change the country's election process, education system and would also ensure the judiciary's independence.

"A full-fledged upazila system will be introduced and policies would be adopted to curb terrorism if the party gets a chance to rule the country again."

Israeli troops 'summarily killed'

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of them children or women, according to the enclave's health ministry.

Meanwhile, Israel yesterday bombed scores of targets in the Gaza Strip as diplomats pressed on with efforts to halt the fighting.

The army said its aircraft had struck another 230 targets in besieged Gaza over the past day, including a rocket launch site, while ground forces had found weapons inside a school in Jabalia near Gaza City.

Hopes that Israel and Hamas could be inching towards another truce and hostage release deal have risen this week as the head of the Palestinian militant group visited Egypt and talks were held in Europe.

Mossad director David Barnea held a "positive meeting" in Warsaw with CIA chief Bill Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, a source familiar with the talks told AFP.

Qatar-based Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh visited Egypt on Wednesday for talks with the country's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel.

However, the stated positions of Israel and Hamas remain far apart.

A Hamas official told AFP that "a total ceasefire and a retreat of the Israeli occupation army from the Gaza Strip are a precondition for any serious negotiation" on a hostage-prisoner swap.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there could be no ceasefire in Gaza before the "elimination" of Hamas, which

Israel, the United States and some other countries consider a "terrorist" organisation.

And US President Joe Biden said of a fresh hostage release deal: "There's no expectation at this point. But we are pushing it."

The UN Security Council was due to try once again to pass a resolution calling for a halt in fighting after previous efforts to win Washington's backing fell short.

Israel has rejected the term "ceasefire", and Washington has used its veto twice to thwart resolutions opposed by Israel since the start of the war.

The United Arab Emirates is sponsoring a proposed resolution which has already been watered down to secure compromise, according to a draft version seen by AFP.

It calls for "the urgent suspension of hostilities to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and for urgent steps towards a sustainable cessation of hostilities".

The war has sparked fears of regional escalation, with exchanges of fire over the Lebanon border, and missiles from Iran-backed Yemeni rebels disrupting Red Sea shipping.

Israel said yesterday one of its fighter jets and artillery had struck Iran-backed Hezbollah militants overnight in response to incoming fire.

An Israeli strike killed a woman in her eighties in a south Lebanon village early yesterday, Lebanese state media said, with rescuers confirming the death to AFP.

Nasa images reveal

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The stars are between 1 million and 5 million years old, and vary in size -- some are smaller and some larger than our sun. The new composite image, rotated clockwise by 160 degrees so that the top of the tree is upright, includes different wavelengths of light detected by Chandra as well as ground-based surveys.

In an animated version of the image, blinking blue and white lights represent the X-ray light from young stars detected by Chandra. Meanwhile, the cloud of gas resembling the festive tree glows in

green optical light, as seen with the National Science Foundation's WIYN 0.9-meter telescope on Kitt Peak in the Arizona Sonoran Desert.

White stars gleaming throughout the image were revealed by observations in infrared light with the Two Micron All Sky Survey, which operated between 1997 and 2001. Studying young stars such as those within the Christmas Tree Cluster offers insight into their volatile nature. Young stars can release strong flares more powerful than those of our sun, and astronomers are still investigating the phenomena.