



PHOTO: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED

“My journey began with English songs, and I still also compose in English. Last year, I released *Spicy*, which was in English. Ironically, the Bengali part—‘Sona Bondhu Tui Amare’—went viral!”

SHARMIN JOYA

This Eid, Xelifer Rahman surprised fans not just with new music, but also with her return to acting. After her debut in Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s *Monogamy*, she appeared in the highly anticipated web-series *Myself Allen Swapan 2*, directed by Shihab Shaheen. She not only shared the screen with Nasir Uddin Khan but also lent her voice to the series with the track *Boyam Pakhi 2.0*. Simultaneously, her song *Niye Jabe Ki* from the film *Daagi* added to the festive lineup.

How did you find yourself joining the cast of ‘Myself Allen Swapan 2’?

It all started when Shihab *bhai* and I had a meeting for the song in *Daagi*. During our conversation, he mentioned that he was considering me for a role in his upcoming web series. At that point, I didn’t know which role I would play or what the project was about. But once I learned more, it was hard to say no. Shihab Shaheen is known for his craft, and *Myself Allen Swapan* already has a massive fan base. I also wanted to take on roles that would help shape my acting career. That’s one of the core reasons I joined the team.

How was your experience sharing the screen with Nasir Uddin Khan?

I had previously worked with Nasir *bhai* on *No Dorai*, where I was the executive producer. Back then, he wasn’t as popular as he is now, and OTTs weren’t popular in Bangladesh. He has this rare quality—wherever he goes, he stands out. Working with him as a co-actor

was inspiring, and I was particularly moved when he said that we would both “give it our all, together” during our scenes.

Tell us about your song ‘Niye Jabe Ki’ from ‘Daagi’.

Many people think I’m only a vocalist—mostly because I’m a woman—and they often overlook the fact that I compose as well. It is something that triggers me. In most cases, whenever you hear me sing a song, it’s likely one I’ve composed myself.

When I was speaking to Shihab *bhai*, I told him the same thing, and said I’d like him to use a song composed by me. What touched me most was that during the shoot, the cast and crew would listen to the demo of my composition. Later, I co-wrote the lyrics with Badhon, based on the plot of the film, and completed the track.

Though people know me more for *Jhumka*, I want to do more melodious songs—this genre has been close to my heart since childhood. The song was released with the film’s theatrical debut, and now that it’s out on all platforms, people have been searching for it. That is incredibly fulfilling for me.

You not only voiced but appeared in the song ‘Boyam Pakhi 2.0’. What was the experience like?

The previous version was already popular, but it had only the male perspective. Now, with my voice added, it includes a female gaze, which I think adds depth and relatability—especially for female listeners. That’s what makes it

beautiful. Also, my voice and appearance added an extra strength to it, I believe!

You started your career with English songs and became popular for your covers. Any plans to return to English releases?

Absolutely. My journey began with English songs, and I also compose in English. Last year, I released *Spicy*, which was in English, though, ironically, the Bengali part—“Sona Bondhu Tui Amare”—went viral! (laughs)

This year, most of my releases will be in Bangla, but I plan to keep nurturing my English catalog as well. I’m also thinking of converting some of the Bengali songs that the audience loves, into English versions.

This Eid-ul-Fitr saw several film songs become popular. Aside from your own, which ones stood out to you?

Definitely *Chand Mamaby* Pritom Hasan from the film *Borbaad*. I also really liked *Ektukhaani Mon* by Tahsan Khan and Masha from *Daagi*. I’m happy that all five films released during Eid had a good response. If we keep up this momentum, our industry will continue to grow—and that includes the music scene as well.

Since your acting debut, your appearance has changed dramatically. Do you miss your previous look?

Honestly, no. I carried that look for a long time. I can always go back to it if I want, but right now, I’m enjoying the change. Since I’m acting alongside making music, I don’t want to be tied to one look.

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Noboborsho Concert
April 13 | 2pm onwards
Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka University



Chhayanaut Borshoboron
April 14 | 7am onwards
Ramna Batamul



Play: ‘12 Angry Men’
April 17 | 7pm-8:30pm
Experimental Theatre Hall,
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

STYLE STATEMENT
ADRIEN BRODY

Oscar-winning actor Adrien Brody, who captivated audiences with his performance in *Brutalist*, recently fronted J Crew’s Spring 2025 menswear campaign after becoming the new face of the brand.

Clad in a rich navy sweater paired with coordinating sleek trousers, Brody exudes understated elegance—his minimalist ensemble enhanced by sharp tailoring and natural charisma.

J Crew handpicked the versatile actor to showcase one of their spring styles, hailed for its crisp structure and effortless appeal.

TRENDY STREAMS

<p>HBO Max The Last Of Us</p>	<p>Hulu The Handmaid's Tale</p>	<p>Bongo How Sweet</p>	<p>Hoichoi Jimmi</p>	<p>Chorki Myself Allen Swapan 2</p>
--	--	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------	--

1-MINUTE REVIEW

‘THE MEHTA BOYS’
Exploring the unspoken bonds of family

In his directorial debut, *The Mehta Boys*, actor-turned-director Boman Irani offers a heartfelt portrayal of an urban Indian family, exploring the timeless father-son dynamic.

Along with co-writer Alexander Dinelaris, Irani skillfully navigates a fractured relationship, leaving a lasting emotional impact. The film is rich in detail, filled with sadness, and offers a thoughtful dialogue between two generations without being preachy.

The premise is around Amay (played by Avinash Tiwary), a young architect, who returns home after his mother’s sudden death to find his father, Shiv (Boman Irani), emotionally withdrawn. Despite their shared grief, they remain distant.

In a revealing moment, Shiv questions Amay’s architectural knowledge, making Amay feel belittled and dismissive of his father’s outdated views, unaware that he himself is still a work in progress—a dynamic that is profoundly represented.

The production design, camera work, and score enhance the film’s atmosphere. Motifs like the sound of a car and Holi’s vibrant colors transform the ordinary into magic. Symbolic elements, such as the red sari and white veni, represent grief and memories, while the film contrasts modern Indian architecture with father-son dynamics.

WHAT'S PLAYING

‘Azizam’
by Ed Sheeran

AZIZAM

Ed Sheeran’s *Azizam* is a radiant blend of global pop and Persian musical heritage, released in celebration of Nowruz—the Persian New Year.

Produced by Stockholm-based Ilya Salmanzadeh, the track draws heavily on Iranian instrumentation, incorporating the sounds of the *daf* and *santur* into a bright, danceable hook. It moreover features backing vocals from legendary Iranian pop stars Arash and Andy.

Azizam stands out for its vibrant arrangement—mixing traditional Persian rhythms with polished Western pop production. Its chorus, driven by layered percussion and a soaring melody, is both infectious and nostalgic, echoing the communal joy of Nowruz celebrations.

The music video, which quickly garnered over 8 million views within two days, is a colourful and visually rich tribute to Iranian culture. Filled with symbolic imagery, traditional dance, and family gatherings, the video amplifies the track’s celebratory tone while offering a global stage for Persian identity.

From wedding halls to festival playlists, *Azizam* is poised to become a cross-cultural anthem.