

BANGLADESHI 'KEN' IN DHAKA

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

From riding around in a CNG while wearing a lungi to walking the red carpet at the Prothom Alo Awards—Ramzan Miah's short trip to Dhaka was anything but boring. The Bangladeshi 'Ken', known for his appearances in major Hollywood productions like *Barbie*, *Wicked*, and *Aladdin*, continues to make the country proud as he juggles acting, dancing, and interviewing some of Hollywood's biggest names.

"Originally, my trip to Dhaka was meant to be short—I came to relax. But a skincare brand reached out, and I ended up working for it," said Ramzan Miah. "I was happy to meet friends and explore the city by CNG and rickshaw. I've

been sightseeing in Old Dhaka, learning about the history behind the buildings. I even visited a mosque here for the first time. Dhaka feels magical—busy, yes, but full of love and respect. Everyone works so hard, and I just feel content being here."

Recently, two of Ramzan's videos went viral—one of him roaming the streets of Dhaka in a lungi, and another wearing a sherwani in the UK.

"Lungi is part of my tradition and my community," he explained. "If I don't embrace and share that, I feel like I'm losing something important. I'm not trying to be someone else—I'm trying to represent my roots. The lungi, the sherwani—they're all part of who I am. When I posted the sherwani look a month ago, it went viral. People saw someone they could relate to—'Ramzan bhai' in a way that reflects their own lives. I wear lungis regularly, so I thought, why not normalise that here? Representing our culture abroad is vital. We're a minority, and we need to highlight our culture as much as we can."

Despite the love and support online, Ramzan has also faced hate and racism. "I get a lot of abusive comments—people calling me things like 'Black monkey' or using racial slurs like the N-word. Some say, 'He's a CNG driver, why is he a model?' Sadly, I get these kinds of comments daily. But I've learned it comes from insecurity—people who lash out because they see someone like me doing things they never imagined possible. I've grown a thick skin, but it's disheartening to know that racism still exists, sometimes even from people within my community. I try to change the narrative by being more visible. The more I work, the more the negativity has started to fade."

Dance has been a key part of Ramzan's journey to Hollywood. "I started with Bangladeshi *natoks* when I was young, and as I grew older, I fell in love with dance. I trained seriously, and that helped me land roles in *Wicked*, *Barbie*, and *Aladdin*. For *Barbie*, they needed a dancer who could act, move, and embody a 'Ken'. I ended up filming for three months. I even had to learn fight choreography for a fight scene between the Kens—something I had never done before."

Wicked was another milestone. "That one was

special," he said. "I auditioned while I was in Dhaka for *Barbie*'s premiere. I always carry my camera and tripod with me. My agent called and said, 'Ramzan, we need an audition tape now.' I told him, 'Send me the scene,' and I filmed it right there in the hotel room. I'm always ready for a challenge."

Given the availability of limited roles for South Asian actors and the growing competition, Ramzan believes that visibility is key. "Social media plays a huge role. It connects you with directors, casting agents, and fellow creatives. Friends are important too—if you surround yourself with other creative people, you can produce your own films, create your own dance pieces, tell your own stories."

One of his roles even came directly through social media. "I was cast in Ed Sheeran's music video *Azizam* because of my online presence. They found my profile and thought I was stylish, a strong dancer, and could act—so they cast me. That's the power of digital visibility."

Beyond acting and dancing, Ramzan also loves to interview big names in Hollywood. "Film premieres in the UK have become more inclusive—they're inviting social media influencers as part of their marketing strategy. I've had the chance to interview the cast and directors of *Lilo & Stitch*, and even the director of *Thunderbolts*. They wanted someone from the South Asian community as a representative, and it's also a great way for me to connect with directors and learn what they look for during casting. It's another way to help my community and see the possibilities."

When asked which interview stood out the most, Ramzan didn't hesitate, affirming, "Interviewing Auli i Cravalho, the voice of Moana, was amazing. She was super cool, got my name right, and even said she wanted to visit Bangladesh! I asked her how *Moana* connects to culture, and she loved that question. I told her I'm Bangladeshi and love embracing my culture. I asked if there's a journey she'd love to experience more, and she said, 'I'd love to experience Bangladesh.' Next time I interview any director or producer, I'll ask them a question like, 'Can we shoot the next part in Bangladesh?'"

Ramzan has earned the nickname 'Bangladeshi Ken', a title he embraces with pride. "Everywhere I went in Dhaka, people asked, 'Oh my God, are you Ken from *Barbie*?' I think it's going to stick—and honestly, I love it. It's amazing to see people so proud to see a Bangladeshi in a big Hollywood film. I don't mind being called Bangladeshi Ken because it gives people hope. If they can see me, maybe they can imagine themselves there too. That's what makes it special. I want to inspire others to write their own stories and chase their dreams."



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHEED



Nazrul Concert
May 31 | 5 pm onwards
Manik Mia Avenue



Play: Dilnawaz
June 3-4 | 7 pm-8 pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Printmaking Workshop: Bhashajog
June 13-21 | 10 am-6 pm
National Art Gallery

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



TV TALKIES

'THE STUDIO' Where Hollywood gets roasted

The Studio is a whirlwind comedy that hides its cleverness behind nonstop jokes and a dazzling visual trick: every episode unfolds in extended, uninterrupted takes.

Seth Rogen plays Matt Remick, a film executive thrust into a high-stakes promotion just as he's losing faith in Hollywood's soul. While Rogen's signature clueless charm brings laughs, it can grow repetitive. Still, the show's true strength lies in its technical brilliance—cinematography, editing, and direction combine to pull off bold comedic stunts with flair.

The supporting cast, including Catherine O'Hara and Bryan Cranston, deliver hilarious performances that keep things lively even when the satire softens. With slapstick chaos, inside-industry jabs, and nods to cinema's golden age, *The Studio* blends old-school glam with modern absurdity.

Though its gimmick sometimes wears thin, the show remains visually inventive and riotously funny. Ultimately, it's a loving roast of Hollywood—a chaotic dreamland where even the dumbest jokes are executed with precision.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Forget You Not



Apple TV+
Fountain of Youth



Bongo
Mirza



Chorki
Gulmohor



Hoichoi
Bohemian Ghora



WHAT'S PLAYING

'What I Want' by Morgan Wallen & Tate McRae

In *'What I Want'*, Morgan Wallen and Tate McRae deliver a simmering collaboration that fuses the rugged intimacy of country with the glassy introspection of contemporary pop. The track, anchored by hushed guitars, atmospheric production, and aching vocal interplay—feels like an elegy for a relationship caught between longing and resignation.

Drawn from Wallen's juggernaut album *I'm the Problem*, the song offers a rare emotional vulnerability from both artisies. Wallen's gravelled voice folds into McRae's crystalline falsetto as they trade confessions, unraveling the delicate choreography of a romance undone by mismatched desires.

Released without an official music video (save for a minimalist lyric video), *'What I Want'* nevertheless made a seismic chart debut. It entered the Billboard Hot 100 at No 1—Wallen's fourth time at the summit, McRae's first. In its debut week, it drew over 31 million streams and made Wallen the first country artiste to claim the Hot 100's top three spots.

