



RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

However, the road to success wasn't all that easy. Before the lights and the lens came rejection slips and pandemic-induced pauses. Yet, quitting was never an option. "Giving up" simply didn't exist in his vocabulary.

"When I first got a call to audition for an Airtel commercial back in 2017, I gave it my all, but I was rejected. Then they called me again for another ad, and I thought maybe I messed up the first time. So, I went all in again. Still, nothing."

He laughs, "I actually started thinking maybe I wasn't meant for this. But then, the third time became the charm! I bagged a Bashundhara Tissue commercial, and I haven't looked back since."

And that's no exaggeration. From 2017 to now, Saad has featured in an estimated 70 to 80 commercials. Ironic twist? "Airtel—the brand that rejected me a few times—ended up being the one I worked with the most. I've done 18 TVCs and OVCs for them," he adds with a smile.

It wasn't until the pandemic that Saad's career truly shifted. With time to reflect and binge, he turned to OTT content and rediscovered his passion for storytelling. His father, a lifelong cinephile, only fuelled the fire.

In 2020, Saad got his first acting break in *BnG*, and audiences immediately connected with his smooth-talking, cool portrayal of Sameer. "The love I got from fiction work was on a whole different level," he recalls. "People were recognising me, reaching out online, it felt amazing."

Soon after came a role in the hit series *Karagar*, where he played young Alfred. "I thought, 'This is it, my acting career is finally happening.' But then... things just stalled. The calls stopped coming in. I kept auditioning, trying to stay visible, but it was tough."

After playing his share of 'sweet guy' roles, *Taandob* changed everything. The project gave Saad the chance to dive into something deeper, darker, and show a whole new side of his acting.

"When I posted behind-the-scenes photos with Jaya Ahsan, they went viral," Saad says. "People who hadn't even seen the movie were like, 'Wait, why are they together?'"

**You might know him as Sameer from Bongo's *BnG*, or perhaps you recognise him as Jaya Ahsan's younger brother in *Taandob*—either way, Saad Salmi Naovi is fast becoming a name to remember. With his tall frame, dashing looks, and effortless charm, he's already a familiar face in commercials and is steadily making his mark in television dramas and OTT platforms.**

Meeting Jaya Ahsan was, in his words, a moment. "I was honestly star-struck when I first saw her. To break the ice, I said, 'Hello apu, ami apnar photo bhai' (Hi apu, I'm your younger brother). Later, we had this scene where I am playing FIFA and she walks in to bug me. I was super nervous, just sitting on the sofa. But she was so relaxed and warm—I felt as though she was my real sister. She made the scene feel natural."

One of *Taandob*'s most powerful sequences was filmed at Bogambara Prison in Sri Lanka—a real jail.

Although he didn't share screen time with Shakib Khan, he made it a point to observe the superstar closely. "Once Shakib Khan steps into acting mode, he fully immerses himself in the role. Watching him perform made me realise—I need to feel what my character feels. Not just act it."

The day of his big prison scene, Saad committed fully. "From the moment I arrived on set, I stayed in character. During makeup, I had this somber expression. I walked to the set barefoot, imagining I'd been locked up for six to seven months. I even improvised a limp to show that my character had been physically worn down. From 2pm till 11pm, I stayed in character, barely breaking even between takes."

Outside of acting, Saad has earned a reputation for his sharp sense of humour, especially on social media.

"During Covid, I started posting funny content. My friends know me as the 'meme king,'" he says. "I used to post 20 to 25 memes a day—my whole algorithm was built around it. My humour really helped boost my popularity."

Whether he's bringing laughs with his viral wit or by losing himself in the emotional weight of a prison scene, there's a sincerity to Saad's journey that makes him stand out in a crowded industry. As he continues to evolve, one thing's certain: this is only the beginning.

# Only the beginning for NAOVI



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## STYLE STATEMENT

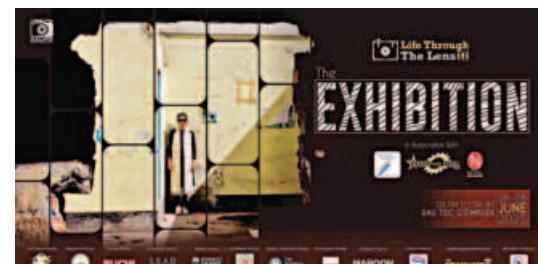
## SCARLETT JOHANSSON

Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson recently brought classic elegance to the fore in a strapless Schiaparelli gown that shimmered with soft pink brilliance, for the *Jurassic World Rebirth* photo call in London. The look, intricately embellished throughout, featured a scooped neckline with sculptural structure, while corsetry elements—complete with boning and a cinched waist—offered a statuesque silhouette.

Draped detailing at the hips melted into a graceful column skirt, exuding quiet drama. Hairstylist Renato Campora swept her hair into glossy, cascading waves with a deep side part, while makeup artist Hung Vanngo balanced bold brows and petal-pink eyes with a softly muted lip—timeless beauty, perfectly reimagined.



## OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



## Exhibition: Life Through the Lens II

June 26-30 | 6 am-11:45 pm  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University



## Play: Agni Shraban

June 27-28 | 7 pm-8:20 pm  
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



## Pothey Holo Dekha

June 29 | 2 pm-7 pm  
Pan Pacific Sonargaon

## TV TALKIES

## 'Mercy for None'

Blood, grief, and gangland grit

*Mercy for None* on Netflix may echo themes of *John Wick*, but it carves out its own brutal identity through raw South Korean thriller sensibilities. Actor So Ji-seob is magnetic as Nam Ki-jun, a grief-stricken ex-gangster dragged back into a blood-soaked vendetta.

The story isn't complex—revenge and retribution—but it's executed with visceral energy and cinematic flair. Hand-to-hand fights replace gunplay, lending the action a gritty, up-close intensity reminiscent of the hit Korean film *Oldboy*.

Gong Myoung adds unpredictable menace as an unhinged mob heir, while other gang leaders add flavour to an otherwise spare cast. Though the characters lack deep introspection and the plot occasionally defies logic, the relentless pacing and impactful performances elevate the experience.



This is a series where bones break, walls bleed, and justice is served through sheer force. While not perfect, *Mercy for None* delivers a satisfying, stylish ride through the underworld, anchored by So Ji-seob's emotionally grounded and physically fierce performance.

## WHAT'S PLAYING

## 'OWA OWA' by Lil Tecca

Lil Tecca channels vintage charm and modern swagger on *Owa Owa*, a nostalgic-yet-fresh track that samples The Buggles' iconic song *Video Killed the Radio Star*. The melodic single sees Tecca blending smooth vocals with confident bars, offering a glimpse into his rise from humble beginnings to hip-hop's main stage.

Backed by the retro-pop bounce of the 80s, Tecca spins a tale of passion, persistence, and self-belief—seducing both his muse and his listeners with raw authenticity. The music video, peppered with throwback visuals, mirrors this balance of past and present.

Touted by fans as the 'Song of the Summer,' *Owa Owa* leads the charge for Tecca's upcoming album *DOPAMINE*, which promises to be his most defining work yet.

With over 32 million Spotify streams and a debut at No 52 on the Spotify Global Chart, the single has quickly become a fan favourite.

## TRENDY STREAMS

## Netflix Dept Q



## Prime Video Panchayat



## HBO Max Back to the Frontier



## Apple TV+ The Wild ones



## Hulu The Amateur

