

Whether it's the soul-stirring 'Buker Ba Pashe', the tender pull of 'Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi', or the rain-soaked longing of 'Tumi Brishti Cheyechho Bole'—behind these tracks stands one voice quietly stealing the show—Mahtim Shakib. Under this young talent's belt are standout tracks like 'Pakhi Pakhi Mon' and 'Megh Balika'—songs that earned him back-to-back wins at the Blender's Choice The Daily Star - OTT & Digital Content Awards.

SHARMIN JOYA

Mahtim dropped by The Daily Star's office for an exclusive photoshoot and a candid chat, where he spilled some tea about his career over cups of lemon tea. He began his musical journey in 2018 with three covers before making his original debut. "I started with a Rabindranath mashup, *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam*, and *Ei Poth Jodi Na Shesh Hoy*. Within a month, I released my first originals, *Mon Bojhena* and then *Buker Ba Pashe*, he reminisced. "I feel fortunate that people accepted me so early on."

Like many Bangladeshi kids, Mahtim once dreamed of becoming a cricketer—and even an astronaut. "But none of those seemed to be my path; only music remained. In 2010, I participated in a reality show, and in 2013, when my voice changed during puberty, I realised how much I missed singing. That's when I knew music was what I wanted to pursue."

Mahtim began training at age four at Chakrabak Academy. "My first steps came from Nishi Sir, Shuvro Sir, and Dipu Sir. I was fortunate to train under Ustaad Rafiq Mahmud, and now I'm learning folk and dotara from Fakir Arif Baul."

As a trained singer, did starting with covers ever bother him, given the orthodox view that artistes should begin with originals?

"If we don't cover Rabindra Sangeet or Nazrul Sangeet, aren't we drifting from our roots? Even our film songs—*Beder Meye Jochhona*, *Chumki Cholechhe Eka Pothe*, *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam*—these are cultural crown jewels we cannot ignore."

He added, "It's true some believe cover artistes struggle with originality, but when I started, I was well received."

Though he loves folk, he also explored ghazals and contemporary genres. Many may not know his debut playback was in the 2019 Shakib Khan film *Moner Moto Manush Pailam Na*. The song *Pran Juriye Jay*, composed by Shafiq Tuhin, was a duet with Kheya.

How did his voice reach West Bengal's music directors? "It was the brilliant Arindom Bhattacharya. He was in Dhaka for personal work and reached out to meet me. He said he thought *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam* was my original and wanted to pro quo it for SVF. I told him it wasn't mine (laughs). He later said he found my vocal texture interesting and wanted to work with me someday."

During COVID, SVF called him for his Tollywood debut with *Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi*—and that's how it began.

In today's content-driven world, Mahtim shares new songs regularly, including covers. "The algorithm has shifted; it's less about quality and more about quantity. To stay in the game, we must post regularly. But I can't create

a meaningful new track every day—art takes time."

For Mahtim, music isn't merely a career or passion. As a self-critical artiste, he has focused more on originals this year. "Music is like breathing—something I love far beyond earning a living." He has voiced for films like *Dewaler Desh* (2024, *Beche Jaao Bhalobasha*) and *Jongli* (2025, *Maya Pakhi*), and in Tollywood films like *Prem Tame* (2021, *Takey Olpo Kachhe Dakchhi*) and *Cheeni 2* (2023, *Tumi Jantei Parona*).

An old soul at heart, he uses social media strategically. He runs two YouTube channels and pages on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok—but only for professional purposes. "I'm not someone who's always on the phone (laughs)! I have no personal accounts. I only appear online as much as needed for work. You're either a consumer or a creator; I'd rather focus on creating quality content and practising music. It takes time and energy. I also have a team to manage."

With everything combined, leisure is scarce. "Apart from practising my craft, my me-time is meditating, working out, and spending time with my beloved cat. My life is 95% music; the rest is family and friends—and I must admit that my close ones have compromised a lot for me."

With a contract at SVF until 2027, Mahtim hopes to explore more originals, including folk and other genres.

He considers himself not just a musician but a storyteller. "I like telling stories, through singing, writing, or directing music videos. I've tried acting in commercials, but it didn't feel right. I also used to do digital painting."

Clearing a few misconceptions about this artiste, he shared, "First, people often mispronounce my name, and sometimes make it something else, even Mahtab! Then they assume I'm very young—but I'm not! Some think I'm from India, which is untrue. I was born and raised in Dhaka. I'm not from Chittagong either—my grandparents are from Narshingdi. There's more, but let's save that for another time!"

Behind the curtains of MAHTIM'S MELODY



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TRENDY STREAMS

NETFLIX
The Girlfriend



APPLE TV+
Down Cemetery Road



HULU
Percy Jackson and The Olympians



CHORKI
Thursday Night



HOICHOI
Anusandhan



OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



'Raga Odyssey' | Eastern Classical Festival
Dec 5- 6 | 5pm - 11pm
Banani Block A, Banani



'Cafe de Volte'
Dec 7-8 | 7:30pm - 9pm
Studio Theater Hall, BSA



'Monoscura-Vision Through Monochrome'
Dec 9-11 | 12pm onwards
Army IBA, Savar

STYLE STATEMENT

MILEY CYRUS



At the world premiere of *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, Miley Cyrus commanded the red carpet with a look that blended rock-star confidence with old-Hollywood drama. Draped in a sweeping black mermaid gown embellished with jet-black sequins, she brought a bold, midnight shimmer to the premiere's fiery backdrop. The bodice's sculpted silhouette flowed into cascading tulle tiers, creating a silhouette that shifted effortlessly between edgy and ethereal. Her tousled waves, smoky eyes and diamond necklace echoed Miley's signature balance of glamour and rebellion, while her visible tattoos added a raw texture to the ensemble.

'PRIME TARGET'

TV TALKIES



Apple TV+ dives into high-stakes paranoia with Prime Target, a tightly wound conspiracy thriller led by Leo Woodall. The series follows a Cambridge mathematician who becomes the focus of a global manhunt after stumbling onto a predictive algorithm tied to political assassinations. Each episode layers tension with sleek pacing, shadowy espionage, and a sense of technological dread that feels alarmingly contemporary. A sharp, binge-ready watch for fans of intelligent, fast-moving thrillers.

WHAT'S PLAYING

'End of Beginning' by Djo



Djo's *End of Beginning* drifts in like a half-remembered dream – the kind that flickers at the edge of nostalgia, soft around the edges but unmistakably electric. Joe Keery slips into his synth-soaked alter ego with ease, sending his voice gliding over warm bass lines and neon-lit production that feels lifted from an '80s after-hours universe. It's intimate, a little uncanny, and achingly self-aware – very much the sonic cousin of the world that first made him a cultural fixture.

And yes, the *Stranger Things* shadow is impossible to ignore. There's a touch of Hawkins in its mood: that bittersweet blend of childhood echoes, suburban melancholy, and the quiet terror of growing up.

After its viral revival, *End of Beginning* has surged past hundreds of millions of streams, becoming a generational comfort track. It's the kind of song you play on a night when the streetlights blur and your younger self feels just a few steps behind you.