

Open to any medium, any challenge: Rizvi

SHARMIN JOYA

Born in Dhaka's Mirpur and raised in Kushtia—the land of Lalon Shah—actor Rizvi Rizu's journey into the spotlight is anything but conventional. Long before stepping in front of the camera, he quietly nurtured a passion for music, a chapter of his life that remains largely unknown to many.

Currently, the actor is drawing fresh attention for his striking performance as Tonmoy in Raihan Rafi's *Pressure Cooker*, once again proving his ability to leave a lasting impression on audiences. Earlier, he won hearts for his performance in *Hawa, Feu, Dui Shaw*, and *Priyo Maloti*.

Beginning with *Pressure Cooker*, he said, "This is one character that feels like a blessing to me, and I am grateful to Rafi for giving me this role," Rizvi said, reflecting with quiet gratitude. The response to his latest performance has been overwhelming—something he deeply values. For him, this role holds a special place, one that will remain close to his heart for many reasons.

"Even after I completed the role, parts of the character stayed with me—the calmness, the silence, the emotional depth, and the void



PHOTO: ZIAUDDIN SHIPLU

demands. People often don't recognise me in person. When I go to theatres, I see audiences surrounding my co-artists for selfies or conversations, while I go unnoticed," he said with a smile. "Only a few people recognise me and come forward with appreciation. But to be honest, that doesn't matter much. What truly matters is when audiences connect with my performance—when they believe in the character I've brought to life. That, to me, is the greatest achievement."

He took him back to where it all began—not as an actor, but as a musician.

"It was around 2011. I was part of a band as the lead vocalist. Arafat Mohsin Nidhi was on drums, Shovon-Mejbaour Rahman Sumon's brother—played guitar, and Pritu was our bassist," he recalled. Those early days, however, were far from easy. Financial struggles often made it difficult to arrange money even for practice sessions.

At one point, he returned to Kushtia—a place he still associates with a deep sense of peace. "I went back for a while. Kushtia has always given me a kind of calm I can't explain," he said.

He later returned to Dhaka and joined a production house, a move that would quietly reshape his path. Through that, he was introduced to Mejbaur Rahman Sumon. "He

gave me my first break as Parkes in *Hawa*—a role that stayed with me for a long time," he added.

Reflecting on his journey, Rizvi emphasised how unplanned it all was. "I was never formally trained in music, nor did I come from theatre or have any acting background. I consider it a God-gifted ability," he said. "My parents used to sing, though not professionally, and two of my uncles were trained in Nazrul Sangeet. So perhaps it was always there—I just nurtured it over time. And of course, my environment played a big role."

Pulled by his love for art, Rizvi made a difficult but defining choice—he left behind a stable corporate job to follow his passion. "I knew it wouldn't be easy to survive just by acting, but I still took that risk," he said. "I don't think I've reached a place where people recognise me instantly, but that's okay—I want to keep doing my craft with honesty."

What keeps him going is the work itself. He isn't chasing fame as much as he is searching for meaningful roles—ones that challenge him and allow him to immerse fully.

"I'm open to any medium, as long as the character excites me and gives me space to explore," he shared. "Because for me, it's never just about acting—it's about becoming the character and living it."



Xefar-Pritom's first on-screen pairing to release on Binge

Shihab Shaheen's romantic web film *Tumi Ami Shudhu*, starring singer turned actors Xefar Rahman and Pritom Hasan, finally has a release date. The web film will premiere on Binge this Pohela Boishakh.

The project was announced last year and created strong curiosity. Its release was delayed due to technical issues on the platform.

The director describes *Tumi Ami Shudhu* as a contemporary love story with a fresh narrative approach. He expressed confidence in the lead actors, citing their previous performances in his works.

Pritom called the collaboration exciting, while Xefar described it as a long-awaited opportunity. Both said the film offers freshness and emotional depth for audiences.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'Photo Adda with Sharif Sarker'

An evening of images and insight unfolds as photographer Sharif Sarker reflects on three decades behind the lens, from aviation to street narratives. Hosted by Abir Abdullah, the *adda* invites audiences into a thoughtful exchange on craft, perspective, and the evolving language of photography.

Date: Saturday | April 4, 2026
Time: 6 pm–8 pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

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evoked by his story. Tonmoy made me wonder if I could be like him. But over time, I realised how much of him already exists in me. I found myself connecting with him in many ways," he shared.

Speaking about the audience's reaction, Rizvi revealed an interesting contrast between on-screen recognition and real-life anonymity. Despite the buzz on social media and praise from senior and acclaimed artistes, he remains grounded.

"Interestingly, after most of my releases, I change my look back to normal, as many of my appearances are quite different and, at times, unconventional—depending on the character's

NEWS

Bangladesh trapped

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the CAB's 13-point demand, calling for full ownership of natural resources, a ban on exports, rapid development of renewable energy, and accountability for "energy crimes".

He suggested installing solar panels in cantonments and wind projects along the coast. He also urged the authorities to dismantle the "VIP culture", citing excessive consumption by influential groups as a key problem.

Drawing parallels between the ongoing global oil crisis and the fallout from the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, he said the new government faces a severe energy challenge a month into its tenure.

Some advisers and special assistants of the interim government acted as corporate lobbyists to secure deals for foreign firms, Anu

Muhammad said, adding that in the contracts that are signed, people from the same side sit on both sides of the table.

He went on to accuse the former US ambassador Peter Haas of lobbying for American firms to secure offshore oil and gas blocks under production-sharing contracts favouring foreign companies.

After taking an early retirement from the US State Department, he became the strategic adviser for the Texas-based oil and natural gas company Excelerate Energy.

Narsingdi-5 lawmaker Md Ashraf Uddin; Farida Akhter, former fisheries and livestock adviser; Ruhin Hossain Prince, former secretary general of the Communist Party of Bangladesh; and Saiful Huq, general secretary of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh, spoke among others.

Four more children die

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Her samples have been sent to the laboratory of the Institute of Public Health in Dhaka to determine if she indeed died from measles, Alam said.

Earlier, six children died at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute and five at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH), with four of the victims hailing from Chapainawabganj.

Although the Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute reported six suspected measles deaths this year, the authorities could confirm three deaths, said Reaz Mubarak, the institute's acting director.

A total of 2,100 patients with suspected measles cases were admitted to the hospital this year as of Sunday, according to officials at the Directorate General of Health Services.

Of them, 676 tested positive, an official said, wishing not to be named. Among the measles patients, 70.9 percent did not receive any vaccination for the infection; around 17 percent took the first dose and 11.2 percent both the doses, he said.

In Shariatpur, 25 samples were collected from different parts of the district after symptoms were identified over the past two weeks and sent to Dhaka for testing.

Of them, 15 were confirmed positive, said Shariatpur Civil Surgeon Rehan Uddin.

Three children have died at the IDH in Dhaka, he said. Those deaths were supposed to be included among the 25 deaths at IDH.

In Patuakhali, 45 patients have been hospitalised in the district in the past month. No deaths have been reported so far, according to the Office of Civil Surgeon Khaledul Rahman.

In Sylhet, a dedicated isolation unit has been opened at Shaheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital to manage the influx of patients.

As of yesterday, 16 patients were receiving treatment at the facility, with two in critical condition, said Resident Medical Officer Mizanur Rahman.

In Chandpur, an isolation unit at Chandpur General Hospital has also been opened to handle the growing number of patients.

As of yesterday, 28 children had been admitted for treatment, said Civil Surgeon Nure Alam Din.

In Gazipur, measles cases have also risen, with 15 new infections reported in the district, said Civil Surgeon Mamunur Rahman.

(Our district correspondents from Shariatpur, Sylhet, Gazipur and Patuakhali also contributed to the report)

US trade deal

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flexibility during the crisis," Debapriya said.

The eminent economist made the remark in a paper presented at a media briefing organised to share thoughts on the first budget of the new government at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in the capital.

It is now a matter of concern for the government whether economic engagement with economies such as China and Russia will be impeded, he added.

"Now, foreign policy has become linked with the economy. So, we have a geopolitical limitation in front of us."

Debapriya, a distinguished fellow of CPD, said Bangladesh faces three macroeconomic challenges—rising power subsidies, higher energy import bills, and increased dollar requirements to pay foreign suppliers.

Surging prices are projected to cause a \$4.8 billion rise in annual energy costs, which is 1.1 percent of gross domestic product, widening deficits in the country's external accounts, he said.

"Increased dollar demand for fuel will further devalue the taka, while regional instability puts pressure on the primary stabiliser of the balance of payments," he said, adding that the war has put remittance inflows at risk as Gulf countries account for about half of total remittances.

He said the full pass-through of increased energy import costs risks fuelling high inflation, especially food inflation, which will raise poverty, and disparity.

CPD Additional Research Director Towfiqul Islam Khan also spoke at the event.

Israel passes

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The measure was promoted by Itamar Ben-Gvir, the far-right national security minister who wore noose-shaped lapel pins in the run-up to the vote.

"This is a day of justice for the murdered, a day of deterrence for enemies," Ben-Gvir said in parliament. "Whoever chooses terror chooses death."

Israel's leading rights groups decried the law as "an act of institutionalized discrimination and racist violence against Palestinians." The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said it filed an appeal against the law with Israel's Supreme Court.

The law is the latest action by Netanyahu's nationalist-religious coalition to raise concern among Israel's Western allies, who have also been critical of settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

ICT may probe 1/11 crimes, 'crossfires'

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"Law enforcement agencies were used, victims were taken to different locations, and staged 'arms recovery' incidents were carried out before they were killed in so-called crossfires. The same narrative was repeatedly presented in each case."

The prosecution has already instructed its investigation agency to compile a nationwide list of such incidents, he added.

He added that once a comprehensive list is prepared, the tribunal would determine which cases warrant adjudication under its mandate.

The chief prosecutor also raised concerns over overlapping investigations and multiple cases

Govt weighs online classes

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of the long Eid-ul-Fitr holidays and various movements across the country.

To make up for those losses, the government was also planning to run schools six days a week instead of five for the time being, Ehsanul said.

According to the minister, the prime minister has already given directions on the matter, and the ministry is working accordingly.

Tarique also discussed with Ehsanul ways to reduce traffic congestion in the capital when children go to or leave school, and directed the ministry to explore practical alternatives, the Prime Minister's Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman said.

Atikur said that in some cases a large number of private cars gather in front of schools during opening and closing hours, worsening congestion on nearby streets.

He cited an example in the capital where around 100 cars reportedly crowd in front of a school with just around 150 students, creating severe traffic jams and causing difficulties for students trying to reach the institution.

After the minister's briefing, the education ministry held a meeting with teachers from various schools and colleges in Dhaka, alongside officials from the education boards and the ministry.

filed regarding the atrocities during the 2024 student movement against discrimination. Since August 5, numerous cases have been lodged nationwide—both with police stations and with courts—often naming hundreds of accused in a single case.

"In many cases, 400 to 500 people have been named. We don't believe all of them are guilty. There are both perpetrators and innocent individuals," he said, warning of "pick-and-choose" practices.

Aminul alleged that inconsistencies have been found, including submitting final reports for some, and, in some cases, allowing actual perpetrators to evade justice while innocent people remain in jail.

week, with in-person lessons on the remaining three days.

Under the plan, online classes may be scheduled on alternate days, meaning if a school holds online classes on Saturday, in-person lessons will be given on Sunday.

Sources said teachers would remain present at their institutions while conducting online lessons. Practical classes would continue in person.

They added that the proposal is still at the ministry level. A final decision will be made only after consultation with the prime minister and discussion at the cabinet.

Meanwhile, Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury said yesterday that the government has decided to introduce music education alongside regular academic studies from the primary to secondary levels.

He explained that the initiative would be carried out by the cultural affairs ministry through a cluster-based model, under which music instructors would travel across upazilas to teach at multiple institutions.

Speaking to reporters after attending a programme organised by the US Embassy at Dhaka University, the minister added that the government had already resolved to expand cultural activities in schools across every district and upazila.

Nitai further noted that music competitions, similar to those arranged by the youth and sports ministry, were already being held in educational institutions to encourage cultural engagement among students.

To address the issue, the prosecution has sought details of all cases filed across the country after August 5, 2024. "We have already received copies of around 500 to 700 cases. We expect to have all cases from across the country within a couple of days," he said.

A dedicated team will review the cases to ensure that no offender escapes justice and no innocent suffers, he added.

The chief prosecutor also warned against the misuse of cases for harassment or financial gain. "If we find that anyone has filed false cases to harass others, we will recommend action against them under existing laws," he said, referring to allegations of "case trading".

'Iran will be at World Cup'

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New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. They are then scheduled to play Belgium in Los Angeles on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 27.

Iran's participation had been thrown into doubt by the war with the US and Israel that broke out on February 28.

The Iranian football federation said earlier this month it was "negotiating" with FIFA to relocate the country's World Cup matches from the United States to Mexico.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also said that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if needed.

Infantino initially said that US President Donald Trump had given assurances that the Iranian team would still be welcome.

But Trump then stated that Iran's team should not travel to the tournament "for their own life and safety".

Iran hit back at Trump's comments, saying that "no one can exclude Iran's national team from the World Cup".

On March 19, Infantino said FIFA was committed to making sure the World Cup goes ahead "as scheduled" with "all teams" taking part.

Iran also played a friendly against Nigeria in Turkish town Belek last Friday.

Iran's players wore black armbands and posed with school rucksacks as the national anthem played to remember the victims of a strike on a primary school in Iran on the first day of the Middle East war.