



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Afzal Hossain discusses recent project, tribute to Ferdousi Majumdar

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SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Afzal Hossain remains one of Bangladesh's most enduring screen icons—once the most celebrated leading man of television dramas and still active across OTT platforms, films, and television today. A recipient of the Ekushey Padak, his creative identity extends beyond acting; he is also an accomplished director, painter, and writer.

He has recently appeared in the telefilm *Zohra Begumer Ichapotro*, written by Tauquir Ahmed and directed by Arif Khan. In the project, he plays the elder son of veteran actress Ferdousi Majumdar. “There is still one more day of shooting left,” he noted.

The telefilm marks a reunion between the two artistes after many years. Afzal Hossain had written a drama titled *Shundor Sarbonash* long ago, in which Ferdousi Majumdar had



performed. This time, they share the screen again in a work that carries both personal and artistic significance.

Speaking about her, Afzal Hossain said, “She is one of the most distinguished artistes in this country—a truly gifted performer who has won audiences' hearts through her contributions in the art and cultural arena. She remains just as fluent and compelling on stage even now.”

He added that roles are rarely written with artistes of

her stature in mind. “However, this time it has happened. She plays the role of an actress in the telefilm—something quite fitting for her.”

He expressed admiration for her dedication and experience. “She still remembers many of her dialogues by heart. It feels wonderful to even think about it. Watching her closely and seeing her perform has been deeply inspiring. I truly enjoyed acting alongside her.”

Reflecting on the shoot, he

said the entire team worked with great joy. “Everyone involved approached the work with genuine enjoyment. We spent time chatting, taking breaks, and filming together. It felt as though certain emotions that had been lost over time were rediscovered.”

The telefilm also brings together artistes from multiple generations. “Yes, several generations have acted together in this project. That in itself is a valuable experience. The days we spent shooting were truly memorable.”

Afzal Hossain revealed that the project was initiated by him as a tribute. “I proposed making this telefilm to honour Ferdousi Majumdar. I felt she deserved such recognition. After completing the project, it feels like our wish has been fulfilled.”

Meanwhile, he is also set to appear in Nuhash Humayun's upcoming film *Moving Bangladesh*.



‘Tomader Golpo 2’ set to premiere this Eid

After gaining over 47 million views, the popular drama *Tomader Golpo* is returning with a sequel this Eid. The new instalment, titled *Tomader Golpo 2*, is directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz.

The first drama aired during Eid-ul-Fitr last year and received widespread praise from audiences. The story, centred on family emotions and relationships, attracted millions of viewers.

The sequel is now being produced with a script by Siddiqur Rahman. Shooting is currently underway. The drama is scheduled to air this upcoming Eid on Channel i and Cinemawala YouTube channel.

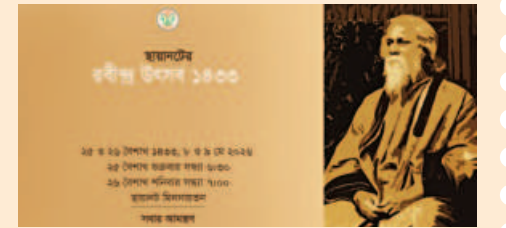
The cast includes Jovan, Totini, Intekhab Dinar, Deepa Khandakar, Monira Mithu, Saberi Alam, Dilara Zaman, Khairul Alam Sabuj, Dr Ejajul Islam, among others.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Rabindra Utsab 1433’

Chhayanaut marks the 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore with its annual two-day *Rabindra Utsab*, returning to a repertoire that has shaped its identity for decades. Featuring Rabindra Sangeet, recitation and dance, the programme brings together senior and emerging performers in a disciplined, collective reading of Tagore's work.

DATE: FRIDAY-SATURDAY | MAY 8-9, 2026
TIME: 6:30 PM-9:30 PM
VENUE: CHHAYANAUT SHANGSKRITI BHABAN, DHANMONDI



Irrfan Khan, Vidya Balan's ‘The Last Tenant’ released after 25 years

A long unreleased film starring Irrfan Khan and Vidya Balan has finally been released nearly 25 years after it was made. Titled *The Last Tenant*, the film premiered on YouTube on April 29, marking Irrfan Khan's death anniversary.

Directed by Sarthak Dasgupta, the project was shot around 2000 but remained shelved after its original footage was lost. A recovered VHS copy later made restoration possible. The film offers an early glimpse of both actors before their rise to prominence and remains their only on-screen collaboration.

Set around a reclusive musician preparing to leave the country, the story explores memory, loneliness and longing. Viewers have since shown strong interest in the archival release, revisiting a rare chapter of contemporary Indian cinema history.



NEWS

Urban primary healthcare moves to DGHS Dhaka seeks Beijing's support

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The following day, the Health Services Division asked all civil surgeons to take over the centres from the authorities concerned by April.

The Tk 1,209 crore second phase of UPHCSDP began in 2018 and ended in December last year.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, 8.37 lakh women received maternal services, including antenatal and postnatal care. Over 4 lakh children received treatment for diarrhoea, measles, respiratory diseases, and malnutrition during the period, according to the LGD's 2023-24 annual report.

After the project's expiry, city corporations and municipalities have been continuing services with support from NGOs.

The 23 municipalities include Sirajganj, Kushtia, Gopalganj, Kishoreganj, Faridpur, Shariatpur, Netrokona, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jagannathpur, Derai, Benapole, Tarabo, Laksam, Pirganj, Cox's Bazar, Jamalpur, and Patuakhali.

However, health experts say primary healthcare services remain relatively weak in the urban areas, forcing people to rely on curative care amid a growing urban population.

“This is definitely the right decision to hand over,” said Aminul Hasan, member secretary of the UHC Forum, a platform of health professionals and activists working towards universal health coverage (UHC).

“One of the major challenges in our health service delivery, particularly in urban health, has been governance.

The health ministry oversees almost everything except urban health. Bringing this under the ministry would improve coordination and implementation,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Responding to a question about managing a large number of facilities amid manpower shortages in the health department, he said, “There are, of course, management issues.”

“While this will certainly be a challenge, I believe coordination will ultimately improve if challenges can be addressed properly.”

The Prime Minister's Office in March formed a nine-member committee, led by the cabinet secretary, to review UPHCSDP and assess the possibility of handing over its infrastructure to the health ministry, sources said.

The April 22 meeting was chaired by LGRD State Minister Mir Shahe Alam. He told the meeting that the centres should be handed over to the health ministry, documents show.

Upon taking charge of the facilities, the health authority will operate, maintain, and repair them, the documents said, directing the authorities concerned to complete the handover by April.

Talking to this correspondent on Tuesday, Dhaka Civil Surgeon Mohammad Zillur Rahman said they already wrote to the two city corporations to hand over some 45 facilities.

Authorities of the city corporations are preparing checklists of equipment and other materials before formally

handing them over, he added.

The facilities continue to provide services, and to keep them operational without disruption, the city corporations have sought an inter-ministerial meeting to resolve outstanding issues, Zillur said.

Contacted yesterday, Jahane Ferdous Binte Rahman, chief health officer of Dhaka South City Corporation, said they already sent a list of their facilities to the Dhaka Civil Surgeon's Office.

She added that the health ministry has called a meeting on the issue today and hoped that everything would be clarified there.

On May 4, the ministry asked the Directorate General of Health Services to submit a report outlining the manpower, medical equipment, and other requirements needed to make those facilities functional, said ministry officials.

It sought details on the services that can be provided, the staffing structure for each centre, and the condition of the physical infrastructure, including the estimated repair and renovation costs needed to make them operational.

Speaking to this newspaper, Health Secretary Quamruzzaman Chowdhury said they were taking over the facilities following the PM's directives.

Replying to a question, he said they may retain existing manpower, apart from recruiting new staffers to operate the facilities. “Our aim is to improve primary healthcare in urban areas to reduce dependency on secondary and tertiary hospitals.”

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Both sides agreed to uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, maintain high-level exchanges, deepen political mutual trust, and enhance synergy between their development strategies to advance the China-Bangladesh Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

Bangladesh reiterated its firm adherence to the One-China principle, reaffirming that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory and opposing any form of “Taiwan independence”.

Wang stressed that China's development of relations with Bangladesh and other South Asian countries does not target any third party, nor should it be influenced by any third party, UNB reports.

The two countries agreed to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and expand collaboration in the economy, trade, investment, industry, the digital economy, water resources, health, and people-to-people exchanges.

The Bangladeshi side highly appreciated Chinese President Xi Jinping's initiative to build a community with a shared future

for mankind and welcomed China's major global initiatives.

Regarding the Rohingya crisis, China said it would continue to support Bangladesh and Myanmar in finding a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of forcibly displaced people from Rakhine State through dialogue and consultation, and would continue supporting repatriation efforts to the best of its capabilities.

Khalilur invited the Chinese foreign minister to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time.

New cyber law remains repressive

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He added that links related to suicide and child abuse saw removal rates of 100 percent and 98 percent respectively, while requests concerning misinformation and fake news had only a 56 percent take-down rate.

Bari noted that the spread of deepfake videos before the election led to a concerning trend where people stopped believing in authentic content.

Stressing that non-regulation is not an option, he suggested social media sites should mark all AI-generated content so audiences can judge its authenticity.

Many speakers questioned the need for the accountability of tech giants regarding misinformation and hate speech.

Joan Barata, an international legal expert working with Unesco, argued that broad and vaguely defined laws give platforms an excuse to dodge accountability.

“If you have a legal system that is open for interpretation ... platforms will say they don't know how to proceed,” he explained, contrasting this with markets where clear laws force compliance.

Moderated by rights activist Shahidul Alam, the event was also addressed by Unesco Representative Susan Vize; Paola Castro Neiderstam, senior manager at the Embassy of Sweden; Ashok Barua, co-convenor of Voice for Reform; and representatives from Tech Global Institute and Blast.

Teacher accused of child

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hearing was not held today.”

On April 23, the mother of the child filed a rape case against two people, including Sagor, with Madan Police Station after discovering that her daughter was seven months pregnant.

The incident has since sparked outrage across the country.

According to the First Information Report, on October 2 last year, after classes ended in the afternoon, Sagor told the child to sweep the mosque adjacent to the madrasa. By that time, other teachers and students had already left for their homes. After the child finished sweeping, he told her to clean his room. As soon as she entered the room, he raped her.

The FIR further said that when the child cried out, he threatened to beat her and expel her from the madrasa.

The child was allegedly raped on four or five more occasions in a room adjacent to the mosque's veranda and also in classrooms, the FIR read.

On April 18, when the mother suddenly noticed physical changes in the child, she took her to a local diagnostic centre for a check-up. There, a doctor found that the child was in her third term of pregnancy.

Meanwhile, Sagor, founder of the madrasa, went live on Facebook on Tuesday from an undisclosed location claiming his innocence and demanding a DNA test to determine the paternity of the unborn child.

Israeli strikes on Lebanon kill 4 despite ceasefire

AFP, Beirut

An Israeli strike in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa valley killed four people yesterday, while the Israeli army said it struck Hezbollah targets in the south, after warning residents of a dozen towns to evacuate.

Israel and Hezbollah have been trading accusations of violating the ceasefire agreement in force since April 17. Hezbollah has claimed responsibility for several operations targeting Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, as well as attacks on northern Israel.

USF to confer posthumous doctorates

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from the university, he said USF formally informed the Bangladesh Consulate in Miami of the decision through a letter dated yesterday.

The university has requested a consulate representative to attend the convocation to receive the honours on behalf of the bereaved families.

In a separate update, Mortuza said the body of Nahida Sultana Bristy is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on May 9.

He said her body will be flown from Orlando International Airport on May 7 at 8:50pm (local time) on Emirates flight EK 0220 to Dubai,

and then onward on EK 0582, arriving in Dhaka at 8:40am.

The process is being overseen by the Bangladesh Consulate in Miami, while the Bangladesh Embassy in the United States is coordinating arrangements in consultation with the foreign ministry in Bangladesh.

The first namaz-e-janaza for Bristy is scheduled to be held in Tampa at 2:00pm (local time) on May 6. Zamil Ahmed Limon and Nahida Sultana Bristy, both 27, went missing in Florida on April 16. A friend later informed the university authorities.

According to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Limon's body was recovered on April 24

near the Howard Frankland Bridge area following the interrogation of a suspect. The body bore multiple stab wounds and was found dismembered inside black garbage bags.

Two days later, on April 26, fishermen spotted a black polythene bag while kayaking in a nearby mangrove area. Police later recovered dismembered human remains from the scene. At a press conference on April 30, authorities confirmed the remains belonged to Bristy.

In connection with the killings, Limon's roommate, US citizen Hisham Abugharbeh, has been arrested.