



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

My love is expressed through my work:

ARIFIN SHUVOO

SAHID AKBAR

This Eid-ul-Azha, Arifin Shuvoo returned to the big screen in Saif Chandra's action movie *Malik*, appearing in a bold and intense new avatar. Released in 32 cinemas across the country, *Malik* has been drawing steady in its second week, the film continues to perform strongly, with multiple houseful shows reported across both single-screen theatres and multiplexes. The film also marks the third on-screen pairing of Arifin Shuvoo and Bidya Sinha Mim, a duo audiences continue to appreciate. Viewers have praised Shuvoo's performance, action sequences, transformation, and screen presence.

What are audiences saying about 'Malik'?

Malik is the kind of film that people specifically enjoy watching during Eid. It has everything—action, romance, and fun. It's a complete entertainer for the festive season. Moreover, audiences have never seen me in a character with this kind of look before. Audiences are also appreciating my on-screen pairing with Mim.

Are you receiving many film offers?

Since the release of my

international project *Jazz City*, many filmmakers have shown interest in working with me. I've already had discussions with several people about new projects, and I'm hopeful I'll be able to share news about upcoming work soon.

However, I've received a strong response from both audiences and critics for this web series. Many people at home and abroad have praised my performance openly. The character Jimmy Roy in the film has really won hearts. I have put a lot of effort into that project, and I'm now even more motivated to do similar work in the future.



Right now, my only love, day and night, is my work. There is no compromise in that. My love is expressed through my work.

Apart from your own film, have you watched any other Eid releases?

I've been busy with the promotions of my own film. Once all these promotional activities are over, I plan to watch the other films as well. I believe our film industry moves forward when we support each other.

I'm hoping to catch the other releases soon. It's really encouraging to see Bangla films being discussed this Eid, and people going to cinemas in groups and talking about films. That kind of excitement around cinema is truly a joy to see.

What was your realisation when you were promoting 'Malik'?

I realised that if you make a proper film, people will come to watch it.

My film has had houseful shows, and audiences are sharing their likes and dislikes openly after watching it. I believe our film industry will move forward even more if we get better budgets.

Through this experience, I've also gained a better understanding of what kind of films audiences actually enjoy.

A part of your recent interview is being discussed on social media. What would you like to say about it?

My stance remains the same. I still stand by what I said. I've worked in many places and have proven myself—there's nothing left to prove anymore.

I started in 2004 with my first fashion show. After that, I've worked across modelling, radio, television, films, and OTT platforms – and I've received good results along the way.

I don't feel I have anything left to prove anymore because I've done a wide range of work: from romantic films like *Chuye Dile Mon*, to action films like *Dhaka Attack*, and even showed a six-pack transformation in *Mission Extreme*. I've also done critically appreciated films like *Ahaa Re*, and with the series *Jazz City*, I've once again tried to push myself.

The industry knows what I can do. That statement comes from that confidence and experience.

What is your current stance on love and marriage?

Right now, my only love, day and night, is my work. There is no compromise in that. My love is expressed through my work.

And if you're asking about love in my personal life, I would say – the old wounds of love are still in my heart, so I'm not thinking about it at the moment. I'm not considering love or marriage right now.

BSA to honour Syed Abdul Hadi

Renowned singer Syed Abdul Hadi, who has enriched Bangla music for more than half a century with his melodious voice and gifted listeners with a string of timeless songs, is set to be honoured with a special award by the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to music.

The award ceremony, titled *Timeless Voice, Respect and Love for Syed Abdul Hadi*, will be held on June 12 at 6 pm at the main auditorium of the BSA. The event will feature performances by contemporary artistes, who will present some of Syed Abdul Hadi's most popular and enduring songs. In addition, various aspects of his long and illustrious musical journey will be highlighted.

Organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the programme will be attended by prominent cultural personalities from across the country.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'The Listening Room: Edition Three'

Purple Poetry Dhaka presents an intimate poetry evening where writers share original work in a quiet, focused setting. The gathering emphasises attentive listening over performance, offering space for reflection and connection between poets and audience in a calm studio environment in Banani.

Date: Saturday | June 13, 2026

Time: 4:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Venue: KOA Studio 11, Banani

NEWS

RUSSIAN STRIKES

5 dead in Zaporizhzhia region: Ukraine Nato jets shoot down stray drone in Latvia

AGENCIES

A Russian attack killed five and injured fourteen in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, the regional governor said on Telegram yesterday.

Ivan Fedorov said Russia attacked the region with air strikes, drones and shelling, damaging infrastructure, residential buildings and cars.

A Ukrainian drone strike on a

passenger train killed the assistant driver and wounded the driver, a Moscow-backed official said yesterday. Moscow and Kyiv have intensified drone strikes on each other in recent months as US-led diplomatic efforts to end the war, now in its fifth year, remain stalled, reports AFP.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky received the backing of the leaders of the UK, France and Germany

in calling for direct ceasefire talks between the warring parties, following a meeting in London on Sunday.

Sergey Aksyonov, the Moscow-installed head of the Crimea region, wrote on Telegram that an "enemy drone strike" had killed the assistant driver and wounded the driver of a passenger train on the route between Moscow and Simferopol in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula which Russia annexed in 2014.

Govt moves

FROM PAGE 12

In recent weeks, content targeting the prime minister, his family, and other political and public figures have circulated on social media. "We must redefine what truly constitutes freedom of expression when such content is spread in the name of independence and free speech."

"This very morning, we began drafting the amendment," he said, stressing that the new law – to be named Cyber Security Act, 2026 – will redefine rumors, misinformation, and defamatory content, and introduce new penalties for their publication and dissemination.

In a supplementary question, Helen asked whether the government would establish effective communication with Meta and other platforms.

In reply, Salahuddin said Bangladesh currently lacks legal provisions to compel platforms to act within a set timeframe. "Neighbouring countries have enacted laws requiring Meta to take action within 24 hours. But our BTRC and cyber law do not yet have such clauses."

He explained that while Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) or other authorities may request removal of content, platforms often delay, citing the absence of legal obligations.

The amendment, he said, will ensure coordination with international platforms, enforce time-bound removal of content, and make reporting and takedown processes more accountable.

A tough journey starts

FROM PAGE 12

the interim administration as an ordinance, it was among a small number of measures the new government chose to hold back from enactment for further review. When it was eventually passed into law, the new provision, section 18A, was added.

Opposition parties criticised the provision in parliament, and economists condemned it as a significant legislative slippage. Even the World Bank and the IMF recommended its repeal. According to sources at the finance ministry, removal of the clause was also included as a condition attached to budget support. The government is now reported to be considering an amendment to the law.

Another major challenge for Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury has been navigating the IMF's \$5.5 billion loan programme – and the conditions that come with it. Last November, the IMF suspended the sixth tranche, waiting for a newly elected government.

When the new government took office, it found itself facing a double bind: an urgent need for funds, and a set of reform conditions.

Opening a path out of this stalemate, the government will now exit the existing programme and start negotiations for a fresh deal. This breakthrough would give the minister some immediate relief and help keep the door open for budget support from other development partners.

"The finance minister has had to face new challenges, such as the rise in fuel prices and the need to secure foreign loans for that without relying too heavily on foreign exchange reserves. He had to tackle these issues, and he has done so reasonably well, even though it required taking unpopular steps like increasing fuel prices," said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Any fair assessment of the finance minister's first 100 days must carry an honest account of what he inherited. Inflation had been running above 9 percent since March 2023. It dipped briefly after the new government took office and then rose to 9.42 percent

in May, the highest in 16 months. Ordinary people have been squeezed for months between stagnant incomes and persistently high prices.

The finance minister's tools to bring inflation down are limited: monetary policy and fiscal policy. There is pressure to cut the policy rate to stimulate investment, but no such move has been made yet. On the fiscal side, austerity measures have been taken for the second time in the current financial year. Officials at the finance ministry argue that Bangladesh's inflation is more driven by supply chain distortions than in most comparable economies, making it harder to tame through conventional tools alone. No visible relief is yet in sight.

Investment, meanwhile, has been stagnant for several years. Public investment depends heavily on ADP implementation, which had already fallen behind during the interim period – and continues to lag. Private sector credit growth fell below 5 percent in March. The investment drought stretching over three years shows no sign of breaking. Many had hoped the arrival of a newly elected government would end the paralysis; the ongoing distress in the banking sector and the spillover effects of the Middle East conflict appear to be preventing that.

"His first major task will be how the budget is formulated; specifically, how he presents the financing strategy, determines the government's priorities, handles sector allocations, and manages deficit financing. Addressing the issues will be a major challenge because he has inherited an economy characterised by high inflation, muted investment, and a subdued private sector response," Mustafizur said.

While Bangladesh's external economy is stabilising, with steady forex reserves, stable exchange rates, and strong remittances, crucial domestic reforms are lagging. Overhauls of the banking sector, the NBR, and the stock market remain slow. "They have started working on these, yes, but our hope is that these efforts proceed with more speed," Mustafizur said.

In this fraught landscape,

Bangladesh Bank made a striking announcement just before Eid-ul-Azha: a Tk 60,000 crore stimulus package, the largest since the Covid-19 relief programmes, to revive a private sector that has been losing ground for years.

The stimulus package can be read as the government's most forceful attempt yet to break that deadlock. Whether it succeeds will depend on questions that remain unanswered: whether banks will participate meaningfully, whether closed factories can actually be revived, and whether the injection of money into a supply-constrained economy drives growth or simply drives up prices.

The package may be well-intentioned, but critics argue it has not been sufficiently evaluated against alternatives, and that controlling inflation should remain the top priority. Additional stimulus may push prices up faster than it increases output, particularly if supply-side constraints remain unresolved.

One of the bright spots in the government's development agenda is the launch of the Family Card programme, which could prove significant for low-income households affected by months of high prices if it is implemented effectively. Alongside direct targeted relief, the administration's vocal emphasis on cutting red tape offers a potential structural upside.

"The finance minister has been championing the need for deregulation, especially simplifying and automating regulatory processes to reduce the cost of doing business. This is long overdue, and we hope he will deliver a time-bound roadmap for deregulation in the forthcoming budget," said Zahid Hussain.

But even the most optimistic reading of the government's first 100 days runs into a hard external constraint. The shadow of the Middle East conflict hangs over all of this – a source of serious concern, by the finance minister's own admission, and a key reason why he has repeatedly said that a visible economic recovery is unlikely within the next two years.