FROM NEWSMAN TO STAR

Celebrating Mahfuz Ahmed



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Before becoming one of the leading television actors of the 1990s, Mahfuz Ahmed spent his days reporting on political affairs and interviewing prominent politicians.

As he celebrates his birthday today, we take a glimpse into the persistence behind a career spanning television, cinema, directing and production.

While studying at Dhaka University, the actor worked as a political reporter for the weekly Purnima. Interviewing prominent politicians and filing regular reports were part of his routine. Then, an unexpected opportunity introduced him to acting.

His first television appearance was a small role in ***Kon Kanoner Phool***, written by Imdadul Haq Milon and produced by Fakhrul Abedin Dulal. He had just one line of dialogue. That was all—but he did not stop there.

The aspiring actor kept returning to the television station in Rampura, hoping for more opportunities. He eventually landed the role of Moti in ***Kothao Keu Nei***, which introduced him to a wider audience.

Determination, patience and the desire to keep working gradually helped him establish himself. In time, he began appearing as a leading man opposite three of television's most popular actresses: Shomi Kaiser, Bipasha Hayat and Afsana Mimi.

His performance alongside Bipasha in ***Shurur Kobita*** drew attention early in his career. He also starred opposite Shomi and Bipasha in ***Tomake Chhuye***, a drama that struck a chord with viewers.

For years, the reporter-turned-actor remained a familiar leading man on television, later working opposite Aupee Karim, Tareen and Richie Solaiman, among others. He was also Mehazabien Chowdhury's co-star in her debut television drama.

Among his most memorable roles was the title character in ***Amader Nurul Huda***. The character brought him widespread recognition and multiple Meril-Prothom Alo Awards.

He also played the title role in the long-running serial ***Choita Pagol***, which he directed. The production earned him recognition both in front of and behind the camera. His subsequent directorial work, ***Tomar Doway Bhalo Achi Ma***, also found an audience.

In the popular serial ***Ekannoborti***, the artiste played Farhad, another character that won viewers' affection. He also took on the title role in a television adaptation of ***Devdas*** and appeared regularly in Humayun Ahmed's dramas.

His move into cinema came with Humayun Ahmed's ***Srabon Megher Din***. He went on to appear in the same director's ***Dui Duari*** and earned praise for his performance in Tauquir Ahmed's ***Joyjatra***.

Lal Sobuj brought him his first National Film Award for Best Actor. He later won the honour again for ***Zero Degree***, directed by Animesh Aich, which he also produced.

More recently, he earned praise for his performance in Chayanika Chowdhury's ***Prohelika***. His work has also reached audiences on OTT platforms, adding another chapter to a career that began with a single line on television.

"I seek everyone's blessings and love. People's prayers mean a great deal. Please keep me in your prayers," he told The Daily Star.



'Mohanagar', 'Bohemian Ghora' to stream on Netflix

Netflix has partnered with Bengali streaming platform Hoichoi to bring its series to audiences across India, including acclaimed Bangladeshi productions ***Mohanagar*** and ***Bohemian Ghora***.

Under the deal, all Hoichoi series premiering over the next two years will stream exclusively on Netflix in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. Other titles include ***Madam Inspector***, ***Sampurna***, ***Lojja***, ***Queens*** and ***Parineeta: A Love Story***.

New releases will debut in Bengali on Hoichoi alongside their Hindi, Tamil and Telugu versions on Netflix. The lineup includes ***The Cursed Temple of Kauriburi***, a folklore-inspired horror series starring Jeetu Kamal, Solanki Roy and Paoli Dam. It premieres on November 6.

The platforms will also develop original adaptations through Hoichoi Studios.

EVENTS

'Art'

Open Space Theatre stages Yasmina Reza's celebrated comedy, in which the purchase of an expensive painting turns a friendship among three men into a battle over taste, money and mutual respect. Directed by M Arifur Rahman, the play finds the fault lines beneath everyday banter, asking how much disagreement a friendship can withstand.

Date: Saturday | October 24, 2026
Time: 4:30pm onwards
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA



NEWS

Mob kills paralysed man

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he struggled to make ends meet, often relying on others for help.

Hoping to rebuild his life, Alam, 41, came to Dhaka from Natore's Bagatipur upazila in search of work.

With a relative's help, he secured a job as a security guard at a house in Dhanmondi on October 1, only to lose it within two days due to his physical and mental condition following the stroke.

He found another job the following day and was scheduled to join on November 1, according to his family.

But before he could start afresh, his life was cut short.

On Wednesday night, Alam was beaten to death at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital on suspicion of being a "child kidnapper".

According to his family, he had gone to the hospital around 11:00pm in search of food and shelter.

Relatives of children admitted there, however, grew suspicious and questioned him. Dissatisfied with his answers, they dragged him downstairs and beat him severely.

A hospital employee who witnessed the incident said Alam had been speaking incoherently.

"At one point, he claimed his wife was admitted to the hospital but failed to give clear answers to further questions," the employee said, requesting anonymity.

The employee said several people beat Alam to death before fleeing the scene.

Yesterday, 15 to 20 family members waited outside the hospital morgue.

His elder brother Yusuf Ali, an auto-rickshaw driver in Mirpur's Rupnagar, struggled to come to terms with his death. He had spoken to Alam over the phone just two days earlier.

"I received a call around 11:00am yesterday and was told my brother was ill. We reached the hospital around 1:00pm and searched the premises, only to learn that his body was in the morgue.

"He was not even inside the children's ward; he was just wandering around. They could have handed him over to the police if necessary, but witnesses here told me they beat him to death."

Yusuf said Alam sometimes went hungry and sought help from others but had never stole anything or had a criminal record.

"And they killed him on suspicion of being a child kidnapper," he said.

Alam's cousin Habibur Rahman said he had been physically and mentally unwell since the stroke but remained in regular contact with his family.

"After getting the job, my brother started dreaming of building a new life with his family. But they killed him on suspicion of being a child kidnapper. He has three children of his own. Why would he kidnap a child?"

Contacted, Masud Rana, inspector (operations) at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said police recovered Alam's body from the hospital after being informed of the incident.

"Following an inquest, the body was sent to the morgue for an autopsy."

One person has been detained, he said, adding that the body was handed over to the family following legal procedures.

Don't put people thru more pain

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overpasses may also be widened to four lanes.

By December 2024, around 97 percent of the infrastructure work had been completed, while overall physical progress stood at 77.48 percent.

Speaking to The Daily Star over the project scrapping, BIP General Secretary Prof Md Musleh Uddin Hasan said concerns over traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and the operation of buses from stations in the middle of the road could be addressed through better planning, traffic management, and appropriate infrastructure.

"One of the key arguments against the project is that reserving a dedicated lane for BRT buses would leave fewer lanes for other vehicles, worsening congestion."

However, he argued that poor traffic management, particularly buses stopping at undesignated locations, was a major cause of congestion along the corridor.

When buses stop indiscriminately, others often queue behind them, obstructing traffic. Ensuring that buses pick up and drop off passengers only at designated stops could help traffic flow more smoothly, he said.

Prof Hasan also disputed concerns about passengers crossing the road to reach BRT stations.

Several footbridges already exist along the 20.5km corridor, while around 18 additional footbridges were reportedly built under the project, although the exact number requires verification, he said.

The BIP general secretary said pedestrian crossings should be planned according to the road's function, noting that designated crossings and footbridges would also be necessary if the corridor were converted into a conventional highway.

Regarding concerns about buses operating from median stations, Prof Hasan said the proposed buses reportedly had doors on both sides, allowing passengers to board and alight from stations in the road median.

He added that the issue had been discussed with BRT authorities during the bus procurement process.

Prof Hasan also suggested exploring an extension beyond the airport to connect the route with the existing public transport network, potentially linking it to a nearby metro station or locations such as Bijoy Sarani or Mohakhali.

Regarding the road safety issue, he said accident risks should be assessed in terms of road design, speed management, pedestrian facilities, and enforcement, rather than treated as an inevitable consequence of BRT.

A conventional highway would also require appropriate safety measures, particularly if operating speeds increased.

Prof Hasan warned that dismantling the infrastructure along the corridor would be complex and costly, requiring the removal of substantial structures and reconstruction of the road. The work could further disrupt commuters and prolong traffic congestion.

Referring to a reported estimate of Tk 45 crore for demolition, he said the final cost could be higher once road reconstruction, traffic management and commuters' losses from additional delays were considered. He also highlighted potential safety risks during demolition.

He argued that authorities should account for public money already invested in the project and compare the cost of completing or modifying the BRT system with that of dismantling it and restoring the road.

Prof Hasan questioned the apparent reluctance to allocate additional funds to existing public transport infrastructure, referring to an estimated Tk 800 crore in annual metro rail subsidies in the previous year.

He also cited approximately Tk 1,200 crore reportedly spent or committed to the BRT project, suggesting that completing or modifying it could require another Tk 800 crore to Tk 1,000 crore.

Major transport decisions, he said, should consider total expenditure, future benefits, operational feasibility and impacts on commuters, rather than construction or demolition costs alone.

Prof Hasan warned that converting the corridor into a conventional highway could encourage greater reliance on private cars, increasing fossil fuel consumption, and air pollution if efficient public transport alternatives were not provided.

He stressed that transport planning should prioritise mass transit and sustainable mobility rather than road expansion alone.

In a statement yesterday, the Institute for Planning and Development opposed the decision of scrapping the BRT project, saying that around 97 percent of the work had been completed.

IPD Executive Director Prof Adil Muhammad Khan said completing the remaining work would better serve public interests.

The organisation urged the government to reverse the decision, investigate delays and cost overruns, hold those responsible accountable, and launch the service through a time-bound plan.

Meanwhile, a citizens' platform staged a sit-in and formed a human chain on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the Gazipur's Bhogra Bypass area on Friday, protesting the government's decision.

At the programme, organised by Sachetan Nagarik Oikya, Gazipur, Ali Nasher Khan, chief organiser of the NCP's central executive committee, claimed only 3 percent of the project remained incomplete.

He said an additional Tk 1,400 crore could complete the work and purchase 187 buses.

He added that dismantling the infrastructure could take five years, prolonging traffic congestion.

The project was funded by the government, the Asian Development Bank, and France's Agence Française de Développement.

Private bank

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Under the previous rules, candidates had to be serving or former bank officers with at least 20 years of experience. An amendment in July this year added a requirement for at least two years of experience in the position immediately below that of MD or CEO.

Both requirements remain in place, but the latest amendment allows the two-year requirement to be waived for candidates with special skills, professional qualifications, leadership ability and a good reputation.

The age requirement of 45 to 65 years, the three-year contract term and the nomination process remain unchanged.

However, lower salaries at public banks may make it harder to attract talent from the private sector.

Among the public banks, Sonali's MD receives the highest salary of Tk 6 lakh.

The move comes after the government cancelled the remaining tenures of the contractual MDs and CEOs of Sonali, Janata and Rupali banks.

Envoy to Japan to be kept in Dhaka during PM's visit

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had not been involved in preparations for the trip despite being recalled for consultations.

Daud is scheduled to go on post-retirement leave on December 7.

According to the schedule, Tarique is due to hold bilateral talks with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on October 27. The talks are expected to focus on trade, investment, infrastructure development and implementation of the Bangladesh-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement.

Officials said there is no precedence of a serving Bangladeshi ambassador being brought back to Dhaka and kept away from the host country during a prime ministerial visit.

The decision has also surprised Japanese officials, according to sources, who are seeking to understand the rationale behind it.

Ambassadors typically play a key role in high-level visits, including negotiations, building mutual understanding, and coordinating arrangements between the two governments.

Turf war leaves one killed, 5 hurt

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people, including Taizul, arrived at the scene in an auto-rickshaw wearing black burqas and pink hijabs.

They detonated crude bombs before attacking two brothers, Jahir and Mohasin, with sharp weapons, leaving them injured.

The attack triggered a clash between the assailants and associates of the two brothers. During the violence, Taizul, Jahir and Mohasin sustained stab wounds.

When locals took them to Kalkini Upazila Health Complex, they were referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, as their conditions were critical.

Meanwhile, Taizul's condition deteriorated on the way to Dhaka, so he was taken to Madaripur 250-bed District Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the police official said.

Others who sustained minor injuries received treatment and returned home, he added.

Police have launched an investigation to identify and arrest those involved in the incident. No case had been filed in connection with the incident as of last night.

"We believe the violence took place over establishing dominance in the area," said Addl SP Jahangir.

'For how long will we gain experience?'

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In Japan, stadiums have synthetic practice tracks and advanced gym equipment. We must improve our facilities and technology to compete internationally.

DS: How can Bangladesh develop medal-winning athletes?

SK: We need to develop athletes early through grassroots and school-level sports. If government initiatives to introduce 10 sports disciplines in schools are sustained, they can build students' interest and produce stronger athletes.

DS: What should federations and policymakers prioritise?

SK: Federations should send athletes abroad for training, where facilities and training systems are more advanced. Instead of preparing for major events just two or three months beforehand, they should follow continuous four-year plans, with regular international competitions and training camps.

DS: How should Bangladesh measure success at major multi-sport events?

SK: We should not participate in major multi-sport events merely to gain experience. How long will we keep gaining experience? We must set clear targets and aim to win medals. Bangladeshi athletes have natural ability, but that potential needs proper training and support.

DS: What is your target at the upcoming South Asian Games?

SK: I am confident of finishing in the top three with proper support and a few months of training abroad. While top international female athletes jump over seven metres, I believe structured, high-level training could help me improve my personal best of 6.25 metres by around 50 centimetres, taking me to between 6.50 and 6.75 metres.

DS: How does job security affect athletes' careers?

SK: Athletes serving in the defence forces feel more secure because they know they will have jobs after retiring from sports. Those without jobs often worry about their future and hope to become coaches or physical education teachers.

Creating more permanent sports positions across the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, BGB, Ansar, Railway and banks would provide financial security, encourage more people to take up athletics and improve overall performance.