Indebted to my parents for everything I know:

BIPASHA HAYAT

Illustrious actor plans to go behind camera for Liberation War film



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After winning the National Film Award for Best Actress in Humayun Ahmed's ***Aguner Poroshmoni*** and earning acclaim for the Liberation War drama ***Joyjatra***, Bipasha Hayat deliberately shifted away from commercial screen acting toward an introspective, multi-disciplinary practice.

Speaking to The Daily Star at her residence, Bipasha reflected on the literature and responsibility guiding her evolution. At the core of her worldview is a deep grounding in poetry. "Poetry has changed my life at various turning points," she notes.

Studying Robert Browning's ***The Patriot*** in class ten taught her the fickle nature of public affection, while Samuel Taylor Coleridge's ***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*** instilled a lasting compassion for living beings. Her literary palette spans from the deep perceptions of Jibanananda Das to Rabindranath Tagore—reciting as Devayani in Tagore's ***Biday Abhishap*** at age 13 alongside dancer Bijori Barkatullah, and drifting to sleep as a teenager to a cassette of ***Shesher Kobita*** narrated by Soumitra Chatterjee.

This engagement with poetic rhythm naturally led her to the stage in her early twenties. "When I acted in Syed Shamsul Haq's ***Khatta Tamasha*** at 21 or 22, as well as in ***Dewan Gazir Kissa*** and ***Achalayatan***, those dialogues were pure poetry," she recalls. "Becoming those characters and internalising that mindset was an extraordinary experience."

Her writing career began organically at Viqarunnisa Noon School with a piece in the school magazine. Encouraged by her father, legendary actor Abul Hayat, and urged by editors including Sanjeeb Choudhury, Tapash, Sajjad Sharif, and Anisul Hoque during their tenure at Bhorer Kagoj, she published regularly, eventually releasing a book with Somoy Prokashani.

Her celebrated plays, including ***Shankhabash*** and ***Jochhonakal***, emerged directly from observing human dynamics. "In ***Jochhonakal***, I experimented with emotional distance—how people close to you become strangers over time," she explains. "I always write from the audience's perspective: if I were in that seat, what would I want to experience?"

That search for truth extends to her visual art. Asked whether she paints to depict or to express, Hayat is clear: "I express through painting. What I render on canvas or paper is my inner world. The language of images is universal, connecting people across the globe."

Her work recently gained global recognition when an Italian publication featured her among 20 international artists bridging art and justice, devoting a full chapter to her portfolio in a book available on Amazon. In New York, she collaborates with an international collective: "I am the only Bangladeshi in those circles, but we interact simply as human beings belonging to a global community."

Her ongoing hiatus from screen acting remains a deliberate choice. "A good story and a strong core idea are essential. Art must serve a purpose and carry a philosophy. Dialogue alone does not make a play; there must be an inner urgency. That is what I am waiting for."

Looking ahead, Hayat plans to step behind the camera for a feature film on the Liberation War. "I have lined up the script outline," she reveals. "I want to do it out of a sense of responsibility, hopefully starting in three years. I was born in 1971; I am a child of the Liberation War. This project is not about becoming a filmmaker—it is about keeping that emotion alive. Whether I shoot with a high-end camera or a small one, it will be one of the most vital expressions of my life."

Reflecting on her foundation, she returns to her family roots. "Everything I have learned, outside of painting, was inspired by my father, while my mother shaped my understanding of home life. My father's influence on my journey remains immense."

'Mirzapur' leads IMDb's decade-long chart of Indian streaming series



Mirzapur has emerged as one of India's most consistent streaming hits, featuring on IMDb's annual list of the country's most popular web series nine times in the past decade, according to a report released on Tuesday.

Titled "10 Years of Streaming in India – An IMDb Report 2026", the study examines 110 chart positions across 64 titles from 2016 to 2026, with rankings based on IMDb page views.

Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story also performed strongly, appearing on the annual charts five times despite having only one season.

The rankings reflect changing audience preferences, with ***Sacred Games*** topping the charts in 2018 and 2019, ***Scam 1992*** in 2020, and ***Mirzapur*** in 2024. ***The Bads of Bollywood*** led in 2025, while ***Pritam and Pedro*** topped the 2026 chart up to October 15.

EVENTS

'13th Liberation DocFest Bangladesh'

The Liberation War Museum hosts the ***13th Liberation DocFest Bangladesh***, centered on the theme ***Presence in Absence.*** Featuring 17 curated documentaries across national and international competitions, the festival examines human rights, historical memory and liberation struggles alongside academic seminars on documentary cinema.

Date: Thursday–Saturday | October 29–31, 2026
Time: 1pm- 9pm
Venue: Liberation War Museum, Agargaon



NEWS

68 killed in Spain as two high-speed trains collide

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an express operated by Spanish train operator Iryo stopped near Toledo due to a signal fault, on orders from infrastructure manager ADIF, when it was struck by another high-speed train, reports Reuters.

Castilla-La Mancha's leader Emiliano Garcia-Page told reporters that more victims were likely as "it has not yet been possible to reach the bottom of the carriages."

State railway operator Renfe confirmed in a statement that the main high-speed line from Madrid to southern Spain had been suspended after one of its services suffered an accident with a train from private Spanish company Iryo.

Netanyahu camp leads but lacks majority

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minister, who has pushed the country sharply to the right and unleashed a wave of wars.

Following the vote, both Netanyahu and his main rival Gadi Eisenkot vowed to form a government despite neither being projected to win a majority.

With nearly 86 percent of votes tallied yesterday, Israeli media forecast Netanyahu's bloc of right-wing, far-right and ultra-Orthodox parties winning 53 seats in parliament, far surpassing 48 for the opposition bloc of rival Gadi Eisenkot.

Qatar offers Iran new war-ending deal

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countries would act as guarantors of the deal, the official added.

Qatar, along with Pakistan, has led mediation to end the war that the US and Israel launched in February. The conflict has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies and spilled over across other parts of the Middle East, reports Reuters.

Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran's ambassador and chargé d'affaires to the United Nations, has described US sanctions as a form of economic terrorism, saying they constitute acts of aggression under international law, IRNA reports.

Malaysia-bound workers may leave from early Nov

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He urged the government to disclose and justify the actual costs, as was done under the previous government-to-government arrangement, and clarify how workers would be selected for the BOESL initiative.

'ZERO-COST' RECRUITMENT

Asked about the zero-cost initiative, Nur acknowledged that workers would still have to bear some expenses.

"It would not be right to call it completely free," he said, adding that workers would have to pay for airfare, medical examinations and a small BOESL service charge.

He said workers could travel at minimal cost but did not specify how much they would have to pay under the initiative.

Explaining the higher estimated recruitment costs through private agencies, Nur said they incurred expenses securing job orders and maintaining ties with foreign employers, unlike BOESL, whose staff salaries and operating costs were government-funded.

He described the previous government-fixed recruitment rate as unrealistic, saying it was not followed in practice.

Asked whether recruitment costs through private agencies could exceed Tk 5 lakh, he said there was no reason to assume so, as the government would set a rate and try to ensure agencies complied with it.

A survey by US-based non-profit Verité found that workers spent an average of Tk 5.44 lakh to secure jobs in Malaysia during 2022–2024, against the government-fixed rate of Tk 78,990.

MEDICAL TESTS TO BEGIN OCT 31

In a statement yesterday, the expatriates' welfare ministry said medical examinations for prospective Malaysia-bound workers would begin on October 31 at government-approved centres.

Tests conducted before that date would not be accepted for immigration clearance, it warned.

The ministry said a list of authorised medical centres would soon be published on its website. Nur said Malaysian authorities were expected to finalise the list by October 31 following bilateral discussions.

The ministry also warned that middlemen and unscrupulous recruiting agencies were trying to collect passports and money from jobseekers by offering unauthorised medical tests.

It urged workers to avoid such offers and verify the authorisation of agencies and medical centres before handing over passports or money.

No medical centre or recruiting agency would be allowed to conduct or arrange tests without government approval.

Until further notice, recruiting agencies seeking clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training must submit the required documents, including Visa With Reference (VDR) papers, to authorised medical centres for examinations.

Violations could lead to the closure of medical centres, suspension of recruitment activities or cancellation of government authorisation, the ministry warned.

Workers were also urged to report unauthorised medical tests, with supporting details and evidence, to secretary@probashi.gov.bd.

WHEN CAN WORKERS LEAVE?

Nur expressed hope that recruitment procedures would be ready by November 1, allowing workers to travel to Malaysia after completing medical examinations.

The first workers could depart within two to four days of undergoing the tests, provided the remaining formalities were completed, he said.

Recruitment would begin through BOESL, with private agencies also expected to start sending workers in the first week of November. However, Nur acknowledged that some formalities remained incomplete.

Malaysia has approved 338 recruiting entities under the new arrangement: 25 principal agencies, 312 associate agencies and BOESL.

Associate agencies must work through principal agencies or BOESL for key recruitment procedures, raising concerns among agency owners and migration experts over the continued dominance of a limited number of agencies.

Nur said Malaysian employers had begun submitting demand letters through the Foreign Workers Centralised Management System and the Bangladesh mission's electronic services.

However, the mission had yet to attest the letters, without which no job demand would be accepted.

Malaysia suspended new recruitment from Bangladesh on May 31, 2024, following allegations of irregularities and excessive migration costs. The government announced the labour market's reopening earlier this month, but recruitment procedures and costs remain unsettled.

Attacks on political parties undermine

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to building a democratic government and a democratic state. They also affect freedom of expression and normal political activities."

He said democracy was not limited to elections and required political parties to operate freely and express differing views.

Contacted, CPB President Kazi Sajjad Zahir Chandan said, "If the BNP does not move away from this path and fails to restore the democratic system in the country, it too may face the same fate as the Awami League. This is the political reality in Bangladesh."

On October 26, two CPB activists were beaten following a dispute over slogans during a procession in Paltan, according to the party.

Earlier, police detained former Bangladesh Chhatra Union president Dipak Shil during a protest in Dhanmondi against attempts to stop female Baul singers in Sunamganj. He was later released.

CPB activists subsequently brought out a procession, chanting "Joy Bangla, Joy Samajtantra". According to the party, around 40 to 50 self-identified Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal activists objected, leading to an argument and the alleged assaults.

The CPB alleged that the group later gathered outside its central office with sticks and shouted slogans. The party said police briefly detained CPB members Iran Molla and Sohel Fakir at that time.

On September 26, police detained 289 people during a JaSoD representatives' meeting at its Gulistan office. Of them, 27 were formally arrested on allegations of creating fear and instability by chanting "Joy Bangla". Almost all were later released on bail.

JaSoD said the meeting had police permission and alleged that BNP activists attacked its office before police surrounded it and detained participants.

On October 12, a group attacked Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader's residence in Uttara, chanting slogans and hurling bricks that shattered windowpanes. No one entered the house.

Police confirmed the attack but said they had not identified those responsible. The party's central office had also faced attacks, vandalism and arson during the interim government's tenure.

Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, formerly of Jahangirnagar University's Department of Government and Politics, said resentment towards the Jatiyo Party could stem from its ties with the Awami League and its role during the 2024 uprising.

"Some of the recent attacks may have been an expression of that anger," he said, adding that the party's recent statements might also have fuelled resentment.

However, he stressed that such grievances could not justify violence.

"Since the party has not been banned, it can carry out its political activities.

Considering this, such attacks or violent incidents against the party should be avoided. We expect them to learn from their past mistakes and continue their politics."

He cautioned against seeing the incidents as a pattern, but added that even

as separate incidents they were not good for healthy politics.

Mojibur said the BNP, after forming a government following a long stint out of power, cannot "wait a few days more" and must now take the lead in protecting political freedoms, consulting others, and restoring law and order.

"The government must quickly bring the overall situation, including law and order, under control and ensure people's freedom of expression and their right to carry out political activities. This is one of the government's main responsibilities."

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said the party remained committed to maintaining a healthy political environment and that its leaders and activists had shown restraint.

He denied any organisational involvement by the BNP in the incidents, saying the party had made no decision to carry out such activities.

"The incidents that have occurred are certainly regrettable," he said.

He, however, described JaSoD as "an ally of the fascist Awami League", and claimed there was a secret plot to rehabilitate the Awami League through other political parties, as its activities remain banned.

Lax rules, looting pushed banking sector into crisis

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Laws and regulations alone cannot restore discipline, he said, stressing that a minimum level of ethics is essential among all players in the banking, corporate and industrial sectors.

On state-owned banks, he said repeated reforms had failed because political patronage had turned them into hubs for distributing undue favours.

Keeping this vital sector free from political influence requires genuine political will, he added.

The government must significantly reform the judicial and enforcement mechanisms to compel defaulting borrowers to repay, said Abdul Hai Sarker, chairman of the Bangladesh Association of Banks and Dhaka Bank.

"Relying on conventional, time-consuming procedures will not bring results," he said, adding that faster and more effective enforcement is needed to restore discipline in loan repayment.

Although banking governance has begun to improve, the culture cannot be corrected in a day or a year, said Mashrur Arefin, chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh.

Defaulted loans are now known to be about 30 percent, against the 9 percent reported earlier, which he called the starting point for recovery.

Arefin questioned the reported 4 percent private credit growth, saying the real figure is doubtful once accrued interest and forced loans are excluded.

Banks see little demand for large letters of credit for machinery or factory expansion, said Arefin, also the managing director of City Bank.

He cited the Purchasing Managers' Index falling from 57.8 in July to 48.6 in September, signalling contraction, along with high inflation, stagnant exports and low imports.

Political uncertainty, despite the recent election, keeps businesses from using offered credit lines.

He also criticised the Bangladesh Bank's policy mismatch, saying it offers expansionary packages while maintaining a tight stance, with the policy rate at 9.5 percent and inflation at 8.5 percent.

The country should urgently repair its banking sector, open up finance for small businesses and lay the groundwork for capital markets, said Jean Pesme, the World Bank's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

He called for a system-wide, time-bound roadmap including asset quality reviews, transparency, triage of weak banks, resolution of defaulted loans and asset recovery.

"Large-scale recapitalisation with burden-sharing will be needed, since the government cannot fund it all. Regulatory forbearance should be phased out, and legal tools such as the Distressed Asset Act, Bankruptcy Act and money laundering law must be in place."

To prevent a recurrence, he recommended reforming the Bank Company Act and amending the Bangladesh Bank Order to strengthen governance and the central bank's operational independence.

The central bank is prioritising cleaning up bank balance sheets, recapitalising weak banks and restoring confidence in the financial sector, said BB Deputy Governor Md Kabir Ahmed.

Asset quality reviews have been completed for 15 banks, with others under way, using standards stricter than those of international auditors, he said.

"An asset management company should help. A recapitalisation plan with the finance ministry should stabilise state-owned banks by March or April. Private banks with shortfalls must submit plans, and a bank restructuring and resolution fund is being developed for early intervention," he said.