

‘NO COMPROMISES, ONLY QUALITY’

Mousumi Mou reflects on decade-long journey

SHARMIN JOYA

She commands the camera with her fluency, smile and confidence. One of the country’s most beloved anchors and actresses, Mousumi Mou has completed a decade as a host.

Today also marks her birthday, a date etched with an extraordinary coincidence in her life. Exactly ten years ago, on this day in 2016, she first stood in front of a broadcast camera as a host at BTV. Five years later, on the same calendar day, her journey as a reality show host began, making November a month of quiet triumphs. Reflecting on a decade of perseverance, Mou opens up about her personal growth, industry hurdles and unwavering dedication to the presenter’s mic.

Over the past ten years, Mou has hosted some of Bangladesh’s most prestigious television programmes, seamlessly spanning multiple channels and genres. From interviewing legendary cultural icons like Runa Laila, Alamgir, Abul Hayat, and Dilara Zaman, among other renowned artistes on Maasranga TV’s ***Star Night***, to hosting prime-time staples such as ***Ispahani Mirzapore Banglabid***, ***Ajker Anannya***, ***Konka Sera Poribar***, ***Meril Cafe Live*** and ***Shera Radhuni***, her presence has become a familiar fixture on television.

“Looking back, I still can’t believe ten years have passed,” Mou reflects. “It hasn’t been easy—there were times I was dropped from projects, but staying honest and dedicated brought me back to host the biggest shows. I always treat myself as an equal team member and maintain strict punctuality.”

Her empathetic presenting style has earned her a devoted international audience. “An expatriate lady from Australia recently told me that her family laughs and cries alongside me when watching ***Star Night***,” she shares warmly. “That emotional connection is a massive compliment.”

While hosting remains her primary craft, Mou’s artistic background also extends to mime and acting. However, her packed broadcast commitments have temporarily put her mime career on hold. “I had to miss mime performances in Korea and postpone a solo performance with Mir Lokman due to shooting schedules,” she explains.

Acting, meanwhile, is something she pursues purely out of passion, taking on exceptional scripts such as the upcoming season of ***Chokro***. “Since hosting is my primary profession, I only step onto an acting set when the project truly excites me,” she notes.

Mou does not shy away from discussing systemic flaws within the entertainment sector, particularly payment irregularities and unprofessional scheduling practices.

“Unprofessionalism is a real challenge in the acting industry,” Mou states candidly. Stating that she, in the beginning, was determined to become an actress, had taken theatre experience and wanted to continue her craft as well; however, the dream then took another turn due to some unexpected experiences. “Directors often block fifteen days of your schedule but end up shooting for only five, wasting crucial time. On top of that, delayed or withheld payments are common.”

As the primary breadwinner for her family, Mou relies on television hosting for financial stability, allowing her to turn down acting projects that lack professional integrity. “Because my bread and butter come from hosting, I don’t have to compromise on acting roles that don’t respect an artiste’s time or remuneration,” she asserts.

As she celebrates another birthday alongside a decade of success in television, Mou remains deeply grateful and optimistic. “The Almighty has blessed me with back-to-back shows, and as I turn a year older, I feel I still have so much more to give to my audience,” she concludes.

PHOTO: **COURTESY**



BFDC plans film festival honouring **Gazi Mazharul Anwar**

The Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) plans to hold a film festival in February to honour the late lyricist, director and producer Gazi Mazharul Anwar.

BFDC Managing Director Masuma Rahman Tani said the festival would be held early in the month, ahead of Anwar’s birthday on February 22, which falls during Ramadan. The event will feature screenings of his films and new renditions of his timeless songs to introduce his work to younger audiences. His daughter, singer Dithi Anwar, is also involved in the initiative.

Anwar wrote more than 20,000 songs and also worked as a screenwriter, director and producer. His films include ***Shasti***, ***Swadhin***, ***Ulka*** and ***Amma***. Born in Cumilla on February 22, 1943, he died on September 4, 2022.

Johnny Depp makes Hollywood comeback with ‘Ebenezer’



Johnny Depp is set to make a major Hollywood comeback with ***Ebenezer***, a new adaptation of Charles Dickens’ ***A Christmas Carol***, in which he plays Ebenezer Scrooge. Directed by Ti West, the film is scheduled for release on November 13 and marks Depp’s first major studio role in nearly eight years.

The film reportedly has a production budget of $38 million, with a further $50 million spent on marketing. Depp is said to have earned $5 million, with additional performance-based bonuses.

Despite the controversies surrounding the actor in recent years, cinema owners remain cautiously optimistic about the film’s prospects. Industry projections estimate an opening weekend collection of around $20 million in North America.

NEWS

‘Fascist Awami forces’

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would not file cases against those who had politically oppressed its members.

He agreed with the opposition leader that recent unrest had been instigated from across the border, saying he had repeatedly made similar remarks.

He alleged that the public was aware of secret meetings between senior leaders of a political party and representatives of foreign organisations in Dhaka.

He further alleged that the fugitive former leader had repeatedly instructed party leaders in audio calls from across the border to identify July uprising participants and attack their homes, but said such an opportunity was unlikely to arise.

Salahuddin said the government would never turn law enforcement agencies into partisan forces. Despite attacks on officers, he claimed, they had refrained from violating human rights.

“But it seems the fallen fascist forces have started taking advantage of this restraint. They are exploiting our respect for human rights,” he said, pledging to uphold the government’s commitments and thwart conspiracies and sabotage while respecting human rights.

He also accused the fallen forces and their domestic allies of inciting workers and turning labour grievances into protests, saying the government had taken effective measures.

During an unscheduled discussion, Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman said he had heard similar claims about improvements in law and order throughout his 52 years in politics.

Shafiqur, also the Jamaat ameer, welcomed Salahuddin’s commitment to unity against fascism but questioned his “suggestive remarks”.

“It has also been said that a particular political party has an understanding with a foreign intelligence agency. If that is what he meant, then he should clarify which party he is referring to,” he said.

Apparently referring to Prime Minister’s Political Assistant Rashed Khan, Shafiqur accused him of repeatedly criticising Jamaat.

“I state clearly that we have no history of meeting any foreign intelligence agency. Why would we meet intelligence agencies? We are a political party,” he said, adding that his party met political opponents and friends, not intelligence agencies.

He alleged that his party’s accusers had themselves met foreign agencies at home and abroad.

Claiming he had been misquoted at a previous press conference, Shafiqur said, “I never said that the Awami League had been forgiven. Throughout my entire 22-minute speech, I did not mention the Awami League even once, not even by mistake. The full video is still available and anyone can verify it.”

230 families

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received no prior notice and could not salvage their furniture and other belongings.

“How will we live? Where will we go?” she asked.

Her daughter, Manowara Begum, said the family had been allotted the house for 99 years after being relocated from the TTP Para slum in Kamalapur to what was then a marshy area.

Mohammad Nur Jamal Haque, founding secretary of the Light of Justice Society, said the organisation filed a writ petition in 2024 on behalf of elderly women and other vulnerable residents following the political changeover on August 5, 2024.

He said the HC had issued a rule directing the authorities not to evict the residents until they were rehabilitated.

According to Haque, residents informed the organisation on October 31 that they had received a verbal notice giving them 24 hours to vacate the area.

The next morning, representatives visited the DSCC office, where an official from its estate department denied plans for any eviction drive, he said.

However, they later found an eviction drive underway, allegedly led by Mallik Ahsan Uddin Sami, deputy commissioner of the Wari zone, along with an executive magistrate and more than 100 police and Special Reserve Force personnel.

Haque said representatives, including the organisation’s president, Afsan Rahman, showed the authorities a copy of the court order and urged them to stop the operation.

“Although the demolition was initially halted after a few shops were removed, it resumed the following day,” he alleged.

He said the Wari zone deputy commissioner described the operation as an anti-drug drive, while DSCC officials denied involvement.

“If it was a drive against drugs, the authorities could have arrested those involved. They had no right to evict all the families,” he said.

Haque said the eviction had displaced around 230 families, leaving residents dependent on begging, domestic work and rickshaw driving in severe hardship.

He added that the organisation’s lawyer was preparing to file a contempt of court petition over the alleged violation of the court order.

Mohammad Liton Mia, 54, a resident of Ward 49, also appealed to the prime minister to intervene.

He said his family had been relocated from TT Para during Ershad’s tenure and given a house and allotment documents under an arrangement involving the army.

Liton said generations had grown up in the settlement, but residents had yet to find a permanent solution despite repeated assurances from successive governments. He alleged that residents had faced eviction attempts under the Awami League government and later approached the interim government, which assured them they could remain until alternative arrangements were made if the land was needed for development.

“I support lawful action against drug traders but oppose evicting entire families over the alleged activities of a few individuals.

He said residents had also approached the National Human Rights Commission and submitted documents to the mayor’s office, seeking five acres of land under a proposed project called Nijoshsho City Polli.

“We supported the BNP with the hope that our situation would improve. After enduring 17 years of hardship, we expected justice when our own party came to power. We are simply asking for our right to live with dignity.”

DSCC’S RESPONSE

Md Shah Alam Bhuiyan, superintending engineer (current charge) of the Mechanical Circle, said construction of housing facilities for evicted sanitation worker families, including the 230 families in Dhalpur, on five acres of the 15-acre project site was around 80 percent complete.

“The project aims to accommodate the families in a newly built tin-shed colony by December 30,” he said.

Regarding compensation, he said claims for losses could be reviewed in accordance with relevant documents and applicable laws. He added that official records would need to be checked to verify whether eviction notices had been served.

Regarding the ongoing court case and reported status quo rule, he said the corporation would determine its legal position after reviewing the court order and relevant documents.

The Daily Star made several attempts to contact Mallik Ahsan Uddin Sami, deputy commissioner of the Wari Division, by phone since last Wednesday, but he did not respond. This correspondent also visited his office but was unable to meet him.

When contacted, the additional deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner of the Demra zone under the Wari Division declined to comment.

Keep control of streets

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party Chairman Tarique Rahman’s return to Bangladesh on December 25 and the first death anniversary of former prime minister Khaleda Zia on December 30.

“Our leaders and activists have been instructed to remain vigilant to counter these attempts politically,” said Nasir Uddin Nasir, general secretary of Chhatra Dal, the BNP’s student wing.

Chhatra Dal will remain active through various programmes throughout this month, as well as in December and January, he said.

The instructions came amid growing political tension and reports of possible developments surrounding former prime minister Sheikh Hasina’s return to Bangladesh.

Reuters reported on Monday that Hasina had requested a new passport and NID card to return to Bangladesh.

However, BNP leaders said they did not believe Hasina would actually return to the country.

They suspect that the announcement of her possible return is intended to mobilise Awami League leaders and activists, create panic among the public and put political pressure on the BNP-led government.

The political developments have coincided with a series of violent incidents across the country, they added.

On Tuesday, one person was killed and at least 10 vehicles were torched as incidents of crude bomb explosions and arson escalated and spread to more areas, according to media reports.

The BNP leaders alleged that the incidents were part of planned activities by the Awami League.

Responding to the situation in parliament on Tuesday, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said there had been visible attempts by what he described as “fallen fascist forces” to destabilise the country.

“For some time now, the fallen fascist forces have been openly conspiring to destabilise the country. Anyone in the country with even a basic understanding of politics can recognise their intentions,” he said.

Meanwhile, at a briefing at the party’s Nayapaltan central office yesterday, BNP Acting Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said that instability was being deliberately created to send a negative message about Bangladesh to the international community.

Any attempt by India to interfere in Bangladesh’s internal politics would not receive international support, he said, while urging the opposition to clarify their position on acts of sabotage.

Alongside its continued presence on the streets, the BNP is also placing emphasis on organisational restructuring, mobilising grassroots leaders and activists, and strengthening relations with its longstanding political allies.

Recent changes in the leadership of Dhaka Metropolitan North and South BNP were part of the ongoing organisational activities.

TIB slams

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the advice as “grossly irresponsible” and unlawful, saying engineers were already paid from public funds to ensure work quality, accept completed projects and clear bills. He challenged the minister to cite any law allowing such benefits, referring to Sections 161 and 165 of the Penal Code, which criminalise unauthorised gratification and certain benefits linked to official duties.

The Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 require prior approval for gifts creating obligations, with certain exceptions, and cap specified gifts to secretaries or equivalent officers at Tk 500 each, he said. The Public Procurement Rules, 2025 allow branded diaries, calendars and pens worth up to Tk 5,000 each, but neither provision permits personal benefits from contractors’ profits for official duties.

Such benefits could compromise engineers’ impartiality in supervising projects and certifying bills, undermine fair competition, encourage collusion and legitimise bribery, he said.

Meanwhile, the ministry described TIB’s characterisation of the remarks as legitimising bribery as “untrue and misleading”. In a clarification signed by Public Relations Officer Borhan Uddin, it claimed the minister’s informal comments had been circulated without the core remarks, creating controversy with ill motives.

It called the allegation unwarranted political propaganda against the government’s anti-corruption stance.

Arson attacks

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by using petrol on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road around 11:30pm in the Karaitala area of Jalkuri on Tuesday, said Additional Superintendent of Police Tarek Al Mehedi, quoting locals.

Part of a tyre was burnt before the driver and his helper extinguished the blaze, he added.

In Brahmanbaria’s Akhaura upazila, several seats in the Dhaka-bound Titas Commuter train were damaged after a carriage caught fire during shunting around 3:00am yesterday, about a kilometre north of Akhaura Railway Junction, said Md Jahangir Alam, in-charge of Railway Nirapatta Bahini in Akhaura. On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

Talking to reporters, Md Nurunnabi, superintendent of Akhaura Railway Station, said the damaged carriage had been detached from the train, which left the junction about an hour behind schedule. Police detained two persons in connection with the incident, he added.

In Pabna Sadar upazila, miscreants set the Grameen Bank’s Dogasi Bazar branch on fire around 1:00am yesterday, said Md Asaduzzaman, assistant general manager of the bank’s Pabna zonal office.

The attackers also vandalised the office’s windowpanes, he said.

Inspector (Investigation) Sonjoy Kumar of Pabna Sadar Police Station also confirmed the incident.

In Netrokona, police recovered two bomb-like objects wrapped in adhesive tape from in front of the bank’s another branch at Challisha Bazar in Sadar upazila around 3:00am yesterday.

Meanwhile in Cox’s Bazar’s Teknaf, police and BGB members were injured in an attack from a flash procession of Awami League, whose political activities are now banned, and its affiliated organisations on Tuesday night.

Ohidur Rahman, additional superintendent of Cox’s Bazar’s police, said a team of police and BGB personnel went to the Godar Beel area around 11:00pm after receiving information that Awami League and Jubo League activists would bring out a procession.

“When the law enforcers tried to prevent the marchers, they hurled brick chunks at the law enforcers,” he said.

A sub-inspector was also struck on the head with a sharp weapon, the police officer said. The injured, Md Zafar, 40, who works at Teknaf Model Police Station, was undergoing treatment at Sadar Hospital.

In a press release yesterday, Border Guard Bangladesh said a group of miscreants suddenly attacked a special patrol team of Teknaf battalion near Oliabad Madrasa around 11:10pm on Tuesday.

One BGB member was wounded in the attack. Following the incident, a team of BGB and police personnel conducted a joint operation and arrested three suspects, said the release.

The arrestees are Khorshed Alam, 25, son of Fazal Ahmed; Akib, 22, son of Zafar Alam; and Abdul Gafur, 19, son of Markin Mia. All three are residents of Notun Pallan Para in ward-4 of Teknaf Sadar Union, it added.

Toddler falls

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was in the ward. The child, who had recently started walking, apparently wandered through an open ward gate onto a balcony without a safety grille, from where he fell.

Dr Shamim said the area was under construction and remained somewhat unprotected.

“The child was without a guardian at the time. He fell while playing. We started treatment immediately, but could not save him,” he said.

He said the child’s body had been handed over to the family.

“The family is very poor. On the director’s instructions, arrangements have been made for them to return home from the hospital,” he added.