



After months of closure and two months of lukewarm attendance, Bashundhara City's Star Cineplex saw some bustle yesterday. Officials assure that social distancing and other health protocols are being strictly followed.

Two new releases breathe life into the silver screen

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIR, A&E Desk

After weeks of lull in terms of new releases, movie theatres across the city were set abuzz by two new releases, that too on the same day.

This Friday marked the release of noted television director Chayanika Chowdhury's debut film, "Bishwoshundori" and Ekushey Padak winner Tanvir Mokammel's seventh feature film, "Rupsha Nodir Baanke" (Quiet Flows the River Rupsha).

In any other year, two new films releasing on the same day, that too on a weekend, would draw large crowds. But in 2020, these movies are not only a test of filmmaking alone, but also their ability to get the industry back on the track.

After remaining closed in the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, several cinema halls have reopened since October 16. However, around two months in, the turnout is still low. But this is expected to change upon the release of these new films.

"Cinema halls are following safety rules and selling only 40 percent tickets of their capacity. I am hoping people will come and see the films on the big screen, following proper safety protocols," Chayanika Chowdhury told The Daily Star. "The audience's involvement and interest will inspire other directors to release their films."

Inside the halls, moviegoers are required to wear protective masks at all times and are seated according to social distance guidelines.

"People are hardly going out these

days. I am not sure how many will venture out to come and watch our films. However, we have waited a long time since February," director Tanvir Mokammel had shared in a previous interview with The Daily Star, regarding his expectations about releasing "Rupsha Nodir Baanke" during the pandemic.

When asked, audience members at STAR Cineplex in Bashundhara City shared that they came out to watch Siam Ahmed and Pori Moni starrer "Bishwoshundori".

Multiple shows of "Bishwoshundori" were sold out at STAR Cineplex -- a solid performance, considering the pandemic.

"The turnout for Bishwoshundori has been great so far," shared Star Cineplex's Senior Manager, Media & Marketing, Mesbah Uddin Ahmed.

"However, we are not expecting a high turnout for Rupsha Nodir Baanke, as it is not billed as a commercial film," he told this newspaper.

Similar sentiments were echoed by insiders at Jamuna Future Park's Blockbuster Cinemas.

"The response to Bishwoshundori has been widely positive, with people turning out in satisfactory numbers. However, the same cannot be said about Rupsha Nodir Baanke," shared Shanto, a staff member at Blockbuster Cinemas. "We are expecting more people in the coming days for both the new releases."

With a story, screenplay and dialogues from Rumman Rashid Khan, "Bishwoshundori" is produced by Sun Music and Motion Pictures Limited and

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DIGITAL BANGLADESH DAY Focus on innovation, not imitation

President Hamid urges all

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday emphasised the importance of innovation instead of imitation to reach benefits of "Digital Bangladesh" to people.

"Technology is the tool of development. Information technology is the most significant invention of the present time... in order to effectively deliver the benefits of Digital Bangladesh to people, we have to catch up with the new and changed technology," he said.

The president said this while addressing a virtual event, marking the 4th "Digital Bangladesh Day" on Saturday.

He inaugurated the Digital Bangladesh Day activities at the auditorium of Bangladesh Computer Council in the capital through a video message.

"It's necessary to make best use of all the opportunities created by information technology as well as prevent its misuse. Our youths are skilled enough in terms of intelligence and ability to adapt to new technology," the president said.

If they are given proper training, they will take the country to the desired goal of development, he added.

Calling upon all, including the private sector, to come forward, Hamid said, "The private sector in our country is now strong and capable enough. Therefore, I hope the government as well as the private sector will continue to make every effort to harness the development potential of the IT sector."

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Mobile hand-wash stations to roam streets of the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to contain coronavirus in the country, a mobile handwashing campaign was launched in Dhaka yesterday, with an aim to reach low-income group in different parts of the city.

Initially, the campaign -- Handwashing on Wheels -- included 10 units of rickshaw-van decorated and equipped with multiple sinks, liquid soap, and water-tanks.

Besides, the units are equipped with digital tabs which will display awareness messages through songs to encourage people wash their hands as a precautionary measure.

About 20 more such units are expected to be added to the campaign soon.

The initiative has been taken by Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Dhaka Wasa),

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DRAINAGE SYSTEM OF DHAKA

Wasa to hand over charge to city corps by January: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will hand over Dhaka city's drainage system from Wasa to the city corporations by January next year, Local Government and Rural Development Minister Tajul Islam said yesterday.

"We will try to make it happen within the rest days [of December]... Even it is shifted to January, it may not linger to the end of January," he told reporters after inaugurating a joint hand-wash campaign of Wasa and WaterAid at the city's Karwan Bazar.

The minister's remarks came after the government decided in principle to hand over the drainage system from Wasa to the city corporations, to solve the city's longstanding waterlogging problem.

Responding to a query, the minister told journalists they have formed a committee for the handing over of the drainage system, and have asked it to submit a report within a month.

"I hope, the committee will soon submit its report," he said, adding once the report is submitted, the ministry after completion of some official procedures will hand over the drainage system upon getting the prime minister's approval.

Tajul Islam said he has been following-up on the committee's activities, adding that the handover will be completed within days of submission of the committee report.

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Some 10 mobile hand-washing stations stand in a queue, adorned in festive balloons, in front of Wasa Bhaban in the capital. Dhaka Wasa, international development organisation WaterAid and the Swedish Embassy in Dhaka jointly launched the campaign. Another 20 vehicles are expected to join the fleet soon, to enforce hygiene habits among people in a bid to stay safe from the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Changemaking starts early in 'Maisun's World'

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Cig

No one is too young to make a difference. This statement gets passed around a lot, but seldom do we come across someone who live their life as a genuine example of it.

There aren't a lot of names besides the globally famous few readily come to mind when thinking of a child leader. Even more rare is a local name who can take that mantle.

But at just 10 years old, Chattogram's Umme Maisun has started to stand out as a youth sensation. With her engaging social media content, she has already established herself as a young English instructor of the country.

It's not an easy task. Beyond just vocabulary and grammar, the language of English requires that someone also be good at accent, spontaneity, fluency and a whole lot more. Somehow, even at a such a young age, Maisun is proving to be capable in all of them.

In addition to this, one needs to have an eye for interesting content to



The 10-year old social media star is impacting lives of her peers.

thrive on social media, and Maisun steps up to the plate for that too.

A third-grader at a Bangla medium school of the port city, she went viral across the country after appearing for a Robi 10 Minute School video

tutorial. The video, published on June 10, features her talking about how to greet people in English. It garnered around 1.6 million views.

Another video on how to introduce

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Obaidul Quader has forgotten the truth: Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

Accusing Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader of regularly spreading a 'false' campaign against their party, BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said the ruling party leader has forgotten to speak the truth.

"Surrounded by police and Rab, Obaidul Quader holds a press conference every day to present absurd and imaginary stories and slanders against BNP," he said while speaking at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltn central office.

Rizvi also said Quader has been trying to malign the Zia family with his regular "campaign of lies" against them. "He (Quader) has forgotten the truth, from telling lies. When people see him on television, they change the TV channel."

Rizvi, the senior secretary general of BNP, questioned as to why the government conducts propaganda against BNP when it has been ruling the country for over a decade by "controlling all the state machinery and institutions."

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BNP should be tried for crimes against humanity

Says Obaidul Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP should be tried for crimes against humanity, as the party has been committing such crimes continuously since its inception.

"There is no heinous crime that BNP did not commit, including promulgation of indemnity act to stop the trial of killers of Bangabandhu and jail killing, grenade attacks and killing people by carrying out arson attacks," he said while addressing the biennial council of AL's Adamdighi upazila unit in Bogura, joining through videoconference from his official residence on parliament premises in Dhaka.

Terming BNP the "creator of cliques of goons" in the country, Quader said BNP's history is the history of conspiracy, killing of people and militancy. He said there is no democracy inside BNP, but they always talk about democracy.

Turning to his own party, the AL general secretary said there could be competition of leadership in a big party, but this competition must be through maintaining organisational discipline and regulation. He urged party leaders and workers to refrain from anything that tarnishes the image of the party.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is very strict about discipline, he said, adding that if anyone violates organisational discipline, the party will not spare them. Dedicated workers of AL who stayed with the party in its crisis must be evaluated in the committees of the party; while extortionists, corrupt people and wrongdoers will not be given any space, he said.

61pc work of Bangabandhu Tunnel completed

Boring of second tube starts

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday inaugurated the boring of the second tube of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under the Karnaphuli River in the port city.

He joined the inaugural ceremony from his official residence on parliament premises in Dhaka.

Quader, also Awami League general secretary, said the tunnel is being built at a cost of Tk 10,400 crore while 61 percent works of the project has been completed.

He said the 9.1 kilometre-long tunnel is the first of its kind in South Asia.

The minister said the tunnel is being built to turn Chattogram into "One City, Two Towns" like Shanghai city in China.

The tunnel will develop a modern communication system among Dhaka-Chattogram and Cox's Bazar and it will connect the Asian highway, he said.

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam, Bridges Division Secretary Md Belayet Hossain, Project Director Harun-or-Rashid, other officials of the project and Bangladesh Navy members joined the event through virtual platform from Chattogram.



Pick a flower, pick a string, strike the string through the flower's heart. Repeat. This process might seem easy enough from a distance, but the sheer number of times this child has to do it everyday merits plaudits. All for a meagre sum of money, and your pleasure! The photo was taken from the capital's Suhrawardy Udayan yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

No business over Covid-19 vaccine

GM Quader urges govt to ensure it

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday urged the government to inform people about the steps it has taken to ensure coronavirus vaccine for them.

Inaugurating the general meeting of Jatiya Chhatra Samaj at his Banani office, he also called upon the government to take necessary steps so that no quarter can do business over the corona vaccine.

"The government has booked three crore doses of vaccine to prevent the coronavirus pandemic. It's not clear whether three or one and a half crore people will be given the doses as each person needs two doses," GM Quader said.

He said, "The country's people want to know what steps have been taken to ensure the vaccine for the remaining 14 to 15 crore people. The vaccines should be given free of cost to save lives as 90 percent of people in the country can't afford to buy it."

Stating that the coronavirus vaccine will have to be stored at a certain temperature, the JP chief said the government should also clearly inform people about the steps it has taken to preserve and transport the vaccine.

He said the ministries concerned used to talk about their all-out preparations during every disaster, but the reality does not match with their words.

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