

Actors busy with work have no time for ELECTIONS

SHAKIB KHAN

Tell me this— have you ever seen Bollywood artistes like Shah Rukh, Salman and Amir participate in film elections like these?

ZAHID AKBAR

Dhallywood's number 1 star, Shakib Khan has been residing in the USA for a while now, as news recently broke out that he will be the ambassador of one of the biggest Bengali festivals around the world, the North American Bengali Conference.

Shakib talks to The Daily Star over the phone about his current work, the industry's recent controversies, and more. **How do you feel about being a part of the North American Bengali Conference?**

I am honestly very excited for this festival, as I have heard about it for a long time. I was invited by Indian producer Srikanth Mehta in 2017, but could not go due to other commitments. Being among people from two Bengals in Las Vegas is honestly very enticing, especially as the festival's ambassador.

This is one of the biggest Bengali festivals in America, having been inaugurated 52 years ago by the Cultural Association of Bengal. I am especially stoked because I can interact with my fans in the festival.

You were supposed to shoot for a film in the USA. What is the latest update on that?

It's not like I can start shooting at will – there are technicalities to that. Meetings are currently being held regarding this, and I can provide an update at the end of February. Rest assured that you will get some projects that you can be proud of.

What is your opinion on the Film Artistes' Association's elections?

Tell me this— have you ever seen Bollywood artistes like Shah Rukh, Salman and Amir participate in film elections like these? Is Amitabh Bachchan fighting over a post in a film association? I don't think so. We should stop glorifying these activities and focus on making more cinema. Actors busy with work have no time for such 'elections'.



PHOTOS: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Aranyak Natyadal celebrates 50th anniversary

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Theatre troupe Aranyak Natyadal will celebrate its 50th anniversary yesterday. Noted thespian Mamunur Rashid, along with other noted theatre artistes, founded the troupe right after Bangladesh's liberation.

"We formed this theatre troupe amidst numerous crisis and problems. After the independence of Bangladesh, I just had one dream, which is to found a troupe of our own. With the presence of Aly Zaker, Shubhash Dutta, Dr Enamul Haque and Nazmul Hossain, we were able to create our own theatre troupe," said the noted playwright.

The name of Aranyak Natyadal was given by noted playwright and filmmaker Abdullah al Mamun. Besides staging shows in the country, Aranyak Natyadal has staged many plays overseas as well. Their first show, "Kobor", written by martyr Munir Chowdhury, was featured on February 20 in the year of their establishment.



Kangana to host 'Bigg Boss' based reality show

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut is all set to make her hosting debut with Ekta Kapoor's upcoming reality show.

The format of the show is very similar to Bigg Boss. Here, the participants will be 'locked up' inside a particular space for 8-10 weeks.

The entire space will be bugged with cameras, and contestants will have to take part in tasks and dares given by the show.

The reality show is slated to release on Alt Balaji & MX Player soon.



COUNTRYWIDE



PHOTO: STAR

BAGERHAT SADAR HOSPITAL

Health service limps due to manpower shortage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Medical service for nearly 18 lakh people in Bagerhat is limping amid severe manpower crisis.

The 100-bed government hospital has been running with less than half of its required manpower for long.

As a result, thousands of patients of different upazilas of the district and nearby areas are being deprived of desired health service.

On the other hand, the hospital authorities are also struggling to provide treatment to a large number of service seekers.

Hospital sources said apart from 18 lakh inhabitants of the district, fishermen, bawalis (honey collectors) and forest dwellers from the Sundarbans come to this hospital for treatment.

According to Bagerhat Civil Surgeon's Office, the hospital started its journey in 1970 with 50 beds in Muniganj area of the town.

Although the hospital was later upgraded to 100-bed in 1997, it has been running with the same number of manpower for the last 27 years.

Currently, two doctors are working against 12 posts at the hospital, while seven out of 12 posts of consultants are lying vacant for long.

Adnan Hossain, resident medical officer at the hospital, said people are being deprived of healthcare as there is a crisis of doctors.

Service seekers said due to shortage of doctors at the hospital many patients are compelled to go to different others district for treatment.

Besides, posts of a nursing supervisor, a health educator, 20 medical technologists, two cardiographers, four assistant nurses and an office assistant also lying vacant.

Bagerhat Civil Surgeon Jalal Uddin Ahmed said he has informed the authorities concerned about the crisis of doctors at Bagerhat Sadar Hospital and hope the matter will be solved soon.

Canal grabbed for fish farming

21 acres of a canal in Barguna's Amtali grabbed by local influentials; irrigation badly hampered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A section of influential locals has grabbed a canal in Barguna's Amtali upazila and has been using it as a fish enclosure, obstructing the natural water flow.

Gamrbania canal is situated in Tarikata village of Arpangashia union in the upazila.

Villagers aren't allowed to bath, use the water for irrigation and household purposes, locals said.

Local sources said that Gamrbania canal covers 28 acres of land from Tarikata bazar to Gamrbania flood control dyke.

Shahidul Islam of Tarikata village along with Hafizur Rahman, Chunnun Talukder and Md Hai Talukdar took a lease of seven acres of land of the canal for three years in 2019 to cultivate fish on the canal.

However, local influential Mezbah Uddin Faisal Talukder and Arifur Rahman Talukder of Tarikata village are cultivating fish by occupying the remaining 21 acres of the canal without taking lease.

They have built enclosures at seven places on the canal for fish farming. The grabbers are not allowing about 5,000 people from Tarikata, Islampur and Gamrbania villages to use the canal waters for bathing or irrigation purposes.

Around 5,000 farmers of the villages depend on the canal water for the production of various crops including Boro and Aman paddy. But the grabbers do not allow the farmers to use the water of this canal for irrigation.

Sultan Ghazi, a farmer of Tarikata village, said local influential persons including Shahidul Islam Gazi, Hafizur Rahman Chunnun Talukder, Md Hai Talukder, Mezbah Uddin Faisal Talukder and Arif Talukdar are cultivating fish in Gamrbania canal. No one can go to the canal for fearing them. Nobody can use the water for irrigation as well.

If anyone protests, they harass them with various lawsuits,

said Sultan.

Contacted, Shahidul Islam Gazi said they took a lease of seven acres of the canal for three years in 2019. Their tenure of the contract will expire this year.

However, he denied the allegations that the villagers were being barred from using the canal water.

Mezbah Uddin Faisal Talukder, an occupier, said no one was being barred from using the canal water.

Replying to a query that how they are cultivating fish without taking a lease he said they have applied for a lease.

Jasim Uddin, a local union parishad (UP) member, said local influential people have been cultivating fish in Gamrbania canal obstructing the natural flow of water.

He demanded that fish cultivation be immediately

stopped and the canal be freed for the villagers.

Soheli Parveen, the chairman of Arpangashia UP, demanded that the local administration take necessary steps to open the canal.

Amtali Upazila Fisheries Officer Halima Sardar said seven acres of the canal have been leased out for three years. The remaining 21 acres have not been leased yet.

Meanwhile, Amtali upazila administration formed a probe body headed by CM Rezaul Karim, upazila agriculture officer, on January 27.

The probe body has been asked to submit its report within seven working days.

Rezaul Karim said, "I am trying my best to submit a report in time after proper investigation."



A group of local influential people have grabbed Gamrbania canal in Barguna's Amtali upazila depriving villagers of irrigation facility.

PHOTO: STAR