



THE MAGICIANS

behind TSC's glow-up

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SHARMIN JOYA

Remember Shirin Alter Shela's stunning attire in the final round of the Miss Universe pageant in Georgia?

Her red Jamdani sari, paired with a stunning 'rickshaw' hood, alphabetic jewellery not only stood out, but earned accolades from all over the world.

Fashion designer Tasmit Afiyat Army was the person behind the bold statement.

The Shela-Army duo recently collaborated in another marvellous outing – giving TSC, considered the heart of Dhaka University, an ambitious glow-up.

This time, Shela and Army worked with Shemanto Saha and Zerine Sinthee, putting their artistic touch on the tea stalls, adorning them with bright, lively rickshaw paint.

"I love creating art that upholds the culture and heritage of

Bangladesh," says Army, who works as the Associate Art Director at Asiatic MCL.

Both Shemanto and Zerine are students of DU.

Tea stalls are an integral part of our suburban 'adda' culture, where people from all walks of life sit down, grab a cup of piping hot tea, and talk about all kinds of subjects – whether it be politics, sports, music or films. "I was impressed when Shela came up with the idea, and we formed a team to execute the plan," she adds.

It took the artists four nights to paint 19 stalls. "We took help from professional rickshaw painters as well," says Army.

"We wanted to make a statement – tea stalls could be just as beautiful as any restaurants. After all, this is something that binds all of us together," she says.

Always keen on preserving age-old Bengali traditions, the artist has been exploring her creativity, with various conceptual projects.

"I want to work further on contemporary Bangladeshi folk art," she concludes.



Shemanto Saha, Zerine Sinthee, Tasmit Afiyat Army and Shirin Akter Shela. PHOTOS: COURTESY

"Shimu- Made in Bangladesh" to release on March 11

SHARMIN JOYA

Rubaiyat Hossain directorial "Shimu- Made in Bangladesh" is slated to release on March 11, across the country. The director herself confirmed the news to The Daily Star.

"We will have the premiere of the film on International Women's Day, March 8," informs the director.

The film highlights the struggle of women from the working class, employed at the RMG sector. It was premiered in the Contemporary World

Cinema section at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019. It was also showcased at the BFI London Film Festival, Locarno Film Festival among other major festivals.

The film stars Shahana Goswami, Novera Rahman, Mita Rahman and Mostafa Monwar, among others.



'Better Call Saul' – will it end with violence or resolution?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'Breaking Bad' prequel Better Call Saul will premiere its sixth and final season in just over two months.

Recently, a cryptic 'first-look' teaser went out featuring the intimidating Salamanca brothers walking into a crime.

It has now been confirmed that AMC will release the first seven episodes of season 6 from April 18.

The remaining six episodes are then set to follow on Monday, July 11.

Fans are eager to see what fate awaits Saul, masterfully played by Bob Odenkirk. What happened in the past that turned him into what we see in

"Breaking Bad"? Moreover, what will happen to him in the current timeline?



COUNTRYWIDE

Tarmac damaged even before road resurfacing work finished

Use of substandard and inadequate materials alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Carpeting got damaged before the completion of the renovation work of a 1.545-km-long paved road under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram due to the alleged use of substandard and less quantity of bitumen in the work.

However, the sub-contractor has pointed the finger at the villagers who according to him have sabotaged the road being angry with the former.

The road carpeting is getting damaged before the completion of the work due to the use of substandard and less quantity of bitumen in carpeting the road, locals alleged.

Just three days into the carpeting work on the road, the carpeting got damaged.

Following the tender, the LGED gave Tk 42 lakh work order to

a contractor NN Enterprise of Rangpur for the carpeting of the road at Tejarmor Fakirpara village in Daldalia union of Ulipur upazila.

The work began on February 3, LGED sources said.

Masud Rana, a local businessman of Ulipur upazila, took the work under sub-contract, they said.

Resident Nader Ali, 55, alleged that the contractor's men carpeted the road at night. The locals tried to resist the move but they did not pay heed to them.

The carpeting of the road is being damaged even before the completion of the work due to the use of substandard and less quantity of bitumen, he said.

Locals demanded that the concerned higher authorities take exemplary action after investigating the matter immediately.

However, Masud Rana denied the allegation of using substandard and less quantity of bitumen for carpeting the road.

Some locals wanted to get the entrance to their houses carpeted but were denied, he said.

The locals got angry with the contractor and they sabotaged the road at night, he said, adding that legal action is being taken in this regard.

LGED's Sub-Assistant Engineer in Ulipur upazila Akram Hossain said some people in the area got angry with the contractor and damaged the carpeting in the dead of night.

A senior LGED official visited the spot to investigate the incident in detail, he said.

LGED's Ulipur Upazila Engineer KKM Sadequul Alam said the carpeting was damaged by locals at night as the contractor had a problem with them in the area. There is no chance of doing poor quality work.

If necessary, a lab test of the bitumen will be done again, he said.



The newly completed carpeting of a paved road in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram got damaged, bearing testimony to the low quality work. PHOTO: COLLECTED

The first Shaheed Minar

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their political affiliations.

On February 24, Ataur Rahman was elected as the convener, and the All-Party State Language

Action Committee was reconstituted. Golam Mawla and Ahmed Rafiq were associated with the Committee on behalf of the medical college.

Sayed Haider along with Badrul Alam designed the first Shaheed Minar in 1952.

Source: Bhasha Andolon Shatchallish

theke Baanna (Ed. Mostofa Kamal, Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd., 1987)

Translated by Shamsuddoza Sajen

Some plants earned \$5.5b

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"It is a win-win situation for private entrepreneurs that whatever they invested, whatever they produced, they would be given a guaranteed market, and the prices had also been predetermined," eminent economist Rehman Sobhan told the conference.

"We appeared to have opted for private-public partnership. Herein appears to lie some of the problems we are actually facing in regard to the energy sector.

Now the figure, which again I gathered from papers, indicate IPPs are now providing close to about 50 percent of energy generation. At the same time, the capacity utilisation of IPPs is not very high," he said.

"It created a huge problem for the economy. Because the way IPP is negotiated has given a guaranteed market [for them]. And the government will be the principal consumer of the product."

This model is crony capitalism as it has allowed a number of people to set up profitable ventures with no risk of loss, he added. "The nature of this model is that the private sector makes the profit and the public sector takes the risk."

This is exactly what appears to be happening in the energy sector where the demand failure in terms of planning forecast has devolved on the government, which is now compelled to buy energy

from suppliers, he said.

Taking part in a session of the conference, Monowar Mostafa, country leader of European Climate Foundation, said the power sector has seen unprecedented progress but it hasn't come without a cost.

The government is providing power at a price less than the one at which it procures, forcing it to subsidise the sector. The subsidy is wasted when it goes to some vested quarters instead of benefiting people due to some wrong policies, he added.

If unrefined oil is imported for Tk 100 per litre, Tk 32 gets added to it the moment it enters the Bangladesh territory. Then comes the question of profit, commission and corruption. And all the pressure and burden are borne by the masses, he said, adding that the PDB suffered a loss to the tune of Tk 8,669 crore this year.

Last year, it was Tk 4,350 crore, almost twice as much as that in the previous year. To overcome the losses, the money funnelled into the sector also comes from the public.

"We have 148 power plants with the capacity to produce 22,000MW. As per last year's data, we purchased power from them for 153 days. They sat idle for 212 days. We have production way over the demand. A lot of words are in the air about whether the production is only on paper or not," he observed.

He also said some plants, which were supposed to be shut down five years ago, are kept on life support in the interest of a few companies.

"We no longer need quick rental. But they are still kept alive. We turned the power sector into a paralysed sector thanks to some wrong policies and massive corruption. A charge named capacity charge is being paid to the plants that have been sitting idle without production. This is actually a penalty on people," he said.

Referring to the losses, he said the penalty was Tk 13,000 crore last year just because the plants were made to sit idle. Not only this, state-owned power plants are made to sit idle. They have the other costs though they are not in operation. If it is included, around Tk 20,000 to 25,000 crore is spent on these idle plants every year, he estimated.

"On one hand, public money will flow into the sector through budget, on the other, people have to spend more directly from their pocket. These are the grim scenes from our energy sector. When companies are pocketing money without production, just based on a contract, it is called 'public money going to the private companies'," he said.

"We can name 10 to 12 such companies, which pocketed \$5.5b."

Eminent economist Anu Mohammad said the cost

of development projects where people's concern and opinion are ignored has been increasing in the absence of accountability.

Such projects result in environmental as well as financial disasters. The government looks for ways how to do the work (project) at highest possible cost, discarding the cost-effective ways, he said.

Webb telescope spots its first star

AFP, Washington

Star light, star bright, the James Webb Space Telescope has seen its first star (though it wasn't quite tonight) – and even taken a selfie, NASA announced Friday. The steps are part of the months-long process of aligning the observatory's enormous golden mirror that astronomers hope will begin unraveling the mysteries of the early Universe by this summer.

The first picture sent back of the cosmos is far from stunning: 18 blurry white dots on a black background, all showing the same object: HD 84406 a bright, isolated star in the constellation Ursa Major.

But in fact it represents a major milestone. The 18 dots were captured by the primary mirror's 18 individual segments – and the image is now the basis for aligning and focusing those hexagonal pieces.