



PHOTO: RAF TAKEN FROM SHITHI'S FACEBOOK

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**SHARMIN JOYA**

After garnering accolades for the track "Raat Jaga Pakhi", a collaboration with Pakistani sensation Shafqat Amanat Ali, talented singer Shithi Saha has now worked with eminent Indian musician Anup Jalota. Anup, considered a legend in his own field, is often referred to as the 'Bhajan Samrat'.

The singer has now returned to Dhaka after recording the duet ghazal, titled "Unkey Khayalon Mein", in Mumbai's Re N Raga Studios. "I am extremely honoured to have earned this opportunity," shares the singer. The song is written by Abrar Lakhnawi and composed by Anup Jalota himself.

"We were first introduced through my online show, 'Shithir Otithi', where we instantly hit it off," says Shithi. "After listening to my voice, he shared his interest in collaboration."

Although this is Shithi's second Urdu song, it is her first project in Mumbai.

She will soon be returning to Mumbai to

shoot for the music video.

Aired on Maasranga television, the musical adda "Shithir Otithi" began its journey after the pandemic had hit the country.

"Like everyone, I was depressed, and looking to initiate something, which resulted in the show. Since then, we have successfully completed 80 episodes," shares the artiste, who is a trained classical singer, also adept in folk and contemporary styles.

Making her playback debut in the film "Projapoti", directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, Shithi wants to work in more films. "It's not like that I don't want to lend my voice in films," she says. However, I have had a bad experience recently, which really upset me."

The singer informs that after recording a

## SHITHI'S subcontinental ventures



Shithi with Anup Jalota in Mumbai.

song for a film, the actress purposely dropped it. "I was shocked – I really did not expect it. It would have been easier to accept if the composer or director made that call," says a disappointed Shithi Saha.

She has recently collaborated with Habib Wahid, and she is in talks for more projects, both in Bangladesh and India. "I believe in working slow and steady. I urge my fans to wait for even more surprises in the future."

## Where is Farukh Ahmed?

**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK**

Chorki released the teaser of Shatabdi Wadud and Afsana Mimi starrer thriller "Nikhoj". Directed by Reehan Rahman, the series revolves around the mysterious disappearance of Farukh Ahmed who has been missing since 1999.

"Nikhoj" stars an ensemble cast – Intekhab Dinar, Shamol Mawla, Sporshia, Khairul Basar, Masum Rezwan, Shilpi Sarkar, Deepanwita Martin, among others.

"Nikhoj" is slated to be released on the streaming platform on March 17.

## "Waiting for Godot" to be staged today at DU

**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK**

Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot" is set in the backdrop of the class struggle of man, fight against exploitation, and endless exhaustion of the post World War II.

Commemorating the 75th anniversary of this historic creation, the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies of The University of Dhaka will present the play on stage from today until March 16 every day at 7 pm, at the Natmandal Auditorium and at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA), from March 18 till 20.

The play has been directed by professor Dr Israfel Shaheen and translated by Asadul Islam in collaboration with the Academy of Arts. It was played by the second semester students of Dhobi's post-graduation.



## COUNTRYWIDE

**TANGAIL-ARICHA REGIONAL HIGHWAY**

### Traffic movement halted as bridge deck collapses again



A large steel plate of the deck of this Bailey bridge over a canal in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila collapsed yesterday, halting vehicular movement on the busy Tangail-Aricha regional highway.

PHOTO: STAR

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail**  
Vehicular movement on Tangail-Aricha regional highway came to a halt as a steel plate of the deck of a Bailey bridge, repaired just a few days ago, on a canal at Tengripara in Nagarpur upazila collapsed again yesterday.

As a result, a good number of vehicles including passenger buses and goods-laden trucks got stranded on either side of the vulnerable bridge.

Locals said due to the sudden collapse, passengers were compelled to cross the bridge on foot and board another vehicle on the opposite side of the bridge to go to their destinations.

Meanwhile, in a temporary fix, workers put a bundle of logs on the broken part so that some heavy vehicles could cross the bridge amid serious risk of accident.

On March 8, another portion of the bridge deck collapsed when a mustard-laden truck was crossing it.

After couple of days of suspension, vehicular movement on the bridge resumed when workers engaged by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) repaired the damaged part.

"I have informed the matter to the RHD officials after one of the steel plates of the bridge deck collapsed again yesterday morning," Nagarpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Waheduzzaman said.

Bhadrak Union Parishad Chairman Shawkat Ali said vehicular movements on the bridge remained suspended on August 23 and September 17 last year due to collapse of the bridge deck in other spots.

Though the bridge was repaired later, but it got damaged again due to substandard repair work, he alleged.

Tangail RHD Executive Engineer Aliul Hossain said a project has already been approved to construct 10 concrete bridges in places of the risky Bailey bridges.

suspension of traffic movement through the bridge," the chairman added.

RHD officials, however, claimed that they were trying to hold a sustainable repair work of the old bridge, but could not do so due to plying of overloaded heavy vehicles, defying ban.

Of the 55.5 kilometre Tangail-Aricha regional highway, 35.5 kilometre area is under Tangail, RHD officials said.

Besides, almost all the 12 Bailey bridges under Tangail portion of the regional road, constructed over two decades ago, have turned awfully risky.

Although, RHD hung caution notices on both sides of all the old bridges, prohibiting movement of overloaded vehicles, nobody paid heed to it.

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### 22-year drive around the world

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The couple had been married six years, had good jobs and had just built a house, with plans to have kids, too, when wanderlust hit. Their round-the-world journey began with a backpacking trip in Alaska.

And somebody offered

them a car, a 1928 model of an American make called Graham-Paige. The engine was bad and the paint looked terrible.

They went through only eight sets of tires in 22 years and only twice needed to do major engine work.

While out on the road,

and with the first two kids born -- Pampa, now 19, came into this world in the US and Tehue, 16, during a visit back to Argentina -- they enlarged the car by actually cutting it in half and adding 40 cm (16 inches) of length and another seat.

That made room for the

arrival of Paloma, now 14 and born in Canada, and Wallaby, 12, down under in Australia.

The last additions to the family were a dog named Timon and a cat called Hakuna during a stay in Brazil, where the Zaps were stranded for a while in 2020 because of Covid-19.

### Approach

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Russian Federation and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, which started 50 years ago," he said in an open letter to editors of print and electronic media, the heads of radio and TV broadcasters in Bangladesh yesterday.

The ambassador referred to 1971 when Bangladeshis overthrew, with the active support from India and the USSR, the dominance of non-Bengali masters, to stop harassment, discrimination and violence against Bengali people, so that they could finally enjoy the right to speak their native language.

At least 60 dead in DR Congo train accident

**AFP, Lubumbashi**

A train crash in southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo has killed at least 60 people, the state rail company and local sources said on Saturday.

"(Currently) the toll is 61 dead, men, women and children (and) 52 injured who have been evacuated," Marc Manyonga Ndambao, director of infrastructure at the SNCC train operator, told AFP.

### Jet fuel price skyrocketing

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is already high compared with the neighbouring and peer countries, said Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert.

"Due to the hub airport, our airlines will have to buy jet fuel from Bangladesh at a higher rate. On the contrary, foreign airlines that are operating to

and from Dhaka will buy jet fuel at a lower price from their countries. As a result, we won't be able to compete with foreign airlines."

The government increased the jet fuel price without considering the fact that foreign airlines would be taking over the local airlines' business

because of this, he added. "It's really an ominous sign for our airline sector," said ATM Nazrul Islam, another aviation expert.

Asked about the price hike, BPC Chairman ABM Azad earlier said the local price of jet fuel corresponded to those in the international market.

### Sharif files writ challenging

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inquiry into the allegations and counter-allegations over the termination of Sharif.

On February 27, Sharif applied for reinstatement in the job.

He submitted an application to the ACC chairman citing some of

his successful works.

ACC sources said the ACC was yet to take any decision on this matter.

Aggrieved by ACC's decision, Sharif's colleagues formed a human chain in different districts of the country.

According to them, Sharif was a hardworking

and skilled officer who filed 52 corruption cases while he was in Chattogram.

Because of his stance against corruption, the corrupt threatened him with life, they said, adding that firing him with no room for self-defence was tantamount to supporting corruption.

### No plan for military facility

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pact "AUKUS". Also, the UK, Australia, Japan and India are engaged in a quadrilateral security dialogue called QUAD.

"Though the US and its allies say that these mechanisms are not aimed at China, practically they are. AUKUS runs the risks of nuclear proliferation in this region. So, I hope that Bangladesh will take a wise decision towards all of these mechanisms," Li said.

Meanwhile, China is working to facilitate early repatriation of the Rohingyas.

"There has been some progress but unfortunately there is no formally organised repatriation yet. Hopefully, this year we will achieve that."

Asked about cost escalation of China-funded projects, Li, who has been in Bangladesh since 2019, placed the blame on land acquisition and the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Chinese

companies will be investing in Bangladesh as the infrastructure and power generation have significantly improved, he said, while suggesting improvements in the areas of logistics and project approval procedures.

On Ukraine, he said China is ready to facilitate any talks between Russia and Ukraine for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

"As a friend of both Russia and Ukraine, China wants to pour water, not fuel to the fire."