



## Meet the Bangladeshi songsmith who wrote for The Chainsmokers

### One on one with Nirob Islam

AAQIB HASIB

On a Friday afternoon, on the way to work, I got a text that Nirob Islam, a Sweden-based Bangladeshi songwriter, would be taking a 'Songwriting Masterclass' at The Daily Star premises.

While many in Bangladesh might not have heard his name, they have surely heard one of the world's biggest artists such as The Chainsmokers, Steve Aoki, Icona Pop, John Newman and so on.

Nirob Islam, "All We Know" by The Chainsmokers, "The Ocean" by Mike Perry and "Midnight" by Alesso, is an acclaimed songwriter who has generated over 1 billion streams for artists all over the world.

#### How did your journey in music begin?

Looking back, it all began when, in the third grade, my mom put me into a Bangla music class. It sparked an interest in me. When I finished high school, I wanted to take the year off and make music. But my parents sent me to university to study biomedicine. I studied there for a year, but felt as if I had hit a wall.

I eventually left that and applied for a music school, after making 5 songs.

Without telling my parents, I packed my bags and left. On the way, I called and told them what was happening. I told them my plans, and that I just wanted to see if I could make it. Finally, they agreed to let me try this out.

#### How did the song for The Chainsmokers happen?

We already had a popular song called "The Ocean" with Mike Perry. However, the manager of the artist tried to exploit me and my song-writing partner, SHY Martin. After being frustrated with the experience of working with middlemen, my partner and I decided to start sending our songs straight to the artists. We knew that the songs we were writing were good.

At that time, we had a demo that sounded perfect for The Chainsmokers, so we Googled the band for 20 minutes and finally found their email. We wrote a formal, straight to the point email, attached our song and sent it in. After four hours, we got a reply saying they would check it out. 20 more minutes on, we got a reply from them that read, "Don't send this to anyone" in all caps!

#### The music video for your latest single, "Westside" is shot in Bangladesh. What did it mean for you to be able to shoot the video there?

Even though I wasn't born here, I've been to Bangladesh every two years since I was three years old. Since I wasn't born here, nor did I grow up here, I see things in a different way. I see the beauty of Bangladesh in a different way.

I've grown up with both cultures, and I want to show people the beauty of Bangladesh. That's one of my biggest goals. When you look at the Billboard Hot 100, how many people look like us? There are a few, but more people from Bangladesh should be on there. That's why I'm here today, taking this masterclass hosted by Qinetix Music.

Hopefully, I can help elevate local producers and musicians.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED



## 'Squid Game' star Lee Jung Jae to play lead in Star Wars series 'The Acolyte'

"Squid Game" famed actor Lee Jung Jae is all set to move to Hollywood with his latest stint in Disney+ upcoming Star Wars series "The Acolyte."

Amandla Stenberg will play the female lead while "Russian Doll" co-creator Leslye Headland will direct the series.

"The Acolyte" is a mystery thriller which will highlight the deep dark secrets of the High Republic, when the Jedi's were at their strongest and the Sith were eradicated from the galaxy."



## Being Human store to launch in Bangladesh, Sohail Khan to attend opening

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's humanitarian organisation, Being Human, is all set to have its grand opening in Bangladesh. The brand will be launching its first ever outlet in Banani with a grand opening ceremony on September 15.

The inauguration ceremony will be attended by renowned actor and brother of Salman Khan - Sohail Khan, and Salman's nephew, Ayaan Agnihotri.

The franchisees of Being Human Clothing, Bangladesh, are Rehan Rahman and Mohaimin Mostafa, who are also the co-owners of Crimsoncup Bangladesh.

# COUNTRYWIDE

## BROKEN BRIDGE

# A death trap for commuters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A large portion of the deck of a concrete bridge over a canal on Hatfadilpur-Nityanandapur road in Shailakupa upazila has remained unrepaired for over eight years, causing enormous sufferings to the people of 15 villages.

Locals said part of the deck of the 70-foot-long concrete bridge collapsed in 2015 due to lack of renovation for long, making it difficult for vehicles and commuters to cross it.

In the first week of August this year, one of the locals Rojdar Ali, 42, of Fadilpur village fell from the broken bridge into the dried-up canal and died while crossing it on a bicycle, villagers said.

Meanwhile, many people sustained serious injuries while crossing the bridge over the last eight years, one of the villagers Alamgir Hossain said.

During a recent visit to the area this correspondent saw a large portion of the bridge deck lying broken, posing risk of accidents.

Kamal Sarkar of Kumiradah village said Water Development Board (WDB) constructed the 70-foot-long bridge on Alamdanga Canal under Ganga Kapotakho (GK) Project about 40 years ago.

Thousands of people of 15 villages

under the upazila use the bridge for their daily purposes.

Moreover, hundreds of students of five educational institutions, located at Hatfadilpur village, use this bridge to go to their institutions, he said, adding that due to lack of renovation for years part of the bridge deck broke down in 2015 and remained unrepaired since then.

The dilapidated bridge now poses serious risk for commuters as its railing on one side and side walls also breaking down gradually.

However, villagers managed to repair part of the broken deck by with bamboo and logs and using it for crossing the canal amid risks of accidents, he further said.

Although, small vehicles like auto-rickshaws, rickshaw-vans and bicycles can cross the canal amid risk, local farmers cannot carry their products to nearby markets as other vehicles cannot move on it.

They have urged the authorities concerned on several occasions to repair the bridge, but they did not pay heed to their demand, another villager Alamgir said. Jhenidah WDB Executive Engineer Rashedul Hasan said many other bridges like this one need urgent renovation, but they were not able to do the work due to fund crisis.



Part of the deck of this bridge on Alamdanga Canal in Jhenidah's Shailakupa upazila remains unrepaired for years, making it difficult for vehicles to cross it.

## Dhaka wants

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He added that though a firing took place almost 10 kilometres off the Bangladesh border, the BGB remains vigilant.

The foreign secretary further said efforts are being made to ensure there are no tensions along the border. "We remain highly alert. BGB will not allow anyone inside Bangladesh."

Bangladesh earlier reiterated its concerns over mortar shells landing inside its territory and air space violations.

On September 3, 2022 two mortar shells fell inside Bangladesh between Border Points 40 and 41.

Aung Kyaw Moe, Myanmar ambassador to Bangladesh, was later summoned to the foreign ministry to meet the director general of its Myanmar wing.

At the meeting, the ambassador was told that such activities are a grave threat to the safety and security of the peace-loving people, a violation of the border agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar, and are contrary to the neighbourly relationship between the two countries.

The ambassador was also urged to ensure there is no trespassing by those internally displaced in Rakhine.

He was asked to come back to the ministry on August 21 and 28, while protest notes conveying Bangladesh's grave concerns were handed to him.

The Bangladesh embassy in Yangon also raised the issue with Myanmar's foreign ministry.

## New dinosaur

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The Tuebingosaurus skeleton consists mainly of the rear of the body, and the new analysis established that many of the bones were not the same as a typical Plateosaurus.

## Nasir Uddin Biswas no more

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30,000 workers in its units, said Ashrafal Haque Bhuiyan, general manager (administration) of the group.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Kushtia after a namaj-e-janaza on his factory premises in Tangail.

His first namaj-e-janaza was at Azad Mosque in the capital's Gulshan after Zuhr prayers, said Shamim.

With bidi (handmade cigarettes) being one of his first manufacturing venture, Nasir expanded to the field of melamine tableware in 1985 and

became one of the pioneers in manufacturing those in the country.

He built one of the biggest float glass factories.

Two factories - Nasir Jute Industries and Quality Glass - are under construction, said Ashrafal Haque Bhuiyan, general manager administration of Nasir Group.

Today, Nasir Group exports float glass, glassware and tobacco worth over Tk 200 crore, said Mohammad Fakharuzzaman, deputy general manager exports of Nasir Group of Industries.

He was honoured

with the Bangladesh Business Awards in 2013 as Business Person of Year for his contribution to industrialisation.

In conversation with The Daily Star back in 2013, Nasir said, "I go for products that are not available in Bangladesh as those will generate employment and save foreign currencies from import payments."

Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said Nasir has contributed to the economy and job creation and had done well in the glass sector.

## Residents return to villages

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land mines, grenades and weapons left behind by fleeing Russian troops, with abandoned farm animals wandering about.

In what remained of Russian-held territory in Kharkiv region, Vitaly

Ganchev, the Russian-installed head of Moscow's occupation administration acknowledged that Ukraine's troops had broken through to the frontier.

Ganchev, who has ordered the complete evacuation of civilians

from Russian-held parts of the province, told Russia's state-owned Rossiya-24 television that about 5,000 civilians had escaped to Russia but the frontier was now shut. "The situation is becoming more difficult by the hour," he said.

## Cost likely to escalate

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the expressway because of the change in its alignment are some of the major reasons for the revision of the project, read the ministry documents.

Project Director Md Mahafuzur Rahman, also the executive engineer of CDA, said the original development project proposal (DPP) mentioned about acquiring or purchasing 138 katha of private and public land.

But as a major change in the alignment of the expressway was needed following the opposition from the Chattogram Port Authority, the project required to acquire or purchase 600 katha. This increased the cost of this segment by Tk 200 crore, he said.

The cost of shifting utility lines, including removing electricity poles

and laying power cables under the ground, rose to Tk 220 crore from Tk 18 crore, Mahafuzur said, adding that inclusion of new components like construction of toll plazas, drainage system and installation of 100 CCTV cameras escalated the project cost by another Tk 100 crore.

Kazi Wasi Uddin, additional secretary of the housing and public works ministry, who headed a four-member committee to analyse the increased project cost, said the project was taken up hastily without conducting a thorough feasibility study and that's why the alignment and designs needed to be changed.

The project director also said a traffic study was initially done by a team from Chittagong University

of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) to know whether the expressway is required and the CDA spent only Tk 1 crore on this.

Professor Muinul Islam, eminent economist and former teacher of Chittagong University, said the port city dwellers have been suffering for long due to the delayed implementation of the project.

"The feasibility studies of projects in the country are done in a poor manner and the costs and deadlines often increase three to four times than the initial estimates."

This happens because of weakness of the government and project officials, he told The Daily Star, adding that corruption is committed under such circumstances.

## Alcaraz takes

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"This is something that is really, really special for me." "Bravo Carlitos!" was displayed on a banner inside the stadium for the tennis prodigy from El Palmar.

The electrifying Alcaraz, who thrilled fans over the two-week tournament in New York with his explosive speed, booming forehand and acrobatic shotmaking, replaced Russian Daniil Medvedev at the top of the rankings.

He is the youngest world number one since the ATP rankings began in 1973, breaking the mark set by Lleyton Hewitt, who was 20 when he became number one in 2001.

## Tidal surges

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communication, including sea trucks, engine-run boats and speedboats owing to the rough seas since Sunday.

"We've taken necessary preparations to deal with the situation."

Meanwhile, Md Rezaul Karim, additional superintendent of Tourist Police (Cox's Bazar Zone), said that they asked tourists to exercise caution when getting into the ocean.

"The cautionary message is being announced through loudspeakers on the beach."

(Our correspondent from Cox's Bazar, Bagerhat and Noakhali contributed to this report.)

## Diaz murder

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Chittagong court on December 18, 2017.

Diaz was found hanging from the ceiling of his house in the CU campus area on November 20, 2016. His mother filed the murder case on November 24 with a Chittagong court accusing around 20 people, including Anwar and former president of CU BCL Alamgir Tipu.

The Criminal Investigation Department of Chittagong police is now investigating the case.