



A coming-of-age for DAMEER

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Recent times have truly been a coming-of-age story for 21-year-old Dameer, who is winning hearts with songs like **Amar Jaan**, **Bashbo Bhalo**, **Sun**, **Michelle** and more. From a very young age, he has lived and breathed music, and now that his songs are internationally acclaimed on various mediums, he also faces scrutiny for every step he takes. We talk to the young musician ahead of his first solo concert on December 14.

You're becoming a star in a generation where the art of doing music is vastly different. Do you have a gameplan?

I want to push Bangladeshi music forward. I want to make it easier to

someone your age. What do you expect from it?

I expect people to have the time of their lives. The people can expect a massive production with not only their favorite songs, but some new songs, new visuals, new fashion pieces and more. We are also having Tara Lily, an incredible Bangladeshi-British artist from London who will be playing in Bangladesh for the first time ever. We're not just here for the Bangladeshis at home, but all over the world.

Talk to us about your upcoming releases.

I have more Bangla music coming up, plus some songs that explore a more grand, upbeat, 'dancey' vibe. I want to make summer anthems as much as I want to make indie ballads. After seeing **Bashbo Bhalo** do so well, I have been writing in Bangla so much more. I've just been waiting for the right time to show it, and what better time than at the ICCB in front of thousands.



become an artist as a Bangladeshi. As it stands now, you have to fight for your right to be an artist in most cases.

Honestly need more diversity in our music. We need more voices, more styles, many Bangladeshis do not feel represented (and therefore emotionally connected) to a lot of our current music. Fortunately, it has never been easier to produce, engineer and distribute music, so I am expecting many new faces to show up in the scene.

You have a solo concert at ICCB on Wednesday, which is amazing for

A recent video of you went viral, where you sang "Amar Jaan" a bit off tune during your performance. Does it bother you?

Not at all. I sung off-tune because that was my first ever live performance and when I heard everyone singing the words to **Amar Jaan**, I started crying. I am not ashamed of this at all and everyone who was there at that show will tell you that the atmosphere in the room was electric. We all had a great time. I'd rather show than tell, so I ask everyone who doubts my abilities to come to my show on the 14th and see for themselves what the hype is about. The fact is that I have the most wonderful, compassionate fanbase and I know they're going to come to my show with the most positive energy, so I am not bothered by this at all.



Three Bangladeshi films to screen at Kolkata Int'l Film Festival

Three Bangladeshi films – Mejbaur Rahman Sumon directorial **Hawa**, Muhammad Quayum directorial **Kura Pokkhir** **Shunne Ura** and Fakhrul Arefeen Khan's **JK 1971** will be screened at the 28th edition of the Kolkata International Film Festival.

The festival will be held between December 15 and 22 this year. Of the 1078 films submitted, only 183 from 42 countries will be screened there. Around 215 shows will be held across 10 venues.

Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan are the primary guests of the inauguration, along with Jaya Bachchan, Rani Mukerji, Kumar Sanu, Mahesh Bhatt, and Shatrguahan Singha.

Popular film director Gautam Ghosh's documentary on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, **Bangabandhu in Calcutta**, will also be shown at the festival.

Mithila wins Maitri Award at Telangana Bengali Film Festival

Rafiath Rashid Mithila, who is quite popular in both Bangladesh and Kolkata, has added yet another feather in her cap, winning a Maitri Award at the Telangana Bengali Film Festival. The actress was given the award for her performance in

Omanush.

The beautiful actress was handed the award on Sunday—the second and final day of the festival. The prestigious award ceremony took place at the Palace Preview Lab in Hyderabad.

Mithila's first Tollywood film, **Maya**, was also screened at the Telangana Bengali Film Festival, which commenced on Saturday. Directed by Raajhorshee De, the movie is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's **Macbeth**.

NEWS

JS body for action

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[agriculture officers] stay at your houses. Don't do that. Visit the field to look into the matter," said a committee member.

The agriculture minister asked why are rice prices so high in the country when the present government has made such huge strides in the agricultural sector.

The harvesting season of Aman paddy is underway but most people are struggling to buy rice as the price of the staple is quite high.

Rice is being sold at Tk 55-60 a kilogramme in the local market and it has remained that way in the last four months.

The JS body also recommended encouraging farmers to increase cultivation of palm, sunflower, mustard and soybean crops in addition to Boro paddy cultivation.

Committee members Imaz Uddin, Mamunur Rashid Kiran, Jayasen Gupta, Umme Kulsum Smriti and Hosne Ara participated in the meeting.

EC to set

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Bogura-6, Md Aminul Islam of Chapainawabganj-2, and Rumeen Farhana, from women's reserved seats.

The two others are Md Harunur Rashid of Chapainawabganj-3, who is now in Australia, and Abdus Sattar Buiyan, the ailing MP of Brahmanbaria-2.

The speaker accepted the resignation of six MPs and said Harunur Rashid would have to sign the resignation letter and send it again as the JS secretariat could not be sure whether the signature in his letter was by him.

The Parliament Secretariat then issued gazette notifications announcing the seats to be vacant.

Hearing aids

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the risk of dementia and cognitive decline over a duration of 2-25 years.

"The usage of hearing restorative devices by participants with hearing loss was associated with a 19 percent decrease in hazards of long-term cognitive decline," scientists wrote in the study.

Students suffer as banks

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been preparing for a Canadian university for the last two years.

"If it gets canceled, then it would be so frustrating for me, for my families," he added. He went to three other banks to open a new student profile, but those banks too responded in the negative, citing the current dollar crisis.

Previously, there was a rumour that Bangladesh Bank had directed commercial banks not to open student files. But the current spokesperson for the central bank, Md Mezbaul Haque, told The Daily Star, "We have not issued any such order. We only instructed them to operate on the basis of sufficient funds."

These banks, who cannot open new files, might be facing a fund crunch, he added.

Foyez Uddin Sarkar, a senior executive of Premier Bank's Elephant Road branch, said, "We are in trouble as we don't have enough funds due to the ongoing dollar crisis."

Sarkar, however, hoped the situation would return to normal by January.

The bank are taking a conservative approach to opening profiles due to the dollar crunch, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and chief executive officer of MTB. While his bank would open 30-40 accounts a month, it has brought down the number to 5-6.

"We haven't stopped it entirely. We are opening the account on the basis of importance," he said. "For example, if a student wants to go to Oxford or Harvard, he or she can definitely open the file."

Standard Chartered Bank is an exception in this regard.

Naser Ezaz Bijoy, chief executive officer of SCB, said, "We have not stopped processing student files. In fact, we have doubled the number compared to last year. We have set up dedicated desks to provide assistance to students and parents."

According to Bangladesh Bank, in the 2021-22 fiscal year, \$414.50 million were sent abroad for education related services.

UNESCO's "Global Flow of Tertiary

Students" report says a staggering 49,151 Bangladeshi students left the country for higher education in 2021.

"In the last fiscal year, the City Bank played a key role in opening student files. Although this is now a peak moment for admissions globally, we cannot help students properly right now," said a top official of the City Bank, requesting to be anonymous.

As such, students' futures remain bleak. For many they're on the edge of missing out on an opportunity of a lifetime.

From 'digital'

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NM Zeaul Alam also spoke at the programme.

Earlier, Hasina distributed prizes among the winners of the quiz competition. Each of the winners received a laptop, mobile phone set and certificate.

A documentary on Digital Bangladesh was also screened at the programme.

There, Hasina inaugurated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hi-Tech Park in Rajshahi and Sheikh Kamal IT Training and Incubation Center in Barishal through digital authentication.

She also unveiled a graphic novel based on the life sketch of Sheikh Kamal, and a publication on Digital Bangladesh.

The PM also distributed Digital Bangladesh Award among the winners.

Quarter-final over, now time

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Quader joined the event virtually.

Meanwhile, six leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in a clash with a group of AL men over the seating arrangement at the programme.

Police charged batons to bring the situation under control.

Chuadanga Police Superintendent Abdullah Al Mamun said, "I've come to know the matter through video footage. We will look into the matter."

Argentina want

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kicking into gear in the group stages and then scripting exhausting wins over Australia and the Netherlands, Croatia too didn't make life easy for themselves with back-to-back shootout victories at the knockout stages. But that is something Croatia are happy to live with, having navigated the path to the final after extra-time in every knockout stage match in Russia four years ago. They are a battle-hardened side with plenty of strong characters in all the positions, with Luka Modric the creative spark, just like Messi.

Any notion of playing boring football was summarily brushed aside by Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic at the pre-match press conference. "We are in the semifinals and we are here by merit. That's the end of the topic," he said in reply to a question.

Selection-wise, Croatia are in a better position as they have no suspension and no serious injuries to contend with, unlike Argentina, who have defenders Gonzalo Montiel and Marcos Acuna suspended. However, the good news for the Argentines is that both Angel di Maria and Gonzalo Montiel are available for selection even though they are not likely to start.

With both teams having won twice against each other and the other match ending in a draw, there is not much to separate the two sides, even though the only time these two sides met in a World Cup ended in a convincing 3-0 win for the European side in Russia four years ago.

But that was a different Argentina team, who had only squeezed into the Round of 16 with a one-point advantage and made a meek exit after the Croatia thrashing. In Lusail tonight, they will certainly be a different beast, with a massive legion of fans egging them on for victory.

Ex-RCC mayor

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Mostafizar could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

A total of nine candidates are running for mayor in the RCC elections which will be held on December 27.

Finance Division

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Finance Division has a say."

Asked whether it would curtail the power of independent organisations like the Anti-Corruption Commission, Anwarul said, "You'll have to have vetting done by the Finance Division while fixing the pay structure and other expenditures. The rest will be done by the respective organisations."

He, however, said the practice had earlier been mandatory for the autonomous, legislative and local government bodies, but the enactment of the existing law in 2018 rendered it ambiguous.

Yesterday, the cabinet also discussed the need for strengthening the cyber security of the country, security of the national data centre and expediting the implementation of a newly adopted project on submarine cables.

In reply to a query, the cabinet secretary said the government was giving emphasis on cyber security as banking transactions and other activities have gone online. To prevent hacking, the government has given the instructions, he added.

The cabinet also approved the proposal to ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury, an international treaty adopted in 2013 in Japan to protect humans and the environment from harmful effects of mercury pollution.

"The total mercury released in Bangladesh is approximately 32,660kg a year, which pollutes the environment," said the cabinet

secretary.

The treaty came into effect in 2017 with 137 countries participating in the convention. The treaty banned the opening of new mercury mines and asked to close the existing ones gradually and restricted the use of mercury in products.

The cabinet cleared another proposal to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Besides, the meeting okayed the proposal for signing an agreement between Bangladesh and Iran to avoid double taxation and prevent tax dodging.

LAST MEETING

Yesterday was the last cabinet meeting for Anwarul as the secretary as he is going to retire on December 15.

"Let's see what I can do next. I'm lucky; perhaps I'm the longest serving civil servant. It's my 40th year as a government employee. I was also secretary for 12 years," he said when he was asked about his plans after retirement.

Asked, the cabinet secretary said, "Today [yesterday] is my last official meeting with you. You [media] gave me tremendous support. I'm thankful to you."

"The cabinet thanked me for my service. I worked for the welfare of the people... There may be some mistakes and for that, I'm apologising to the people."

Fakhrul, Abbas denied bail

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granted bail, they added.

The prosecution, however, opposed the bail petitions saying activists had carried out subversive activities as directives from high-profile leaders, including Fakhrul, Abbas and several others.

Upon hearing both sides, the magistrate dismissed the defence pleas considering the depth of offences brought against them in the case.

The case was filed with Paltan Model Police Station on December 8, a day after the clash broke out in front of the party's Nayapaltan office.

The clash left one person dead and scores of others injured.

A total of 450 leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were arrested in the case on December 7 and produced before a Dhaka court the following day.

Law enforcers picked up Fakhrul and Abbas from their homes around 3:00am on December 9. The same day, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim sent Fakhrul and Abbas to jail in the case, rejecting their bail petitions.

The two BNP leaders were shown arrested on a charge of provoking party members to launch an attack on police in the Nayapaltan area.