

POPEYE comes to town

MOUMITA SULTANA HEMA

In the 2010's, an unknown entity named Popeye Bangladesh swept the music scene with the song, *Neshar Bojha* with little to no marketing.

With his original tracks, the voice behind the project, Raffan Imam, has created a musical entity of his own. Having released his first album in 2010, he is all set to perform his first concert in the country in 13 years on March 9, at the capital's International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB).

Popeye Bangladesh started as a music project between you and Talat Minhaz. Is it still a project or has it changed to you adopting it as your stage-name?



Poster of Popeye's concert which will kick off on March 9 at ICCB

Yes, it is a stage-name. However, it was always a music project, similar to Bon Jovi or Dave Matthews, so we used my stage-name as the name for the project. Talat and I are a part of the same entity (project), like two different forces working together. I cannot imagine working without Talat. He is actually a producer, and he understands my brand and my ability as a musician very much, so the work dynamic between us is still the same even after 13 years.

How did you get your first break?

Back in the day, releasing music was not as accessible as it is today. Thanks to the internet, talent can now be exposed to the world. For my first album, I burned eight songs on a CD and I would visit distribution labels like Gaanchill Music and G-Series, but I could see no light at the end of the tunnel. A student who I was tutoring at the time, was actually the relative of Tahsan Khan. When he listened to my songs, he was so impressed that he insisted that Nazmul

Haque Bhuiyan, the head of G-series, rethink our album and release it. That's how we actually got our first break!

Your songs relate to so many individuals in Bangladesh. Since you live overseas, where do you find the inspiration to connect with the Bangladeshi audience?

My songs don't follow geographic patterns, instead they come from emotions. And emotions in people are the same worldwide. If I'm making a love song, I think that the sensitivity is important, so that feeling and emotion are the same, irrespective of whether it's in Bangladesh or in the US. I try to observe people and understand their agony to get the humane side, that is how I find inspiration.

Is there anything you feel that you haven't achieved yet?

Stardom! I don't think I have become a star yet, and I never actually planned to be one. My philosophy has always been that as a musician, my first priority is my music, which is why I never tried to make music videos either.

I wanted to show people that when you work hard enough for something, you do not need to do other fancy things to get people's attention.

Many of your songs have received immense love from the fans. I would like to ask you about one song in particular, 'Neshar Bojha'. What was the inspiration behind this song?

Whenever I sit to write a song, unless it has a very sweet sort of melody, I try to avoid love songs. So, for *Neshar Bojha*, I already had a tune and it was darker, with a tranquil vibe.

At that time, the people around me were suffering from depression. So, I tried connecting the dots. The song was not necessarily focused on drugs, rather it was more about depression, anxiety, and the loneliness people feel.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Joy Bangla Concert returns after two years



Joy Bangla Concert, one of the most anticipated youth events, returns this year after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, music-loving youngsters can expect a bigger and better show than ever before.

The concert will feature both iconic and emerging bands from the country, including Artcell, Avoid Rafa, Lalon, Chirkutt, Cryptic Fate, Karnival, Meghdol, Nemesis, and Arekta Rock Band.

The Joy Bangla concert will take place on March 8 at Army Stadium. The registration for the concert is free and has officially commenced at ticket.youngbangla.org.

Kartik Aaryan announces 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3'



Kartik Aaryan is all set to reprise his role as 'Rooh Baba', as he dropped a major announcement on social media this Wednesday. The actor posted a video where he declared the release date of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* which will hit the theatres on Diwali 2024.

Following the success of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, Ance Bazmee announced that there will be a third instalment of the renowned franchise. However, fans were left stunned with the sudden video announcement as 'Rooh Baba' looked spookier than ever before.

Kartik, dressed as 'Rooh Baba', sings *Ami Je Tomar* in the video. "I don't simply talk with spirits, they also take over my body as well," he said in the teaser, referencing his dialogue from the last film.

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1 dead, 50 hurt

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Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. His body was kept at the hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

At least 20 people were detained from the spot and additional law enforcers were deployed to avert further violence, said Ranjoy Chandra Mallik, assistant superintendent of police in Sunamganj.

No case was filed in this regard till the filing of this report around 7:30pm yesterday.

Onus squarely

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preparing a Mirpur wicket capable of putting the ropes on England before proceedings move to Chattogram, where the wicket is expected to be sporting and the challenge much more difficult.

The onus will be on the Tigers batters to deliver as they failed to capitalise on a good start in the opener and eventually succumbed to struggles of their own making before being bundled out for a meagre 209.

The hosts' bowlers, particularly the spin trio of Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam, and Mehidi Hasan Miraz, managed to turn the match on its head but the runs on the board were not enough for Bangladesh to clinch the match.

England, on the other hand, will have the momentum having won the close contest and will be looking to seal back-to-back ODI series wins away in the Tiger's den.

New moai statue

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Huki Cuadros, director of the Ma'u Henua Indigenous community that administers the Rapa Nui National Park, where the volcano is found, told AFP.

"The interesting thing is that, for at least the last 200 or 300 years, the laguna was three metres deep, meaning no human being could have left the moai there in that time," said Huki, who is also the provincial head of the local branch of the national forestry corporation, which is collaborating with the restoration of the marshland.

Moai are distinctive monolithic carved stone figures with elongated faces and no legs that were mostly quarried from tuff, a kind of volcanic ash, at the Rano Raraku volcano.

India's SC orders probe

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suggest measures to strengthen the statutory and regulatory framework and secure compliances within the existing framework for the protection of investors, reports Hindustan Times.

"The Adani Group welcomes the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It will bring finality in a time-bound manner. Truth will prevail," tweeted billionaire Gautam Adani.

A bench, comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, pronounced its order on a batch of four petitions that sought the intervention of the court and an investigation into different aspects of the issue.

On February 17, the CJI-led

bench reserved its order on the composition and remit of a committee, which is expected to look into the recent episode that witnessed a massive slide in Adani Group's stock prices after US firm Hindenburg Research came out with a report alleging fraud and stock manipulation by the Gautam Adani-led group.

The Adani Group has denied the charges.

On that day, the bench turned down the Centre's "sealed cover" nominees for a probe committee, asserting the court will instead name its own panel. The bench underlined that the process must inspire transparency and confidence without an impression being given of the committee being a "government-appointed" panel.

Rohingya ration cuts

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"I have spoken with desperate families in the camps who have already had to cut back on essential food items due to a spike in prices. Reversing these cuts in food aid is literally a matter of life and death for Rohingya families."

Many UN member states have offered rhetorical support for the Rohingya people, but Rohingya families cannot eat political rhetoric.

"It is past time for UN member states to replace empty declarations of support with life-saving action.

"Unless they are quickly reversed, the impact of these cuts will be

catastrophic and long-lasting."

According to the expert, malnutrition and adverse health outcomes could spike in the community and the development of Rohingya children could be severely impaired.

The consequences of these cuts are likely to be carried by the Rohingya people for generations.

Meanwhile, Doctors Without Borders, in a statement yesterday said cuts to the food rations received by around one million Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar will increase their risk of malnutrition and have a serious impact on their health.

Dhaka wants foreign funds

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Talking about the second proposal, Tofazzel said only one-third of the land of the Bhashan Char was used (for infrastructure to house 100,000 Rohingyas) and now the Prime Minister wants the infrastructure to be constructed in the remaining two-thirds of the land and more Rohingyas to be taken there.

"So, Bangladesh has sought assistance to construct new infrastructures," he said.

In the meeting, the foreign countries and agencies were asked to put importance on the Rohingya issue

in other international forums, he said.

The principal secretary said Rohingya people will get better life and livelihood in Bhashan Char as they get skill development training and opportunities for agricultural work including raising poultry and rearing farm animals.

He mentioned that the Rohingyas taken to Bhashan Char are brought to the mainland camps to meet their relatives in Cox's Bazar regularly.

He said several problems, including internal conflict, violence, killing, and trafficking are occurring in the Cox's Bazar camps.

PM to fly to Qatar tomorrow

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Hasina will be visiting Qatar at the invitation of Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Sehele Sabrin at the weekly media briefing yesterday.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, and Education Minister Dipu Moni, among others, will accompany the PM.

On March 5, Hasina will deliver a speech at the opening plenary meeting as a special guest. She will address an event on the sidelines, titled "Sustainable and Smooth Transition for the Graduating Cohort of 2021".

The PM will also speak as the chief guest at a business summit titled

"The Rise of Bengal Tiger: Potential of Trade and Investment in Bangladesh", and attend a high-level dialogue on "Enhancing the participation of LDCs in International Trade and Regional Integration".

Hasina will present Bangladesh's story of graduating from LDC. She will also speak on how the coronavirus pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war rattled the global economy, especially those of the developing countries.

Bangladesh will raise these issues and seek support from the developed countries for continuation of the trade privileges it now enjoys as an LDC, beyond 2026.

Sehele Sabrin said the PM would call on Qatar Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister Khalid

bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani on the sidelines of the summit.

She is likely to seek Qatar's support in oil supply as energy prices have shot up due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

She will also meet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during the summit.

At the briefing, the foreign ministry spokesperson also said Romania is expected to recruit more than 15,000 Bangladeshis this year.

A Romanian consular mission will come to Bangladesh on March 5 and stay till September.

During this time, the mission is expected to issue 15,000 visas, which was 5,400 last year.

Bangladeshis are going to Romania to work mostly in the construction sector.

Police want 550 SP posts before polls

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promotions of the cadre officials.

Asked, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told The Daily Star that they would look into the matter.

NO REGULAR PROMOTIONS IN NEXT 5 YEARS

According to the PHQ database, 150 officers of the 28th BCS cadre batch are waiting to be promoted to SP from additional SP. So are 35 officials from the 29th BCS cadre batch, who joined the force in 2011.

But only 77 SP posts will be vacant by 2030 as officers from the ranks of SP to additional IGP are scheduled to go into pre-retirement leave (PRL) by that time.

During these seven years, 233 officers, include 81 additional deputy

inspectors general (DIG), 57 DIGs, and 18 additional IGs will go into PRL.

An official goes into PRL after reaching the age of 59.

Meanwhile, around 182 police officers from the 30th BCS cadre batch, who joined the force in 2012, and 182 from the 31st BCS cadre batch, who joined the service the following year, are also waiting for promotions from additional SP to SP, shows the PHQ database.

A high official at the PHQ said, "In a regular process, it will take at least six years for promoting these officers from these two BCS cadre batches to higher posts."

An officer from the 28 BCS batch, said, "We have completed 13 years in service. Offices from the same BCS batch in all other cadres -- admin, tax,

foreign, and customs -- have already been promoted. We are suffering from an inferiority complex for not being elevated to higher posts."

The PHQ proposal shows that the creation of 550 in-situ SP posts will cost the government an additional Tk 1.05 crore a year.

Currently, there are 3,124 first class BCS cadre officers in the police force. Of them, 1,222 are ASPs, 1,001 additional SPs, 593 SPs, 200 additional DIGs, 85 DIGs, 20 additional inspectors general (grade II), two additional inspectors general (grade-I) and an inspector general.

PHQ sources said that the proposal on creating new posts of 85 SPs, 39 additional DIGs, 12 DIGs, and four additional IGs is now pending approval by the home ministry.

inflated salaries.

"No pilot undergoing training is being provided with any salary and unless they complete their training, there is no scope for getting paid. Reports stating such are not valid," it said.

The Daily Star has obtained three pay slips and two pay vouchers of first officers Sadia Ahmed, Syed Muhiy Rezwan, and Mohammed Atiqur Rahman, all of whom are under training, as well as Captain Nasim Ebne Ahmed, whose training has been halted.

According to the pay slips, Nasim earned from Biman Tk 8.20 lakh, before tax, in July 2022, while Atiqur earned over Tk 6.40 lakh, before tax.

That month Sadia Ahmed earned over Tk 12.63 lakh.

Two pay vouchers from May and June 2022 show that Razwan was paid over Tk 2.20 lakh and Sadia Ahmed was paid over Tk 5.63 lakh.

Furthermore, The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the office order directing a department that these pilots be paid.