

## Nahubo: When social media is judge, jury, executioner

**"I know many of you are having a hard time understanding the song easily, due to linguistic reasons. For that, I am sorry. However, I can say that I did not compose this song with any negative words, which would bring shame to my Hajong community. So, I would request everyone, please don't speak ill about my mother tongue. I am not such an ill-willed person,"**

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

They say that life is a great leveller – and that sentiment is doubly true for the entertainment industry. Coke Studio Bangla, a cultural phenomenon fuelled by endless debates about meritocracy and even capitalism in music, started season 2 with the highly appreciated "Murir Tin", blending dialects of Chattogram, Khulna and Sylhet to make an incredible musical mishmash.

Then followed "Bonbib", and while it was overall appreciated for its presentation, tone and an in-form Meghdol's consistent brilliance, talks of not understanding and perhaps appropriating the social and geopolitical nuances also ran amuck on social media.

By all means, the third collaboration between Animes Roy and a relatively unknown artist named Daughter of Coastal should have been unanimously the best – that was the conclusion that I came to after listening to a few of the latter's songs.

While I'm not well versed in rap, D.O.C's



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

are groovy as ever and while Sayonton Mangsang's composition arguably has a few consistency issues, his work on the saxophone, flute and synth are immaculate.

However, the song did not go down well with netizens on the internet, owing not only to its aforementioned visual similarity with the aforementioned "Kana Yari", featuring Kalfi Khalil and Eva B.

Unfortunately, any of the comments also went as far as to ridicule Animes himself and worse, insult his Hajong language, which in no way is acceptable.

"I know many of you are having a hard time understanding the song easily, due to linguistic reasons. For that, I am sorry. However, I can say that I did not compose this song with any negative words, which would bring shame to my Hajong community. So, I would request everyone, please don't speak ill about my mother tongue. I am not such an ill-willed person," shared the singer on a social media post, which he later deleted.

Animes, a proud member of the Hajong community, claimed that he cannot remember the last time that he spoke in anything but Bangla. The sheer emotions of disappointment that emanated from the post was enough to remind us once again that while artistes are encouraged to have a 'thick skin', they too are human beings and it is not always possible to ignore the sentiments of the public.

Many countered that their problem was not with Hajong itself, as evident by the overwhelming popularity of "Nasek Nasek", but the execution of the song itself. But as I write this, I can see dozens of unsavoury comments being made about the song, on my own news feed.

There is no real way out of the conundrum for the Coke Studio team but to ignore social media for a while, and focus on their next songs awaiting release. An artist like Animes Roy should never have to apologise for his work, regardless of what people think of it. And I cannot believe I have to spell this out – no human being should ever have to apologise for his mother tongue.



COLLAGE: ANTARA RAISA

original music felt stellar, so it was all the more disappointing when her performance fell flat in the new Coke Studio Bangla song, "Nahubo". While the music and tune is still an enjoyably fresh original, the inspiration that the makers took from Coke Studio Pakistan's "Kana Yaari" was more than evident, right down to when the female rapper makes her 'bombastic' entrance in the song.

All the firepower that the musical team boasts is still there and they are undoubtedly at their best – Saadul and Imran's guitar riffs carry the song, Mithun Chakra's percussions



## Billie Eilish makes acting debut in 'Swarm'



After casting a spell on the music industry, Billie Eilish has now made her acting debut in an episode of a new thriller-series, *Swarm*, which has been directed by Donald Glover.

The singer plays Eva, a character Rolling Stone has described as a 'mysterious' cult leader.

The seven-part television series, which debuted on Prime Video on Friday, stars Dominique Fishback as Dre—a troubled adolescent whose intense obsession with pop artist Ni'Jah turns violent. The show, which delves into the darker side of 'stan' culture, stars Chloe Bailey, Damson Idris, and Rickey Thompson.

## Celebration of FFSB's Golden Jubilee kicks-off

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

On the rainy evening of March 19, The Federation of Film Societies of Bangladesh (FFSB) hosted the inauguration programme of the year-long celebrations for the competition of 50 years of their journey and 60 years of the Film Society Movement in Bangladesh.

The programme started around 6 pm at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Jatiya Natyashala Theatre. The programme consisted of an award ceremony honouring the 'Best Film of Bangladesh's 50 Years', a performance by Joler Gaan, and a screening of the film, *Lal Moroger Jhuti*.

The programme's chief guest was the Information and Broadcasting Minister, Dr Hasan Mahmud, while eminent filmmaker, Syed Salahuddin Zaki was present as the special guest.

The FFSB will also organise workshops on film education in 10 districts of the country—namely Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Rangpur, Khulna, Kustia and Rangamati.

The year-long celebrations will end on October 28.



# NEWS

## Interpol's red

FROM PAGE 12

the charge sheet in a case filed for the murder of a Bangladesh police official.

"I received news that Interpol has accepted it. Now they will do the rest of the work."

About the alleged relationship between a former police official and Arav, the IGP said, "We are looking into it ... We'll let you know at an appropriate time."

On April 11, 2019, the Detective Branch of police pressed charges against Rabiul and nine others in the murder case of Mamun Emran Khan, the then inspector of Special Branch of police.

Regarding some celebrities' participation at the inauguration of Arav Jewellers, he said, "They [the celebrities] can tell you better about why they went there ... It is not necessary to presume that they will stand in the dock for attending the programme. We are looking into their motive as well."

About the Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps, he said, "The law and order situation is fully under control. Police, Rab, APBN, intelligence agencies, the RRRC and others are working together. After every incident, law enforcers have taken legal action."

When asked about the arrest of film actor Mahiya Mahi, the IGP said, "A case was filed. No injustice will be done to anyone."

## Not a single

FROM PAGE 12

They last talked to Tonu's father and his younger son Anwar Hossain Rubel when they visited the spot in 2020.

"The hope of justice for my innocent daughter is fading. We don't know whether we will get justice before our death as both of us [parents of Tonu] are becoming sick."

Contacted, PBI Inspector Mujibur Rahman, investigation officer of the case, said he won't make any comment on the probe. "Senior officials will brief the media about it, if necessary."

PBI chief Banaj Kumar Majumder told The Daily Star, "We are trying our best and the probe is on. We hope one day we will be able to crack the murder mystery."

## Pro-BNP lawyers stage demo

FROM PAGE 2

They also brought out a procession and formed a human chain there protesting "the anarchy created by pro-BNP lawyers and outsiders".

Newly elected SCBA Secretary Abdun Nur Dulal, Vice President Jasmine Sultana, Assistant Secretary Noor-A-Alam Uzzal and Dhaka City AL Law Affairs Secretary Mohammad Zaglul Kabir spoke on the occasion.

In the election, pro-AL lawyers won all 14 SCBA posts, including president and secretary.

**PRO-BNP LAWYERS SECURE BAIL** Yesterday, the High Court granted anticipatory bail to 13 pro-BNP lawyers, including Mahbub Uddin Khokon and Ruhul Quddus Kazal, in three cases.

They were granted anticipatory bail for eight weeks, or until

submission of police reports in the cases, whichever is earlier.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim and Justice Md Bazlur Rahman passed the orders following three petitions filed by the accused seeking anticipatory bail.

The petitioners appeared before the HC bench during the hearing.

The cases were filed on charges of snatching ballots of SCBA election, preventing police from discharging duties, and carrying out vandalism during the March 15-16 polls.

SCBA election conducting sub-committee, its administration and police lodged the cases with Shahbagh Police Station on the same dates.

Senior lawyers AJ Mohammad Ali and Zainul Abedin argued for the accused.

## Govt won't repeal DSA

FROM PAGE 12

of enforced disappearance victims, stating that certain civil society organisations have been identifying themselves as "rights bodies" to hide their political agenda.

"We repeatedly asked Odhikar to give us the details of the victims but they did not comply."

"Can someone give me a list of the victims?" he added, stating that they have a list of 78 victims given by the UN.

The state minister further said that from that list, they are working with the cases of 28 victims of enforced disappearance.

He added, "Ten of the families refused to cooperate with police, while 10 people on the UN's list were later found."

Nur Khan Liton, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, said that instead of rejecting these allegations, the government should investigate them.

HFRB's report presented yesterday said that between September 2018 and February 2023, at least 56 persons have been victims of enforced disappearance.

During previous UPRs, Bangladesh had been recommended by UN

member states to ratify the UN convention for the protection of persons from enforced disappearance, but Bangladesh had rejected the recommendation.

"I don't want to make any commitment about [accepting the] recommendations that were noted [official term used by the UPR for rejecting]."

The draft report recommended that the government create a level-playing field for all political parties prior to the upcoming national election, to which Alam said that Bangladesh will not return to a caretaker government.

"If we need to change the constitution to bring about a caretaker government, we will not. Everyone must participate in the elections under the existing law."

"The perceived main opposition does not want to ... So, we cannot force them."

Huma Khan, senior human rights adviser of UN Resident Coordinator's Office, and Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, were also present at the seminar.

Tamanna Hoq Riti, coordinator of HFRB, presented the draft report.

## Child abducted

FROM PAGE 12

The father of the victim filed a case with Shahzadpur police station on Sunday accusing three people.

Inspector (investigation) of Shahzadpur Police Station Sazzadur Rahman said receiving the complaint, police on the same day arrested Md Shakhawat Hossain, 21, and Naim Hossain, 22, from the locality.

Receiving information from the arrestees, Md Sagar Ali, 21, was arrested early Monday from Dhaka's Savar area.

All the accused are from Rotonkandi village.

Based on the arrestees' statements, police recovered the body of the victim from Dohobeel area of Potazia union in Shahzadpur yesterday, the inspector said.

Police said the accused kidnapped the boy on Friday and killed him and dumped his body the same day.

The arrestees were sent to jail. An investigation is ongoing, the inspector added.

The body has been sent to Sirajganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## 54 BNP leaders

FROM PAGE 12

Kamruzzaman alleged that police framed the BNP men in Dhaka like they are doing elsewhere in the country.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir in a press statement condemned the arrests saying that the party leaders and activists were taking part in a social programme.

He said that efforts are being made continuously to establish "one-party rule" by imprisoning BNP men.

Contacted, SI Ikramul said they conducted the drive and made the arrests as they had information that the opposition men were planning "sabotage".

Asked whether police have any proof of the plan, the complainant said planning is not a visible thing.

He also admitted that police didn't recover anything from the arrestees.

## Remains of ancient

FROM PAGE 12

volcanic material in the region. When mixtures of volcanic ash, lava and volcanic glass called pumice react with water, a hard, crusty salt layer can form.

## 2018 polls neither

FROM PAGE 1

Affairs Bureau, and the Election Commission to observe the election, the report added.

Low voter turnout, intimidation, irregularities, and violence during campaigns and voting marked several local government elections during 2022. Ain O Salish Kendra noted that 479 incidents of political violence occurred, with 70 deaths.

On the human rights situation, the report said the government mobilised law enforcement resources to level civil and criminal charges against opposition party leaders.

The BNP claimed that police implicated thousands of BNP members in criminal charges related to political demonstrations during the year and detained many of the accused. Human rights observers claimed that many of these charges were politically motivated.

It said AL-affiliated organisations, such as Bangladesh Chhatra League, reportedly carried out violence and intimidation around the country with impunity, including against individuals affiliated with opposition groups.

The report also highlighted issues, including press freedom, labour rights, freedom of assembly,

migrants, and refugee rights.

It said there were significant limitations on freedom of expression both online and offline. Members of the media and bloggers self-censored their criticisms of the government due to harassment and fear of reprisal.

Throughout last year, the government widely used the Digital Security Act against persons criticising the government, including questioning the government's handling of the pandemic.

Increasingly, the law was used against speech found on social media, websites, and other digital platforms, including for commentators living outside of the country.

In April, the Centre for Governance Studies of Bangladesh released a report that stated at least 2,244 individuals were accused in 890 DSA cases between January 2020 and February 2022. Politicians made up the plurality of the accused, followed by journalists.

The report claimed an average of 32 arrests per month under the DSA, with arrest rates increasing in 2021.

It added that in 2022, extrajudicial killings dramatically decreased from the previous year.

## 'Dear friends' Xi, Putin

FROM PAGE 12

also "slightly envious" of China's rapid development in recent decades.

"China has created a very effective system for developing the economy and strengthening the state. It is much more effective than in many other countries," he said.

"We are always open to negotiations," Putin told Xi. "We will certainly discuss all these issues, including your initiatives which we treat with respect, of course," he added.

For Xi, the visit is a diplomatic tightrope.

China has released a broad 12-point proposal to solve the Ukraine crisis, while strengthening relations with Moscow.

Beijing has repeatedly dismissed Western accusations that it is planning to arm Russia but says it wants a closer energy partnership after boosting imports of Russian coal, gas and oil.

"Both sides are continuously

strengthening political mutual trust, creating a new paradigm of relations between major powers," Xi wrote in an article published in Russia ahead of his trip.

Western sanctions made Russian energy cheaper, saving China billions of dollars, but its top trade partners remain the United States and European Union.

Ukraine said China should press Russia to stop its invasion.

"We expect Beijing to use its influence on Moscow to make it put an end to the aggressive war against Ukraine," Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko said.

Xi said China's Ukraine peace proposal, an unspecified document released last month, reflects global views.

"Complex problems do not have simple solutions," he wrote in Rossiiskaya Gazeta, a daily published by the Russian government, according to a Reuters translation from Russian.