



OC Harun from "Mohanagar", Allen Swapan from "Myself Allen Swapan", Kaiser Chowdhury from "Kaiser", Rafsan Haque from "Punorjonmo".

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

'Why are OTT characters sending me friend requests?'

How would it feel if Humayun Ahmed's iconic characters Himu or Misir Ali sent you a friend request on Facebook? One look into the profile reaffirms everything that you learned from reading books or watching them on-screen. A live interaction with the character would be fascinating, isn't it?

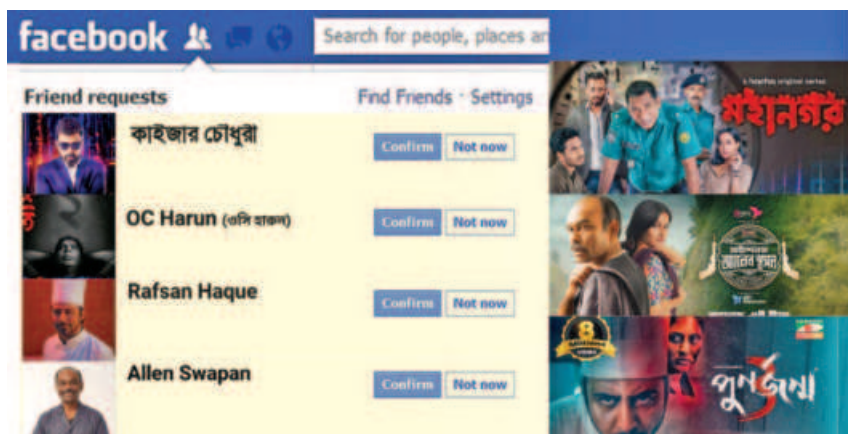
SHARMIN JOYA

Recently, the characters from OTT shows, Allen Swapan from *Syndicate*, and its spin-off *Myself Allen Swapan*, and OC Harun from *Mohanagar* has been actively interacting with fans on the social media prior to the release of these shows.

Allen Swapan: The underground mafioso, who does his underhanded dealings remaining hidden. He is the antagonist from Shihab Shaheen directorial web-series *Syndicate*, donned by Nasir Uddin Khan. After the show's release in July, 2022, the character became popular for its unique representation. The character's quirkiness, and the way Nasir Uddin portrayed the role perfectly captured everybody's imaginations across the globe. Owing to his popularity, he became the lead of his own spin-off show.

As a promotional strategy, OTT platform Chorki came up with this unique idea to engage people with Allen Swapan's character. Director Shihab Shaheen told The Daily Star that this profile is being operated by Chorki's promotional team, and they have been jointly planning when to post what, and how to keep the audience on the loop about the upcoming show.

Tanzina Rahman Tasnim, communication officer, Chorki also



informed that they have been focusing on this promotional campaign prior to the release of the show, however, she also added that since Allen Swapan is a negative role, they are showcasing Allen Swapan positively on social media in a sarcastic manner. They will also continue the activity of this profile, post-release.

OC Harun: The witty police officer has been ruling hearts of people since its release in June, 2021. After the long wait for two years, the sequel of Ashfaque Nipun's cop crime thriller web-series is set to stream from April 20. There is an id named after OC Harun roaming on Facebook, sending requests to people. In

this regard, the director informed that the profile probably has been created by a fan. "I have also got the friend request, and messages saying if I don't accept, he will arrest me," laughs the director.

Whether the profile of OC Harun is being able to portray just as the character donned by Mosharraf Karim in the show? In response, Nipun says, "Obviously, OC Harun is a very realistic character, with serious tone and activities. He would rather chase for a real mission, than making funny comments around on social media."

Kaiser Chowdhury: ADC Kaiser Chowdhury is a homicide detective, who is addicted to games and loves to

keep suspense in the way he works. His personal life, however, is tumultuous. The Hoichoi web-series created a buzz in July, 2022. The Tanim Noor directorial project featured Afran Nisho as Kaiser.

It is unknown to many, but after the show's success a fan made profile was opened, and from there artistes and crew members of the production was getting requests. "We had no clue who was operating the profile," said Tanim Noor. "It is a great way of promoting a project, however, the profile of Kaiser Chowdhury was probably opened by a fan." The director shared that he has kept the request pending.

Rafsan Haque: Vicky Zahed's iconic character Rafsan Haque, a cannibal chef, donned by Afran Nisho in the *Punorjonmo* series, was one of the most popular spin-offs in the history of Bengali content. Vicky told The Daily Star that there was a profile named Rafsan Haque, which was created by a fan, and they had no promotional strategy as such. "However, this idea really worked in promoting our series. Although it happened organically, it is really a great concept especially for the digital contents as the audience can relate more and interacting with the onscreen characters make them more involved in the project itself."

Renaissance bringing new song this Eid

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, popular band Renaissance will be releasing a new song titled *Shada Kaalo Noy, Noy Badami*.

The song's lyrics have been written by Shahid Mahmud Jangi, while Pilu Khan has composed the music. Alongside the band, singer Elita Karim has also provided her voice for this song.

The song will be released by Ajob Records. Naquib Khan shared, "This song is against caste discrimination. Renaissance has always talked about life through our thematic songs, and we are continuing to do so with our latest song. I hope the audience appreciates our effort."



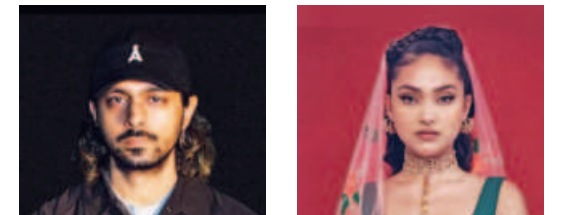
Bangladeshi origin artistes perform at Coachella 2023

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival is one of the biggest annual events, taking place in California. This year's event, which kicked off on April 14 has been no different, featuring some of the biggest names in music from Blackpink to Bad Bunny.

Two artistes of Bangladeshi origin, Jai Wolf and Joy Crookes are the two artistes in question.

Sajeb Saha aka Jai Wolf is a Bangladesh-born electronic music producer, who grew up in New York. He is well known for his songs *Indian Summer* and *Like it's over*. While not born in Bangladesh, Joy Elizabeth Akther Crookes aka Joy Crookes rose to fame with her songs *Feet don't fail me now* and *When you were mine*.

Both the artistes of Bangladeshi descent were featured on Weekend 1 of Coachella, as they delivered stellar performances that captivated the crowd.



COUNTRYWIDE



Villagers cross the Vatua river, a branch of the Jamuna, on small boats due to lack of a permanent bridge. The photo was taken from Salal Ghat area in Sirajganj's Kazipur upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Cry for a permanent bridge over Vatua river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

More than two lakh residents living in 12 unions under three upazilas of Jamalpur and Sirajganj have been suffering much for years for want of a permanent bridge over Vatua river, a branch of the Jamuna, at Salal Ghat in Sirajganj's Kazipur upazila.

The small river divided the 12 unions of the two districts into two portions.

Around one lakh people of different villages under five unions of Sirajganj Sadar and Kazipur upazila live in the western side of the river, said Kamrul Hasan Golzer, ex-chairman of Monsurnagar Union Parishad (UP) in Kazipur upazila.

Abu Taher, chairman of Satpoya UP under Sarishabari upazila, said more than one lakh people of

several villages under seven unions of Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila reside in the eastern side of the river.

People living on the western side of the river are the worst sufferers as they have to cross the river to go to their destinations including different schools, colleges, hospitals, markets and government offices every day.

Meanwhile, as the Natuarpara Haat, one of the largest weekly markets of Sirajganj, is situated on the western side of the river, people of Jamalpur and Tangail districts go there on every haat day by crossing the river on boats, locals said.

Abul Kalam Azad, principal of Alhaj Farhad Ali Memorial Degree College, said due to inadequate number of boats student of his institution have to face untold sufferings to attend their classes

during monsoon.

Farmers living on both sides of the river have to cross the river frequently to cultivate their croplands, Monsurnagar UP Chairman Abdur Razzak said, adding that but they have to face serious trouble while taking the harvest to their homes.

If a permanent bridge is built over the Vatua river, farmers will be able to carry their agricultural goods to anywhere across the country, he said. Contracted, Sarishabari LGED Upazila Engineer Jahidul Islam said people are in dire need of a permanent bridge over Vatua river.

Kazipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sukhmoy Sarker said he will inform the higher authorities of the matter and request them to take immediate step in this regard.

Power cuts caused by shutdown of 2 plants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Two power stations being unable to generate electricity has been causing load shedding nationwide for three days.

On Sunday, Bangladesh generated 1,291 megawatts less than what the authorities thought the demand would be, 15,273MW.

Khulna region alone had to shed 350MW of load, according to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) data.

PDB officials said that the Rampal power station shutdown was the main reason for the power cuts in the region for some days.

The plant in Bagerhat was producing around 350-450MW of electricity every day before it stopped production on April 15.

Sayed Akram Ullah, managing director of the company that runs the plant, said they were trying to resume operations by last night.

Akram did not say what issues the power plant was having.

PDB officials also blamed the 400MW Ashuganj north power station staying offline since Pehela Baishakh.

However, AMM Sazzadur Rahman, managing director of the company that runs the power station, said the unit was offline due to regular maintenance. "It will take another 3-4

days to resume operations."

Power Grid Company of Bangladesh data shows that power stations with a total capacity of 7,010MW were shut due to either fuel unavailability or maintenance.

PDB spokesperson Shameem Hasan told The Daily Star, "Temperature in the country has increased in the last few days. For that reason, people are using air conditioners more and the demand rose."

The country has a capacity of 22,566MW production. The highest ever production was 15,604MW at 9:00pm last night.

The previous record was set on this April 13 with 15,304MW generated.

EU to send observers if election participatory

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three phases: the first delegation visits six months before the polls, the second one two months before and the third one during the polls.

The EU has also informed the BNP that it puts importance on participatory polls.

The foreign diplomats, especially the ones from the western countries, have been calling for free and fair elections. They are

also critical of the last two national elections.

Momen yesterday informed Whiteley of the steps the government had taken to empower the Election Commission so that it could conduct a free and fair election.

He stressed that economic development is Bangladesh's top priority and urged the EU to come up with more infrastructure and green investments.

The European

Investment Bank is now more interested in investing in renewable energy and the transport sector of Bangladesh, the EU ambassador said.

The EU is interested to invest here through its Global Gateway initiative, he said.

Momen reiterated Bangladesh calls for the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and urged the EU to play a more pragmatic role.

Man beaten to death by mob

UNB, Faridpur

A man was beaten to death by a mob suspecting him to be a child abductor in Faridpur's Bhangra upazila on Sunday night.

His identity could not be known immediately.

Quoting locals, police said when the man was trying to pick up a child named Ritaz Meer, son of Khairul Meer of Nazirpur area, locals caught him and beat him up mercilessly around 8:00pm.

Physical work to start in July

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Asked about it, Siddique said the road transport and bridges ministry has already formed a committee that held several meetings and visited the spot. "We hope it would be resolved very soon."

The 20km rail line with 14 stations will have underground and elevated sections.

The metro authorities in June 2020 hired a consortium, led by Nippon Koei, for preparing detailed designs, tender documents

and supervising the construction work.

At least 77.1 percent work of detailed designs has been done as of March this year, show DMITCL documents.

The government will build a 140km network of metro rail consisting six lines in Dhaka and adjacent areas by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

The MRT Line-6 was launched partially in December last year, while construction work

of MRT Line-1, the first underground metro rail line in the country, started in February this year.

MRT LINE-1 COST TO RISE
The cost of MRT Line-1 will go up as more land has to be acquired for the biggest infrastructure project in the transport sector.

The 31.24km MRT Line-1 now involves Tk 52,561.43 crore.

The 19.87km part from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur (airport route) will be underground. The

other part (Purbachal route), a 11.36km stretch from Notumbazar to Purbachal, will be elevated.

The deadline for the project is December 2026.

In reply to a query, Siddique said they had a plan to acquire land following a feasibility study, but now they have to acquire more land due to "ground reality".

"So, we have to spend more money for land acquisition and the project cost will increase."