



Arbovirus at their jubilant best.



Indalo during their performance.

PHOTOS: SHAHBAZ NAHIAN



Roshan reveals 3-year marriage

Actor Ziaul Roshan has finally unveiled his relationship status. He had gotten married to his longtime partner, Tahsin Esha, three years ago.

The actor finally posted pictures of one of the wedding ceremonies today on his Facebook account, captioning it "Now we can hangout forever!"

Roshan told The Daily Star, "We got married three years ago, which wasn't revealed for various reasons. Please keep us in your prayers now, so that we can live in happiness and prosperity."

Roshan stepped into Dhallywood with *Rokto* in 2016. He then rose to fame with more films like, *Beporowa*, *Mukhosh*, *Psycho* and *Operation Sundarbans*. This Eid, two more of his films were released titled, *Paap* and *Jinn*.

IDOLS PAY TRIBUTE TO THEIR IDOLS

In celebration of music's greatest, Rock N Rhythm 3.0: Tribute Fiesta was held on May 5, Friday at Capital's International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB). Organised by Advantor Communications the event included popular Bangladeshi rock bands covering internationally famous songs, along with originals. The concert began at 3 pm and ended 10 pm.

Present at the event were Artcell paying tribute to their heroes, Cryptic fate paid homage to Iron Maiden, Powersurge covered Metallica, Mechanix covered Pantera and Alterbridge, Shonar Bangla Circus covered Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan and Bob Marley. Ionic Bond paid tribute to Eluviete and Children of Bodom, Echoes channeled Pink Floyd, Nemesis put forth their renditions Coldplay and Incubus, Arbovirus rendered Linkin Park and Green Day, Indalo covered Audioslave, Karnival covered Radiohead and Nirvana, while Unmaad did AC/DC and Guns N' Roses.



Cryptic Fate's Shakib storming the stage.



Powersurge were heavy-hitters during the event.



The jam-packed venue.



Artcell was a fan-favourite at the show.

Coke Studio Bangla dropping new song later today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



After impressing audiences by experimenting with different genres of music in songs like *Murir Tin*, *Bonobibi*, *Nahubo* and *Darale Duaarey*, Coke Studio Bangla will now be releasing their fifth song, *Deora*, a mixture of *sarigaan* and *palagaan*. The song will be released today at 7 pm.

Deora will see popular singer Pritom Hasan collaborating with boatman Fazlul Huq, Islam Uddin Palakar and Armeen Musa's music group, Ghaashphoring Choir.

According to Coke Studio Bangla, Fazlu Majhi (Fazlul Haq) is the original lyricist and composer of the song *Deora*. A few lines have been added to the original song, with the modern portion being written by Pritom. The song will also feature a *palagaan* segment, performed by Islam Uddin Palakar.

COUNTRYWIDE

Sand lifting threatens bridge, highway

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB

The lone bridge over the Brahmaputra river, that connects Jamalpur and Sherpur district, is under serious risk due to sand extraction from the riverbed only 100 metres off the bridge.

Some Local influential men have been lifting sand with excavators in Sherpur Sadar upazila, leaving the important bridge, Jamalpur-Sherpur Highway, roadside cropland and the Brahmaputra river embankment under threat of erosion.

Local people alleged that local influential Akbar Ali, chairman of Pokkimiari union, and his brother Mono Munshi have been extracting soil from the river for over a year, defying the law.

Alongside informing both the deputy commissioners in Sherpur and Jamalpur they locally tried to stop the illegal act on several occasions, but in vain.

According to the Sand Quarry and Soil Management Act 2010, sand lifting from within a kilometre of culverts, embankments, barrages, bridges, highways, rail tracks, residential areas and other important structures is completely prohibited.

Illegal soil extraction from near the Brahmaputra Bridge, the only bridge

over the river that connects two districts, has been going unabated for months, posing threat to the important bridge and the highway, said Nuruzzaman of Pokkimiari village.

Mahub, a resident of Jamalpur municipality area, said sand is being lifted from only around 100 metres off the bridge that may devour the surrounding croplands during the monsoon.

Contacted, Akbar Ali said he is not the only one who is doing business.

More than 10 to 12 syndicates from Jamalpur and Sherpur are involved in soil extraction from the river, he added.

Meanwhile, his younger brother Mono Munshi said they have been lifting sand after taking permission from the local administration.

Jamalpur Roads and Highways Department (RHD) Executive Engineer Pangkoj Bhowmik said he has informed the authorities concerned about the matter and hopes steps will be taken soon.

Although the bridge is situated in Jamalpur, it is controlled by Sherpur RHD, he added.

Sherpur RHD Executive Engineer Mohammad Moniruzzaman said they will launch a joint drive soon to stop the illegal sand lifting from the river.

Gold smugglers game the system

FROM PAGE 1
general of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID), said individuals bringing gold to the country under the baggage rule have to pay less in taxes than the ones importing gold for business.

This is why the smugglers are able to work the system, he added.

Even the jewellery store owners prefer to buy gold bars from the travellers because it is cheaper, said Shamit Ghosh Apu, a member of Bangladesh Jewellers' Association (Bajus).

Individuals bringing 234 grams of gold pay Tk 40,000 in customs fees, but someone importing the same amount of gold pays Tk 70,000 in taxes, customs officials said.

The customs directorate has written several times to the National Board of Revenue to set a limit on the number of times an individual can travel to Bangladesh with gold each year, Fakhru said.

A top official of Dhaka Customs House said, "It has been suggested to the NBR that expatriate workers

should be allowed to bring two gold bars no more than twice a year and tourists once a year. Besides, this should be included in their tax files," said a top official of Dhaka Customs House, requesting anonymity.

Tohidul Islam, an additional deputy commissioner (airport zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said police were aware that a section of smugglers were using the legal means.

"We have got the names of several suspects. We are looking for them," he added.

MONEY CHANGES HANDS THROUGH HUNDI
On March 19, CIID officers arrested a man arriving from Riyadh named Junayed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) with 3.21kg of gold worth around Tk 1.47 crore.

He allegedly gathered the gold from carriers traveling along with him inside the terminal.

Police officers investigating the matter learnt that Junayed was used to receive the gold bars from travellers outside the airport. He has been

involved in the racket for over three years, officers said, adding that he has at least 45 accounts with different banks.

An officer, requesting anonymity, said Junayed's transactions for the smuggling were done over hundi.

Three other people were arrested by customs officials and police on March 27, April 25, and April 28 each with over 1kg of gold at the airport.

Police said the suspects' activities in the racket were similar to those of Junayed's.

Officials said gold instead of foreign currency arriving in the country was hurting the reserves. On top of this, the gold is usually smuggled to India.

AIR TICKETS PLUS POCKET MONEY
Police and Customs officials believe some people just simply travel to Dubai and Oman to be able to play the role of carriers for the smugglers. Besides gold bars, they also bring mobile phones and personal care products.

They get free plane tickets and up to Tk 30,000 in return for the favour,

officers said.

This correspondent has talked to six men who said they took this as a profession.

Investigators said after making all the payments, the racketeers make a profit of about Tk 60,000 every time their carrier makes a trip.

According to the airport database from 2019-2022, around 91 percent of the gold brought to the country comes in the form of bars. Around 74 percent of it comes from the United Arab Emirates, 20 percent from Saudi Arabia and the rest from Bahrain, Oman, and Singapore, officials said.

Anwar Hossain, vice president of Bangladesh Jewellers' Association (Bajus) told The Daily Star that Bangladeshi consumers buy around 18 to 20 tonnes and gold a year and most of it comes from gold brought under the baggage rule.

"Every year, gold bars and ornaments worth around Tk 73,000 crore come to Bangladesh under baggage rules. The money was supposed to be remitted by the migrants,

but it arrives in the form of gold. This is deepening our dollar crisis," said Anwar.

However, a large part of the gold that comes into India, is smuggled into India. They said that gold bars are used to pay for stolen or undeclared goods, a custom source said.

Shamit of Bajus said gold smugglers use Bangladesh as a transit because regulations on gold import are stricter in India.

Fakhru Alam, the CIID DG said, "We have come to know that India is the destination of a large part of the legal and illegal gold. But who are the investors of these golds always remaining hidden."

Mosieur Rahman, additional commissioner of Dhaka Customs House, told The Daily Star that there is a plan to open a help desk in the departure lounge of airports to check foreign currency endorsement to ensure transparency.

The Border Guard Bangladesh has seized around 33.79kg gold while those were being smuggled last month alone.



An excavator set by a local syndicate, extracts sand from the Brahmaputra river in Sherpur Sadar upazila, posing threat to the adjacent bridge. PHOTO: STAR

China is mediating Rohingya return

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The situation at Myanmar's Maungdaw township where Rohingyas will be resettled is "not bad", said Mizanur Rahman, the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, on his return from the day trip.

"We have seen many Rohingyas doing trade and business there. As per my data, 80 percent of the people there are Rohingya," he told reporters in Cox's Bazar on Friday.

However, Mohammad Selim, a member of the delegation, said Rohingyas

would not return until they were granted citizenship.

"We don't want to live in a camp in our country. We want to live on our own land in our village. We don't want financial assistance," he added.

There have been at least two repatriation attempts since the largest influx of about 750,000 Rohingyas in 2017 following a military crackdown. On both occasions, the Rohingyas did not volunteer to return, arguing that there was no guarantee of citizenship and safety.

In late 2017, Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a repatriation deal that was supported by China.

Under a pilot project, Myanmar wants to take back more than 1,000 Rohingyas towards the end of this month, according to foreign ministry officials.

Also at the symposium, Yao said Bangladesh and China have always firmly supported each other on issues of core interests, and both pursue independent diplomacy for peace and support each other in safeguarding sovereignty,

independence, territorial integrity and national dignity.

Beijing wants Dhaka by its side in opposing "unilateral sections" while advocating for an open global economy.

"We should oppose protectionism, the erection of 'fences and barriers', decoupling, unilateral sanctions."

China and Bangladesh should make their relations a model of friendship among developing countries.

"We should defend true multilateralism, promote

greater democracy in international relations and work together to make global governance fairer and more equitable," he said.

China is willing to help with the modernisation of industries in Bangladesh and to improve the quality and competitiveness of "Made in Bangladesh".

Itekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury, president of Cosmos Foundation, chaired the discussion and Enayetullah Khan, chairman of Cosmos Foundation, delivered the welcome remarks.