

THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY'S PREMIER AWARD SHOW IS BACK

Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2022 announced

This year Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2022 will have 28 categories, out of which 14 are for Film/Drama/Story, 4 for Music, 4 critics award and 6 for content creators.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

To celebrate and honour the innovators of 2022 in the OTT industry and the digital space, **Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards** was unveiled yesterday at The Daily Star Centre, through a press conference. The awards, presented by Ispahani and The Daily Star, are being organised for the second time to honour the groundbreaking work done by the artistes in the OTT space, alongside content creators.

The press conference was headed by Imran Kadir, Head of Marketing & Sales, The Daily Star, along with Omar Hannan, General Manager, Ispahani Team Limited, and Ajoy Kumar Kundu, CEO of Mediacom Limited. Celebrities, including the likes of FS Nayeem, Shohel Mondol, Syed Ahmed Shawki, Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed, Khayam Sanu Sandhi, Aisha Khan, Sharif Siraj, Goutam Koiri, and Shahnaz Sumi, among others, graced the occasion with their warm presence.

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"Ispahani has a long history of supporting and promoting Bangladeshi arts and culture. The collaboration between Ispahani and The Daily Star for the **Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards 2022** is an endeavour to acknowledge, appreciate, and inspire the competitive spirit among both on-screen and off-screen contributors in Bangladesh's OTT and digital content industry," mentioned Omar Hannan.

He also expressed hope that this initiative



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

will foster the growth of a thriving creator's economy and culture, nurturing positive and innovative digital content.

Tajdin Hassan, Chief Business Officer, The Daily Star told A&E, "It is truly monumental that OTT has become such an essential ingredient of our entertainment. The goal of this initiative is not just to recognise the outstanding performers, but to inspire the upcoming artists to set greater benchmarks."

He also added, "This is our second iteration, and I'm certain that over the upcoming years, we'll see this industry reaching greater heights."

FS Nayeem congratulated this initiative sharing his thoughts. "Recognising talents in the OTT arena is a great way to appreciate and inspire artistes to work more cautiously. I believe the best may take the prize home."

Taqdeer and **Karagar** director Shawki appreciated the initiative, and added that other than the National Film Award, no other awards in the country provides recognition for behind-the-scene, technical artistes.

The submissions for the nominations are open from today (June 8) and it will be closed on July 8.



Captain America's 'Brave New World'

Recently, Marvel Studios made an exciting announcement, revealing the official title of their upcoming and fourth **Captain America** film as **Brave New World**. Previously known as **Captain America: New World Order**, the studio took to Twitter to share the new title with fans.

The film is set to hit theaters on May 3, 2024, as stated in a post on Marvel Studios' official page, accompanied by a first-look photo featuring stars Anthony Mackie and Harrison Ford on the film's set.

Souls disclose 50th anniversary plans at press conference

On Tuesday, Souls arranged a special press conference to announce plans for their 50th anniversary and their newly designed logo. Partha Barua, the band's vocalist and lead guitarist, told the media that they had been planning their 50th anniversary for a long time.

"We are currently in discussion with various sponsors related to the programme. We will inform everyone as soon as everything gets finalised," shared Partha Barua.

The musician also shared the band's plans of going on international and national tours at the end of August, adding that they have also recorded multiple songs, which will be released along with their music videos soon.



COUNTRYWIDE/NEWS

Bridge tilted before inauguration not repaired in 5yrs

MIRZA SHAKIL

An important bridge at Nirail village in Basail upazila that tilted just after completion of its construction work has not been reconstructed in the last five years.

As a result, thousands of people of the village and nine other adjacent villages have been facing immense sufferings for long.

According to the office of the Project Implementation Officer (PIO) in Basail, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief constructed a total of 128 bridges in 12 upazilas of Tangail during the 2016-2017 fiscal years.

Under the project, one of the bridges was constructed at Nirail village under Fulki union in Basail upazila.

Construction Firm Ms Abdullah Enterprise built the 60-foot-long bridge at a cost of Tk 54 lakh.

But the newly constructed bridge got tilted amid huge pressure of flood water just before its inauguration, sources at the PIO office said.

Local people, however, blamed use of sub-standard materials in the construction work.

Later, authorities concerned requested the contractor to reconstruct the bridge again.

But, after conducting the demolition

work partially the constructor concern didn't continue the work further.

The contractor could not continue the bridge reconstruction work due to ending of the project period, the PIO office said.

Meanwhile, people of at least 10 villages, including Balia, Fulki, Fulbari, Baghil and Nirail have been facing huge sufferings to go to their destinations due to the incomplete bridge construction work.

Several villagers said now they are compel to move several kilometres more to reach the upazila heath complex or taking agricultural goods to the nearby markets.

"We have been deprived of getting fair prices of our crops as we cannot take our agricultural products to the local markets due to the broken bridge," said Robi Miah of Nirail village.

Meanwhile, several students of the area said they have to face serious troubles while going to and from their institutions during the rainy season for not having a bridge.

Contacted, Basail PIO Shakhawat Hossain said out of the Tk 54 lakh bill the contractor got only Tk 12 lakh.

The Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) have a plan to construct a large bridge there, he added.

High inflation

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sector. Real household earnings are yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels despite an improvement in employment," the WB said.

While the central bank raised policy rates, transmission to the broader economy was impaired by a cap on lending interest rates, it said.

In the next fiscal year, gains in market share in key export destinations are expected to sustain Bangladesh's export growth.

Growth is projected to accelerate to 6.2 percent in fiscal 2023-24 -- which is again below the government's target of 7.5 percent -- as inflationary pressures ease, reform implementation accelerates and transportation and

energy infrastructure megaprojects are completed.

This is similar to the growth projection made for India in fiscal 2023-24: 6.3 percent, a 0.3 percentage point downward revision from January.

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However, for Bangladesh, financial sector risks remain elevated, with high levels of defaulted loans, weak capital buffers and weak bank governance, said the World Bank.

Now water crisis heaps misery upon residents

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the power cuts.

Dhaka Wasa has 1,061 pumps. It has generators, but those are not enough to run all the pumps at once.

AKM Shahid Uddin said, "We have almost 400 generators. But we are not able to extract enough water with these generators."

On an average, Dhaka needs 255-260 crore litres of water a day. But the heatwave has pushed up the demand for water and created a crisis, he added.

"The water crisis will subside if there are fewer outages and there is rainfall," he said.

Meanwhile, the Met office forecast rains or

thundershowers in eight divisions of the country including Dhaka in the 24-hour period starting from 6:00pm yesterday.

However, the mild to

moderate heat wave will continue in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions and some parts of Rangpur, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions, it added.



FILE PHOTO

Blinken in Riyadh

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considers a pariah over its contested nuclear activities and involvement in regional conflicts.

On Tuesday, the day Blinken arrived, Iran reopened its embassy in Riyadh after a seven-year closure, with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alireza Bigdeli hailing a "new era" in ties.

On the same day, Prince Mohammed hosted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, the head of a fellow oil power who has long sparred with Washington.

Last month, in a major shift, Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad attended an Arab League summit in Jeddah, his first since Syria's membership was suspended at the start of its 12-year civil war. Washington criticised the

decision to invite Assad.

Yesterday's meeting at the GCC headquarters in Riyadh was attended by Qatar's prime minister among other top Gulf officials.

On the agenda were key regional issues, including conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, Syria and the Palestinian territories, Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majid al-Ansari said on Tuesday.

"The meeting undoubtedly constitutes an opportunity to draw a common position here in the region in relation to the United States of America and to define the form of the American positive influence in the region through partnership with the GCC," he said.

Blinken's visit is aimed at boosting ties

with longtime ally Saudi Arabia, which has begun forging closer relations with Washington's rivals.

The visit will also focus on the joint battle against the Islamic State group and the Arab world's relations with Israel.

Blinken had "an open, candid discussion" with the 37-year-old Prince Mohammed in Jeddah, a US official said on condition of anonymity.

"The secretary raised human rights both generally and with regards to specific issues," the official said.

The meeting, which lasted about 100 minutes, touched on topics including Saudi Arabia's support for US evacuations from Sudan, the need for political dialogue in Yemen and the potential for the

normalisation of relations with Israel.

The two men discussed "our shared priorities, including countering terrorism through the D-ISIS Coalition, achieving peace in Yemen, and deepening economic and scientific cooperation", Blinken said on social media.

Since announcing resumed relations with Iran in March, Saudi Arabia has restored ties with Tehran ally Syria and ramped up a push for peace in Yemen, where it has for years led a military coalition against the Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

Regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Iran have been at loggerheads for years, backing opposing sides in a number of conflicts around the volatile region.

Two die of diarrhoea in Rangamati

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Confirming the outbreak, Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rumana Akter said the disease is spreading mainly because of drinking water.

Baghaichhari Upazila Health Complex's Medical Officer Arbindu Chakma said he was already instructed to send a medical team there.

Initially, saline has also been supplied in the areas from nearby BGB BOP.

Arvind Chakma said, "We have already left for Sajek with the necessary medicine saline and water purification tablets. It will take a day to reach the remote villages from Konglak Para of Sajek on foot."



This bridge, tilted just before inauguration, at Nirail village in Tangail's Basail upazila has not been repaired in five years, much to the suffering of local people. PHOTO: STAR