

Bringing the **DHAMAKA** to Bangla rap

Shafayat opens up on his journey



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

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MAHIYA TABASSUM

Mohammad Shafayat Hossain, popular by his stage name Jalali Shafayat, stands as a prominent member of the acclaimed rap ensemble, Jalali Set, making him one of the most recognised rappers in the country. Whether in collaboration with Jalali Set or as a solo artiste, he consistently proved his prowess in delivering versatile verses and hit tracks, including *Dhamaka*, *Local Bus* in collaboration with the once-national sensation Momotaz Begum, and *Mainkar Chipay* alongside AvoidRafa.

What are you currently working on?

We have been working on a new track, titled *D1207*, which is awaiting its release. Several artistes from the Dhaka-1207 region have collaborated on this track, which is gonna be a gangsta rap for the hood. The song features five musicians, including underground artistes, Skib Khan from Deshi MCs, and me.

Additionally, I am also working on a film track. The audience might watch me on a big screen this time. I would like to keep the details under wraps for now, but I can assure the audience something big is coming.

Your collaboration with Momotaz on 'Local Bus' became a hit nationwide. Any memorable experiences from the production?

It was my first collaboration with Momotaz *apa*. Interestingly, *Local Bus* became a favourite of our Prime Minister, and most

likely, she wanted us to perform it at the National Film Award ceremony last year. It was a great experience. There might be another collaboration with Momotaz *apa* in the near future.

Jalali Set performed as a band after a long time in Coke Studio Bangla's 'Bober Pagol' rendition. How was your experience?

The experience was something else; rappers usually don't get the chance to perform on such a big scale. Thanks to Arnob *bhai* for believing in me. He listened to our music, and he could tap into the potential in us. Fusion has become really popular in our country, and he could successfully utilise it. After that collaboration, we did several shows and performed in Kolkata as well. Coke Studio Bangla taught us how to perform in a live setup. We could learn a lot from the entire team. So a big shout out to them!

What's up with Jalali Set?

The journey with Jalali Set has been beautiful, starting from 2013 to 2023. It was a blissful journey for me, but everything has to come to an end. Now, every member of the band is occupied with their solo projects. So, there



might not be any production in the near future under the label of the band. Even if there is, I might not be a part of it. Let's see what the fate holds for Jalali Set.

Tracks that were the most challenging for you to produce?

Till now, the most challenging was *Bonobasher Shadhon*. It's a track from Jalali Set's only album. We wanted to create something natural, that would represent our country. I had to work really hard for its lyrics, and we worked for six months on this single track.

What influences your lyrics?

Life itself is my greatest motivation. Artistes draw inspiration from the life around them. Every element of the surroundings is open to interpretation. I observe my surroundings, and they become my source of inspiration.

How did your journey begin with music?

My parents introduced me to music as an extracurricular activity, providing me with instruments like the harmonium and tabla. I even took guitar classes at Shishu Academy until my father's passing. Music has always been an integral part of my life.



Orsha-Imran get married, share unique photoshoot

The year has begun with the news of celebrities tying the knot, one after another. After Mousumi Hamid and Farhan Ahmed Jovan's wedding news, the media industry is pleasantly surprised by the news of newly wedded couple Nazia Haque Orsha and Mostafizur Noor Imran.

Together, the two have worked on projects like *Jahan* and *Shahosh*. Orsha informed The Daily Star that the marriage occurred with the blessings of both families. Due to her mother's health issues, the actress had limited on-screen appearances too. Once her mother's health improved, they agreed that it was the opportune time for the marriage ceremony.

The photos, taken by Badhon Mahmud, were also in a unique 'rural' setting, without the glitz and glamour of usual celebrity weddings.

Bubly to set sail in Tollywood with 'Flashback'

Shobnom Yesmin Bubly is all set to make her Tollywood debut under the direction of Bangladeshi filmmaker Rashed Raha in the movie *Flashback*. She will be seen with Kaushik Ganguly and Sourav Das.

Khairul Bashar Nirjhor penned the script and dialogues, while the film is set to be developed under the production house Blue Whale Entertainment.

Bubly shared the exciting news on her social media, expressing, "Embarking on my debut Kolkata film, *Flashback*. Stay tuned for further details, which will be unveiled soon. Grateful for everyone's prayers and continuous love."



NEWS

Plunderers, corrupt causing sufferings

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 The BNP leader said the current "authoritarian regime" is indulging in widespread corruption and looting in Bangladesh in the name of "development".
 "It's now universally accepted that mega-corruption is happening in the name of mega-projects in Bangladesh. People belonging to the ruling party have looted all the banks. The prices of all products are now skyrocketing because of the syndicate of ministers and pro-ruling party businessmen," he observed.
 Rizvi also accused the ruling party of siphoning off lakhs of crores of taka

abroad from the country.
 "A kg of potatoes can't be bought at the price of a kg of rice. Even in peak season, there are no vegetables below Tk 100 per kg...the prices of onions and green chillies have skyrocketed. But the ruling party leaders are not bothered."
 Rizvi slammed AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader for his comment that the BNP is looking at foreign friends to unseat the government with sanctions "like in Cambodia".
 "I would like to tell Mr Obaidul Quader that it is not the BNP but the Awami League that has been in power depending on foreigners...there is a big power behind them. The prime

minister formed the government by leaning on this power," he said.
 The BNP leader said the Awami League now fears losing power after forming a dummy government through a dummy election.
 "Voters didn't join that one-party one-sided fake election," he said.
 Rizvi said the questionable election has not been accepted anywhere—at home or abroad.
 "The United Nations, international organisations, and countries that are partners in our development have also demanded to scrap the farcical election and hold a new election," Rizvi said.

Govt to keep friendly ties with all countries

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 of the cabinet members at the Bangabhaban on January 11.
 "They congratulated the government and expressed willingness to work with the new government. We also want to have cooperation from all — East and West — and want to take the country forward," said Hasan, formerly the information minister.
 The US, EU, UK, Canada and Australia have been critical of the elections but China, Russia and India congratulated Sheikh Hasina on her reelection as prime minister and spoke of continuing and deepening their ties with Bangladesh.
 Asked about the critical view of

some countries on the election, Hasan said all countries face questions on elections, the US and Bangladesh included. Those who lose also pose questions. The election in Bangladesh was "fair and comparatively peaceful".
 Asked what major challenges he would face as foreign minister, he said the world is getting polarised and that would be the main challenge.
 "But we will stick to our policy — friendship to all and malice to none. All of them are our development partners. We will work with all of them."
 Different countries have different perceptions and narratives, but Bangladesh values the concerns of all of them, he added.

Asked if the government feels pressures like it did ahead of the polls, he said, "We are not feeling any pressure."
 He said he would focus on economic diplomacy, boosting trade relations with the non-traditional markets including those in the Asian, African and Latin American countries, alongside the traditional export markets of the US and Europe.
 "The government would also work to ensure remittance inflow through legal channels and overseas jobs for skilled labour."
 "We will have to expand and deepen relations with all countries. We will find out solutions as we start working," Hasan said.

Parties in JS 2nd lowest since 1991

FROM PAGE 12
 Prof Nizam Ahmed, parliamentary affairs expert and former teacher of the public administration department at Chittagong University, told The Daily Star yesterday that the representation of only a few parties in parliament is not a good sign for democracy.
 "The 12th parliament shows how the political parties' representation in the Jatiya Sangsad is ever shrinking," he said.
 Nizam said that the 12th parliamentary election was essentially Awami League versus Awami League-backed independents, with some seats compromised for the Jatiya Party.
 "As a result, the parliament will

lack a genuine opposition. This seriously undermines democracy."
 According to the results of the January 7 election, out of 299 seats, the ruling Awami League won 223, Jatiya Party II, Bangladesh Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and Bangladesh Kalyan Party one each, and independent candidates 62 seats.
 AL sources said that of the 62 independents, at least 58 were ruling party leaders.
 They also said that although the AL took several steps, including asking its grassroots to support some aspirants from other parties, to ensure that the next parliament has representatives from more political parties, the strategy did not seem to have worked.

Some chosen aspirants from Trinamool BNP, Kalyan Party, Jatiya Party, and Jatiya Party (Manju) and several former BNP leaders were supposed to get a free ride to parliament, said sources, adding that these candidates otherwise had no chance of becoming MPs.
 After the 11th parliamentary election, held in 2018, nine parties were in parliament, while seven parties came to the Jatiya Sangsad through the 10th parliamentary election, held in 2014.
 Eight parties were in parliament after the 2008 and 2001 elections. And after the June 1996 election, six parties were in the House, while 12 parties came to Jatiya Sangsad through the election in 1991.

7,902 killed on the roads

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 He highlighted the BRTA's tendency to minimise accident numbers and deaths, asserting that it seeks to undermine BJKS's report rather than address the real issues.
 He pointed out that such discrepancies also exist between BRTA's data and that of the World Health Organization.
 "However, challenging WHO seems unattainable to BRTA," he said, emphasising that the BRTA's focus should be on solving issues rather than suppressing dissent, as effective measures would significantly reduce road accidents and fatalities.
 According to the Accidents Monitoring Cell's Annual observation report by Jatri Kalyan Samity, the year 2023 saw a decrease in the number of road accidents from the year before.
 In 2022, the country recorded 6,749 road crashes, claiming over 10,000 lives, indicating a decrease of 488 accidents in the past year.
 The report disclosed that 10,372 people were injured in road accidents in the country last year.
 Motorcycles were involved in 32.4 percent of all accidents, with 2,031 incidents causing 2,152 fatalities.
 Over the last nine years, the report highlighted a four- to five-time increase in the number of registered vehicles, particularly motorcycles and easy bikes, contributing to the rise in road accidents.
 It attributed road accidents and

fatalities to the free movement of motorcycles and three wheelers on highways, in violation of the government's ban.
 Apart from motorcycles, out of 8,550 vehicles involved in road crashes, buses constituted 16.15 percent; trucks and vans 24.84 percent; cars and microbuses 5.91 percent; CNG-run auto-rickshaws 5.39 percent; battery-run rickshaws and easy bikes 14.47 percent; and Nasimon, Karimon, Mahindra, tractors and CNG-run auto-rickshaws 7.19 percent.
 The report further attributed the accidents to factors such as reckless driving, overtaking, road defects due to construction, movement of unfit vehicles, passenger and pedestrian negligence, and driver incompetence.
 The organisation proposed 13 recommendations, including recognising road accidents as a more significant epidemic than Covid-19; prioritising safety in government projects; expediting the formulation of the Road Safety Act; increasing the budget for road safety; strengthening the road safety unit in the transport ministry; implementing previous recommendations; installing road signs and traffic signals; and improving zebra crossings through proper lighting and markings.
 The report added that apart from road accidents, there were 520 rail and 148 river route accidents in the country last year, resulting in the death of 603 people.

Top diplomats meet in Davos on Ukraine 'peace formula'

REUTERS, Davos
 Ukraine pushed ahead with its peace formula to end nearly two years of war with Russia with a meeting of national security advisers from around the world in Davos yesterday.
 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is scheduled to address the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos later in the week, was not in the opening morning session, which included 81 participants from countries and international organisations.

Statement

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 The government rejected the UN claim that "many human rights defenders have been forced to go into hiding, and some have fled the country, while dozens of suspected enforced disappearance cases have been reported, mostly in November".
 It said this is far from reality and rather a plain example of irresponsibility on the part of UN high commissioner's office. "It is important that the office checks the veracity of the information before it uses the same in public statements."
 The foreign ministry said it welcomes constructive criticisms and is always ready to address any legitimate concern. Bangladesh looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the UN and its human rights mechanisms.

Bangladesh

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 including the Genocide Convention.
 As a state party to the Genocide Convention, Bangladesh calls on all states to respect their obligations under the convention to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.
 The statement said Bangladesh reiterates its calls for an immediate ceasefire and the rapid, safe, and unhindered provision of life-saving assistance, at scale, to Gaza.
 It also reiterated its calls for an end to Israel's occupation of Palestine and for a lasting and permanent solution that sees the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state along pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

DGHS shuts down United Medical College

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 documents produced by its authorities, the DGHS found that the institution never sought registration or licence from the health directorate.
 The institution without lawful registration or licence is treating people, which is contrary to the laws, said the DGHS order.
 On December 31, Ayaan was circumcised under general anaesthesia, allegedly without his parents' consent, at the United Medical College Hospital.
 He did not regain consciousness. He was transferred to the hospital's Gulshan branch where he was kept on life support in the paediatric

intensive care unit.
 The doctors declared Ayaan dead on January 7.
 On January 9, ABM Shahjahan Akanda Masum, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the authorities concerned to pay Tk 1 crore to Ayaan's family.
 The petition, filed as a public interest litigation, prayed to the HC to order the DGHS to form a committee to probe the allegation of doctors' negligence.
 The same day, the DGHS formed a four-member committee to investigate the matter.