



BONNA MIRZA revives on stage



Expressing the intensity of solo performances, Bonna shared, "Solo acts still evoke a sense of responsibility and accountability. The entire production seemingly rests on the shoulders of the solo performer, a daunting yet fulfilling challenge."

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

While Bonna Mirza is widely recognised for her roles in cinema and television, her roots in theatre remain a defining aspect of her career. Despite being a prominent figure in the film and TV industry, Bonna frequently graces the stage, captivating audiences with her acting prowess.

Since initiating her career in theatre during childhood, Bonna recently gained acclaim for her lead role in the solo play *Puro*, directed by Masum Reza. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Bonna shares her insights, plans, and aspirations regarding her theatrical journey.

Having resided in New York, USA, for the past seven months, Bonna returned to her home country specifically for the play. Additionally, she is participating as a panelist at the 22nd Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF). The success of *Puro* with two consecutive shows at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on January 23 and 24 has left Bonna elated and fulfilled as an actor.

When asked about the disparity between stage and screen performances, Bonna remarked, "Although the two differ in

structure, they share more similarities than one might think. An actor should be versatile enough to perform regardless of the character or medium."

Acknowledging the collaborative nature of theatre, she emphasised its group dynamics, stating, "Theatre is a collective effort, involving a team of 30 to 40 individuals both on and off the stage. Solo performances, while personally satisfying, may limit the involvement of other talented performers within a troupe."

Reflecting on her theatrical journey, Bonna noted, "Working in theatre from a young age under various troupes has instilled in me the importance of teamwork and disciplined performances. Every aspect, from walking cohesively as a group to physical transformations based on characters, has contributed significantly to my growth as an actor."

Jon Stewart returns to 'The Daily Show' as host and executive producer



Jon Stewart, known for his 16-year tenure as host of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, is making a comeback. Showtime and MTV Entertainment Studios announced he will host the show every Monday starting February 12.

Stewart, making his return as the 2024 presidential election season gains momentum, will not only host but also serve as the executive producer for the show. He will collaborate with a rotating lineup of comedians who will take charge of the programme on the other weekdays, from Tuesdays through Thursdays.

James to thrill audiences in first open-air concert of the year

James is gearing up for his first open-air concert of the year outside Dhaka. The renowned musician is thus set to enthral fans in Brahmanbaria on January 27.

The concert has been organised at Brahmanbaria's Niaz Mohammad Stadium to express appreciation to the newly elected local Member of Parliament and Minister of Housing and Public Works, R A M Obaidul Muktaadir Chowdhury.

This marks James's first open-air concert outside Dhaka for this new year, and the anticipation among fans is palpable. Notably, last year, James performed in the United States, scheduling 10 shows across 10 states within a month.



COUNTRYWIDE



Amid dense fog, a farm labourer plucks damaged seedlings from a Boro seedbed in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila for transplanting those in the field. PHOTO: STAR

Cold spell hampers Boro farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Though it is now the peak time for Boro cultivation, the ongoing cold spell prevailing in the northern part of the country during the last few weeks has been compelling farmers and agricultural workers to stay inside their homes.

As a result, Boro farming in different areas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram is likely to be delayed in the current season as persistent cold wave coupled with dense fog damaged a large portion of seedbeds prepared for the purpose.

The prolonged cold wave accompanied by foggy weather has brought day-to-day activities of people living at different villages along the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dudhkumar, Gangadhar, Jinjiram and Dharla rivers to almost standstill.

Subal Chandra Sarkar, in-charge at Kurigram's Rajarhat Agricultural Meteorological Observatory, said the minimum temperature in the district was recorded at 8.5 degrees Celsius on Wednesday morning.

Local farmers said Boro seedbeds in different areas are turning reddish due to cold injuries, hampering normal growth of the seedlings.

Meanwhile, due to cold spell and dense fog farm labourers are facing utter

difficulties in plucking the damaged seedlings and transplanting those in the fields, they added.

Farmer Anwar Hossain of Sakoya village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila said when he and other labourers went to the crop field a few days ago, the severe cold forced them to rush back their homes, leaving the work incomplete.

Due to the adverse weather, many labourers often refuse to work in the wet Boro fields or demand high wages, he added.

Lalmonirhat Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Hamidur Rahman said if the ongoing cold weather continues for a few more days it may adversely affect the Boro seedlings on vast tracts of land.

Though Boro cultivation has been delayed a bit, hopefully, overall Boro farming would not be affected that much despite late plantation, he added.

According to Lalmonirhat and Kurigram DAE, farmers in the two districts have prepared Boro seedbeds on 1,550 hectares of land this season while transplanting has been completed on only 10 percent of the targeted area.

DAE sources said the department has a target to cultivate Boro paddy on a total of 1,92,000 hectares of land in the two districts.

PM hopes for more help from China

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Bangladesh," she said. The PM said this while Chinese Communist Party's Vice Minister of the International Division Sun Haiyan called on her at the Gono Bhaban.

PM's speechwriter M Nazrul Islam briefed reporters after the meeting. Haiyan is the first senior Chinese politician to visit Bangladesh after the formation of Hasina's new government.

She conveyed President Xi Jinping's greetings to Hasina on her re-election as the prime minister of Bangladesh.

Haiyan said, "Xi was confident about Sheikh Hasina's re-election as the prime minister for her commitment to changing the fate of the people and

patriotism towards the country and its people."

Haiyan also congratulated Hasina on her re-election as the premier on behalf of the Chinese government and the Communist Party of China.

She also congratulated premier's only daughter Saima Wazed on her election as the World Health Organisation's regional director.

"Saima Wazed will play a great role in containing autism globally," she said.

Haiyan hoped that the activities of Bangladesh premier will continue for socio-economic development of Bangladesh and quicken the transformation of the country into a prosperous and developed country.

To this end, she referred to her several visits to Bangladesh since 1991.

"I have witnessed a tremendous and unbelievable development of Bangladesh and efforts to upgrade the living standard of the countrymen [during the period]," she said.

In reply, Hasina said massive development has taken place as she successfully infused confidence among the people that "we can".

She also credited the continuation of her government for a long period that helped implement the plans to develop Bangladesh socio-economically.

The PM suggested that Haiyan visit the rural areas to see the "real change" in Bangladesh.

Haiyan also stressed the need for enhancing collaboration between China and Bangladesh.

During the meeting, Hasina said her government has been working to accomplish the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu and change the lot of the people by giving them an improved and better life.

She has sought Chinese cooperation to this end.

Haiyan also put importance on strengthening relations between the Communist Party of China and Bangladesh Awami League by enhancing bilateral programmes.

Ambassador-at-large M Ziauddin and PM's Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah were present.

668 Dhaka

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election debacle.

Many JP leaders alleged that the two top JP leaders received a lot of money to participate in the election but they did not spend the money to support party candidates during the campaign.

GM Quader and Channu recently outright rejected the allegation that they got money from the government for participating in the election.

On January 10, several hundred JP leaders and activists staged a protest in front of the party chairman's Banani office demanding the ousting of GM Quader and Channu.

JP had contested in 265 constituencies and won only 11 despite having a seat-sharing deal with the Awami League for 26 constituencies. The party had 23 seats in the 11th parliament.

A drivers' gang behind abduction

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Sunamganj police picked up five other suspects.

Briefing reporters at the Rab media centre in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar yesterday, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the Rab's media wing, said Malek and Samidul were the masterminds of the kidnapping.

Samidul, who had been the driver for Himel's family for about four years, had a lot of information about the family's finances and properties.

On December 16, the gang, led by Malek and Samidul, gathered in Uttara and planned to kidnap Himel, the Rab official said.

As part of the plan, Samidul told Himel that there was a good prospect for the latter to sell batteries in Sherpur district and enticed him to go there.

As Himel left Dhaka for Sherpur on December 26, Samidul informed Malek

about it.

Malek and his cohorts, who were on motorbikes, intercepted Himel's car in Gazipur's Salna area. They put the victim and Samidul in rear seats of the car and took them to Mymensingh's Dhobaura, which is close to the Indian border.

After staying there for three days, all gang members except Billal went to the Tahirpur border area with Himel.

From there, Malek called Himel's mother Tahura Haque over WhatsApp and demanded a ransom of Tk 2 crore for her son's life and freedom. They sent her videos of Himel's torture.

However, the abductors later agreed to release Himel for Tk 30 lakh.

The criminals asked the victim's mother to go to Tahirpur on Tuesday with the money. In the meantime, Tahura informed law enforcers about the incident and

sought help.

Rab said Malek had been behind bars for more than eight years in at least 14 cases over kidnapping, robbery, and murder. He served three years for kidnapping a professor's son in Mymensingh.

Roni also served over six years in prison in two cases, including one for robbery.

Bannya wins Padma Shri Award

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Bhushan and Padma Shri. The awards, which are announced on the occasion of the Republic Day every year, are given in various disciplines.

The awards are conferred by the president of India at ceremonial functions which are held at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi usually around March-April every year.

Three 'Arsa men' held in Rab raid

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Usman used to work as a source for the military of a neighbouring country. In 2017, Usman's family was displaced by the Myanmar government. Then he escaped with an AK-47 rifle and joined Arsa, Sajjad said.

He added that Usman admitted that he had killed two people.

Nesar, another arrestee, made more than 500 mines, said the officer.

More areas to feel

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have been instructed to close only if temperatures plummet below 10 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, people from the low-income group, children and the elderly people are also the worst sufferers of the cold.

According to the Met office, a mild cold wave occurs when the temperature ranges from 10 to eight degrees Celsius; a moderate cold wave occurs when it is 7.9-6 degrees, and a severe cold wave when it is 5.9-4 degrees.

Less than four degrees Celsius is a very severe cold wave.

According to the forecast, moderate to thick fog may occur over the country from midnight till morning and may continue till noon in places.

It said air navigation, inland river communication and road communication may be disrupted during that time.

Meanwhile, night temperatures may fall slightly while day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged.