

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, VOTE

### Bangladesh Film Artistes' Association sets stage for 2024-26 election

**In this year's contest, six independent candidates are in the fray alongside two main panels, led by Misha Sawdagor-Monowar Hossain Dipjol and Nipun Akter-Mahmud Koli.**

ZAHID AKBAR

The Bangladesh Film Artistes' Association (BFAA) is poised for its biennial election today, with 571 voters set to cast their ballots. Amongst them, 50 are new voters - reflecting a potential shift in the association's dynamics. This follows the landmark decision in the previous election where the Ilias Kanchan-Nipun Akter panel secured victory and reinstated voting rights to 103 previously excluded artists, signaling winds of change within the association.

In this year's contest, six independent candidates are in the fray alongside two main panels, led by Misha Sawdagor-Monowar Hossain Dipjol and Nipun Akter-Mahmud Koli. The competition is fierce, with each panel vying for supremacy and a chance to shape the future trajectory of the BFAA.



Monowar Hossain Dipjol



Misha Sawdagor

conductive to transparency and devoid of any disruptions. I am steadfast in my commitment to ensuring that past influences do not taint the integrity of this election. My aspiration is for a truly trustworthy, equitable, and aesthetically fair electoral outcome."

Voting is scheduled to commence at 9am at the BFAA office, continuing until 5pm with breaks in between. The candidates are gearing up for a day of intense campaigning and engagement with voters, aiming to secure their support for the upcoming term.

In the Mahmud Koli and Nipun-led panel, the candidates for the vice-president position include Danny Sidak and Amit Hasan, with Bappi Saha as joint general secretary. Anjana Rahman is contending for organising secretary position, while Maruf Akib for the international affairs secretary, and Kabila for the office and publicity secretary. Mamnun Hasan Emon is contending for the culture and sports secretary position, and Azad Khan is pursuing the treasurer position.

Candidates for the executive council member positions include Sujata Azim, Nader Choudhury, Pirzada Harun, Poli, Jasmine Akter, Tanvir Tanu, Md Saiful, Sadiya Mirza, Sony Rahman, Helena Jahangir, and Saif Khan.

In the Misha-Dipjol panel, Masum Parvez Rubel and DA Tayeb hold vice-chairperson positions, with Arman as the joint general secretary. Joy Choudhury is contending as organising secretary, Alexander Bo as the

international affairs secretary, Jacky Alamgir as the office and publicity secretary, Don as the culture and sports secretary, and Komol as the treasurer.

Candidates for the executive council member positions include Sucharita, Rozina, Ali Raj, Subrata, Dilara Yasmin, Shahnur, Nana Shah, Ratna Kabir, Chhunu, Sanj John, and Firoz Mia.

In the light of the election, Mahmud Koli stated, "Since the moment I committed to running for the Film Artistes' Association election, I've advocated for a celebratory atmosphere where every artiste engages in the democratic process harmoniously, devoid of misunderstandings or conflicts. My primary goal is to prioritise the interests of artistes, providing support to those in need and their families. Moreover, I aim to cultivate a culture of respect, unity, and collaboration within the film industry, thereby honouring artistes' contributions to our nation and society."

Misha Sawdagor assured, "Our top priority is looking out for artistes' best interests. We'll push for more funding for commercial cinema, which has a hand in boosting the entire industry. We also want to grow our lifetime membership. Winning is our goal, but win or lose, we're one family. Last time, I celebrated the winners even after losing. That's the spirit we're upholding."



## Tahsan and Mithila to reunite on screen

Popular actors Rafiath Rashid Mithila and Tahsan Khan are returning to the screen together in the web-series *Baji*. Helmed by *Matir Projar Deshe*-famed director, Arifur Rahman, the series is expected to premiere its first seven episodes on an OTT platform during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

While details haven't been officially announced, sources close to the production have confirmed to The Daily Star that Tahsan and Mithila have been preparing for their roles for several months.

In the series, Tahsan plays a cricketer, while Mithila portrays a journalist. Other notable actors have also joined the cast.

## Alia Bhatt featured on Time's 100 Most Influential list



Alia Bhatt has added another achievement to her name by being featured in the prestigious Time's list of 100 Most Influential People of 2024, alongside other names including Dua Lipa, Elliot Page, Michael J Fox, Sofia Coppola, and Hayao Miyazaki, amongst others.

Notably, director Tom Harper, who worked with Alia in her debut Hollywood film, *Heart of Stone*, applauded the actress in the list's segment.

Alia is the sole Bollywood artiste to receive this honour from the Indian subcontinent this year. Additionally, Indian-origin British actor Dev Patel also made the list, while wrestler Sakshi Malik was recognised by Time for her advocacy against sexual harassment in the wrestling federation.



Nipun Akter



Mahmud Koli

PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

"Ensuring the integrity of the electoral process is paramount," emphasised BFAA Chief Election Commissioner Khorshed Alam Khosru. Alongside his team members, AJ Rana and BH Nishan, they have undertaken measures to guarantee a fair and impartial election, free from any external influence or disturbances.

Khurshid Alam Kasru affirmed, "This year's Artistes' Association election boasts a total of 571 voters. Rigorous measures have been implemented to foster a fair and impartial electoral process within an environment

## NEWS

### Power supply

FROM PAGE 12

11,000MW and 13,000MW last week, the highest from gas-fired power plants - up to 7,400MW.

As of 7:00pm yesterday, there was around 500MW of power generation shortfall against the demand of 13,750MW.

The demand was, on average, 15,500MW before industries closed for the Eid holidays. This year, the PDB has set a peak production target of 17,800MW.

A top PDB official, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star that the power supply was quite stable as demand fell with offices and industries closed during the Eid holidays.

"As a large number of people left Dhaka for their village homes to celebrate Eid with their families, it was decided that major loads would be allocated to the rural areas under Bangladesh Rural Development Board," he said.

He, however, acknowledged that the extent of load shedding will likely increase and the power supply situation will deteriorate once offices and industries resume full operation and the temperature soars in peak summer.

There was a shortage of power when demand increased early this month. According to PDB, power cuts reached a peak of 2,054MW on April 6. However, since then, demand has fallen, and as such load-shedding was no longer necessary.

Prof M Shamsul Alam, vice president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), said that it was frustrating that the power division still struggles to meet the demand during peak summer.

"It has been of no use to increase the power generation capacity and pay capacity charges to private power plants. Consumers are ultimately bearing the extra charges on their electricity bills," he said.

### US to oppose

FROM PAGE 12

or China to pass. Diplomats say the measure could have the support of up to 13 council members, which would force the US to use its veto.

"We have long been clear that premature actions in New York, even with the best intentions, will not achieve statehood for the Palestinian people," the US official said.

### To make a friend happy

FROM PAGE 12

At the same time, they never forget their main role - protecting the sovereignty of their country."

He said a country's intention can change overnight, but not its capabilities.

"One can be a friend today, but what happens if they aren't tomorrow? We should be capable enough to defend our national interests and our motherland. But the main foreign policy dictum sets every tone for us."

Regarding cooperation between the military and the ministries concerned, he proposed forming a national body to enhance coordination and collaboration among the defence forces and relevant ministries for the advancement of national interests in a geopolitically changing environment.

"We start many engagements but can't complete those as they don't remain in the military domain anymore... Also, there are questions regarding who should take the lead."

He said Bangladesh has earned a good reputation with many countries through its UN peacekeeping troops and this can eventually lead to relations in other areas, including trade.

"But those opportunities needed to be followed up by relevant ministries. That did not happen... Our strategy is based on the national strategy and interests. It can't be achieved in isolation. This is where the question of 'who will lead' arises.

### Taliban pull 2 TV channels

FROM PAGE 12

as opponents" of the Taliban government and "until their owners come here, and answer the questions posed to them, their operations will be suspended".

The Afghanistan Journalists Center (AJFC) said in a statement Afghanistan's media commission had repeatedly warned "Barya" for airing remarks by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a once-powerful warlord and former prime minister, about the Taliban government.

"Noor" had received warnings because it broadcast music and the uncovered faces of female presenters, the AJFC said.

The "Barya" channel is owned by Hekmatyar's son Habiburrahman

"There should be a body to ensure a concerted effort so that we do not lose what we achieved. The BISS can suggest the modality. With continuous efforts, we can find an effective way to work together."

All government organisations work for national interests and it is important to have a conducive environment to work together to best utilise the opportunities, he opined.

"It's impossible to achieve [any of these] alone. How to collaborate is the challenge. We'll be able to find a solution while discussing ways to improve."

He said it is important to allocate resources and budgets to enhance the capability of the armed forces for their influence and cooperation.

Prof ASM Ali Ashraf, of Dhaka University's international relations department, said Bangladesh has been performing quite well in terms of defence diplomacy.

He suggested that Bangladesh strike a balance between US and China, keep up the excellence at the UN peacekeeping missions and maintain diversity in its economy.

BISS Chairman AFM Gousal Azam Sarker moderated the seminar, which was also addressed by Bangladesh Army Chief of General Staff Wakeruz-Zaman, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Mahmud Hussain, Maj Gen (Retd) Main Ullah Chowdhury, BISS Director General Abu Bakar Siddique Khan and its Research Fellow ASM Tarek Hassan Semul.

### Maldives court

FROM PAGE 12

court found he accepted a bribe to grant a lease on a small islet for tourism development while he was in power between 2013 and 2018.

Yesterday's ruling set that verdict aside. Yameen's co-accused Yusuf Naem, a businessman who was said to have paid the alleged bribe of \$1 million, was also freed.

Yameen, 64, was held at the high-security Maafushi prison but was transferred to house arrest the day after his ally, Mohamed Muizzu, won presidential elections last September.

The pro-China former leader had borrowed heavily and built thousands of houses and other infrastructure in the small but strategically placed Indian Ocean archipelago during his five-year tenure.

### Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh's export to Thailand is only about \$80 million. So, there is a lot to do to increase our exports to Thailand and bring Thai investments here," an official told The Daily Star.

Thailand's interest in investing in deep sea oil and gas exploration and supplying LNG to Bangladesh will be discussed during the PM's visit.

Cooperation in improving Bangladesh's tourism will also be an important area of discussion, officials said.

Hasina is visiting the country at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin. She would lead a delegation of ministers, advisers, and high officials, a foreign ministry statement said.

On April 24, Thai PM Srettha Thavisin will receive Hasina and a ceremonial guard of honour will be accorded to her.

The same day, they will hold bilateral talks at the Government House, and Hasina will have a royal audience of His Majesty Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochoyuthua and Her Majesty Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshan, King and Queen of the Kingdom of Thailand at the Palace.

On 25 April, she will deliver a speech at the 80th session of the Commission for UNESCO and the Under Secretary-General of the UN Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific Armida Salsiah Alisjabana will call on her.



PHOTO: REUTERS

A volunteer helps residents evacuate their flooded homes after heavy rainfall, at a residential community in Dubai, United Arab Emirates yesterday.

### West sanctions Iran drones

FROM PAGE 12

discussed ramping up economic pressure on Tehran with other leaders at a G7 meeting in Capri, Italy.

The US sanctions target 16 people and two entities involved in producing the drones used in Iran's attack, as well as companies providing parts to the country's steel industry.

Washington added that the United Kingdom would impose sanctions on Iran's drone and missile programme, which was also the target of promised sanctions announced by the European Union on Wednesday.

Israel has yet to reveal how or when it will carry out its promised retaliation against Iran.

US broadcaster ABC News, citing three unnamed Israeli sources, reported that Israel had "prepared for and then aborted retaliatory strikes against Iran on at least two nights this past week".

Among the range of possible responses considered by Israel were an attack on Iranian proxies in the region or a cyberattack, the sources told ABC.

A high-ranking Iranian general warned Israel against attacking Iran's nuclear sites.

If this did happen, then "the nuclear facilities of the regime will be targeted and operated upon with advanced weaponry," said Ahmad Haghtalab, the head of Iran's Nuclear Protection and Security Corps.

However, Tehran has also sought to calm tensions through indirect diplomatic channels with its other major adversary, the United States.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, in New York for a UN meeting, said Iran had "tried to tell the United States clearly" that it is "not looking for the expansion of tension in the region".

Israel has faced growing global opposition to the relentless war that has reduced vast areas of Gaza to rubble, while its 2.4 million people have suffered under an Israeli siege that has blocked most water, food, medicines and other vital supplies.

Meanwhile, UN Security Council was scheduled to vote yesterday on a Palestinian bid for full UN membership, said diplomats, a move that Israel ally the United States is expected to block because it would effectively recognise a Palestinian state.

The 15-member council is scheduled to vote on a draft resolution that recommends to the 193-member UN General Assembly that "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations," diplomats said.

Guterres said Israel's offensive had created a "humanitarian hellscap" for civilians trapped in Gaza. He said that Israel had made "limited progress" on allowing more aid into the territory, calling for more to be done.