

CANADA CHANTS 'ARTCELL, ARTCELL!' as beloved band celebrates 25 years

"The 'Artcell Artcell' chants in each show really stole my heart", says Kazi Faisal Ahmed, Artcell's lead guitarist. "People from Virginia and other parts of the US came to see us, even though they know that we are going to eventually tour the United States."

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

On May 5, Toronto's Hamilton saw what was the largest audience for a band in decades. To everyone's surprise, it was not a North American band, but a Bangladeshi one, celebrating 25 years of their glorious music on tour.

I am, of course, talking about Artcell, whose songs *Pothchola*, *Oniket Prantor Dukkho Bilash* and *Ei Bidaye* have titillated the mainstream, while *Odekha Shorgo*, *Rahur Grash*, *Pathor Bagan*, and *Chile Kothar Shepai*, amongst numerous others, reside in the hearts of progressive rock fans all across Bangladesh.

"This tour highlights the significance of the love for our music from NRBs," (Non-resident Bangladeshis) says Cezanne, the band's bass player. "This is huge for the entirety of Bangladesh's music landscape."

This holds especially true as Artcell's Vancouver show was sold out in only three hours, prompting the organisers to host another show the very next day, on May 13. Another milestone for the band is the fact that their show in St John's, NL, will be

the first time that a Bangladeshi band will perform in the area.

"The 'Artcell Artcell' chants in each show really stole my heart", says Kazi Faisal Ahmed, Artcell's lead guitarist. "People from Virginia and other parts of the US came to see us, even though they know that we are going to eventually tour the United States." Talks are also going on with organisers in the UK and Australia.



Local MP of Winnipeg, Terry Duguid, providing certificate of appreciation to Artcell.

According to Artcell, this is the first time that a Bangladeshi band is touring the country from coast to coast. "Seeing fans, especially students, from all over Canada really makes me emotional," says Iqbal Asif Jewel, a veteran musician who also plays for the legendary Miles.

The band's drummer, Shaju, is grateful that the shows are all houseful. "The organisers are to thank for this momentous occasion," he says.

The voice of Artcell, Lincoln, notes that the spontaneity of the audience is what won him over. "The way they have enjoyed and sang along with all our songs, truly moved me, I feel like the luckiest musician in the world," he says.

For fans in Bangladesh, there is no need to have any FOMO on the beloved band's silver jubilee, as they are planning a special tour, which will see them going around major Bangladeshi universities, culminating in an acoustic show and a larger open-air concert than their 20-year celebration in 2019.

Artcellism, despite its ups and downs, is truly well and alive as the world gets a taste before Bangladesh gets the entrée.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

'Fatima', Farin's Bangladeshi debut film, impresses with trailer



The trailer for the film *Fatima*, which dropped on Friday (May 17), features Tasnia Farin in the titular role. The trailer suggests the struggle of a young artiste Fatima, who tries to establish a name for herself in the film industry.

In this journey, she tries to escape exploitation and the misogynistic media industry that undermines her self-

esteem.

Directed by Dhrubo Hasan, the film will be released nationwide on May 24, marking Farin's Bangladeshi silver-screen debut. Her first film, *Aro Ek Prithibi*, directed by Atanu Ghosh, was released in India last year.

Asif Akbar makes an appearance on BBC's 'Nadia Ali Show'



Bangladeshi musician Asif Akbar recently attended an event hosted by the international media giant BBC in the UK. He engaged in a lively conversation on *The Nadia Ali Show* at the BBC's London headquarters.

Sharing the news on Facebook on Friday (May 17), Asif wrote, "As a child, I would listen to BBC World News with my father by tuning into our three band radio.

Whereas, today, I had the pleasure of visiting the BBC World headquarters in London and appearing on *The Nadia Ali Show*."

Asif Akbar travelled to London for the release of his latest song, *Chirodiner Jibon Shongini*, on May 15 at the House of Commons' Committee Hall.

NEWS

Metro, railway tussle over yard

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DMTCL, however, say it will discuss with the railway authorities and go ahead with the plan to build the yard as it is required for smooth operations of metro rail.

Significance of Kamalapur, where the country's prime railway station is located, has increased manifold lately as different government agencies have plans to implement several projects, including a Multimodal Transport Hub and metro rail lines, in the area.

THE PROBLEMS

BR is working with a Japanese sub-working group, led by Kajima Corporation, to turn the Kamalapur station into a transport hub, which will be connected to both conventional and high speed (proposed) railways, four metro rail lines, Dhaka Elevated Expressway, and a bus terminal.

The project will be implemented following public private partnership (PPP) model under a government-to-government initiative between Bangladesh and Japan.

Kajima Corporation has already submitted a concept plan and pre-masterplan for the project, while BR has appointed consultants for carrying out technical and feasibility studies. The railway authorities are also preparing documents for financial negotiations with Japanese companies.

On the other hand, DMTCL is expanding the MRT Line 6, the country's first metro rail line, up to Kamalapur, changing its previous decision to build the line up to Motijheel from Uttara.

As per its plan, DMTCL will build a station, a stable yard where trains will stay at night, and a loop line to construct a scissors crossing so trains can change directions after reaching Kamalapur.

A scissors crossing is a type of track junction that allows trains to cross over one another without disrupting traffic flow.

When DMTCL submitted its line extension plan with design in early 2020, BR expressed serious reservations about the move saying that it will jeopardise railway's mega plan to turn the station into a transport hub.

BR authorities said they would have no objection to the extension plan, but mentioned that the structures would partly encircle the Kamalapur station and the elevated part of the metro rail would obstruct the view of the station plaza.

Kajima Corporation had also

informed the BR that it would withdraw its proposal on the transport hub if the MRT line-6 extension plan was approved.

Officials of BR and DMTCL held several meetings in 2020 to discuss the issue.

Finally, both parties in a crucial meeting on November 24, 2020, agreed upon a new plan, which would require shifting of Kamalapur Station Plaza to a nearby site to make room for extension of MRT Line 6.

The plan, however, said the loop line for the scissors crossing would not head towards the station. Rather, it would go to a different direction, BR officials said.

WHY THE TUSSLE RESURFACES?

DMTCL is now planning to build a stable yard and the loop line in the station area and it has already carried out some survey works there.

On February 28 this year, the then BR director general wrote to the railways ministry saying that DMTCL was conducting survey works on BR land without taking their permission.

Upon receiving the letter, the ministry on March 14 wrote to the DMTCL managing director asking him not to conduct any survey on BR land and demarcate its land without having railway's permission.

DMTCL even did not ask for land for any stable yard, the letter mentioned, adding that as per the discussion with Kajima Corporation, there is no scope for handing over any land in Kamalapur station area to another agency.

WHAT BR, DMTCL SAY?

Contacted, Al Fattah Md Masudur Rahman, the BR official responsible for the transport hub project, said even though they did not receive any formal proposal from DMTCL on handover of land, they were provided with a design which revealed DMTCL's plan for building a 300-metre yard.

He said they will build different structures in Kamalapur station area as part of the transport hub, but this would not be possible if the yard is constructed as per the DMTCL's design.

Fattah said DMTCL made the move in violation of a decision from a November 2020 meeting which was attended, among others, by Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment affairs adviser to the prime minister.

Besides, Kajima Corporation may feel discouraged to invest in the project if railway's plan is changed, Fattah told

The Daily Star on May 9.

MAN Siddique, managing director of DMTCL, said they currently operate metro trains keeping them at the stable yard at Diabari depot and that is why they cannot start operating trains simultaneously from both ends.

But once the line up to Kamalapur is opened, they would have to start operating trains from both ends at the same time, he added.

To make it happen, the DMTCL would require a stable yard at Kamalapur end, he told The Daily Star on May 14.

The metro authorities would also need a scissors crossing in Kamalapur to change trains' directions, he added.

The DMTCL chief said they have already written to the railway authorities in this regard.

Replying to a question, Siddique said, "We had to drop the plan [of building the scissors crossing there in 2020] due to strong opposition from the railway authorities. But we have been telling them that this yard and crossing are required for smooth operation metro trains."

He said they have already made good progress in the extension works of MRT Line-6. "Now we need to start building these two structures [stable yard and scissors crossing]."

Asked about BR's concern that DMTCL's move would frustrate their plan, Siddique said, "They have been talking about the Multimodal Transport Hub for the last few years, but the plan is still at the initial stage. Even Kajima Corporation is now interested in working in the metro rail project."

Costly, ineffective

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the most efficient way to help Gaza.

What was initially proposed as a way to supplement aid to a starving population as Israel's punishing war on them continues may become the only source after Israel seized and closed the Rafah land crossing with Egypt. Israelis have also begun attacking aid trucks heading to Gaza through Israeli crossings.

The pier has been criticised as a complicated and costly alternative that tries to deflect attention from demanding a more appropriate and much simpler solution - for Israel to open land crossings to Gaza and to secure aid trucks going in.

Woman dies in Rab custody

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"Suraiya fell sick from the excessive heat at the Bhairab camp. She probably died of a heart attack," he told The Daily Star.

Commander Arafat Islam, director (legal and media) at Rab headquarters, said the cause of death will be investigated.

"Rab will follow the legal procedure. Besides, the actual cause will be detected through medical examination," he added.

Suraiya's husband Azizul said, "My wife died due to torture. I will file a case. I want justice for this murder."

Suraiya and Tajjul, 27, were accused of torturing and killing Tajjul's wife

Rekha Akter over dowry.

According to the case filed against Suraiya, Tajjul and Rekha were married two years ago. Suraiya and the other family members often abused Rekha who died of torture by her in-laws on April 26.

Rekha's mother filed the case on May 2.

Abdul Quader, a former member of Chandipasha Union Parishad, said, "Azizul's family members are gentle people. They make a living by selling goods by the road. As far as I know, they are not involved in any criminal activities."

POLICE ROLE

Lightning strikes claim seven lives

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"Four people were brought dead to our hospital. There are indications of lightning strike injuries on their bodies," said Narsingdi District Hospital resident medical officer Dr Mahbubul Kabir Bashar.

In Tangail, two men who were cousins also died while they were harvesting paddy during a thunderstorm in Kalihati upazila in the morning.

The deceased were Afzal Hossain, 55, and Amir Hossain, 52.

Sohrab Hossain, chairman of Birbasinda Union Parishad, said lightning struck the two men dead while they were harvesting paddy in a nearby farmer's field in Nawabari village.

In Gazipur, a woman died after being struck by lightning when she was doing household chores in the yard of her house in Sreepur upazila around 10:00am.

The deceased was identified as Fatema Khatun, 45, said Sub-Inspector Quddus Mia of Sreepur

Police Station.

She was then taken to Sreepur Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared her dead, the SI added.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) predicted rain or thundershowers in various parts of the country, including Dhaka, Tangail, and Gazipur during a 24-hour period starting from 9:00am yesterday.

[Our correspondents from Narsingdi, Tangail, and Gazipur contributed to this report.]

Fighting flares in Gaza

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militants re-grouping there.

In southern Gaza bordering Egypt, thick smoke rose over Rafah, where an escalating Israeli assault has sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from what was one of the few remaining places of refuge.

"People are terrified and they're trying to get away," Jens Laerke, UN humanitarian office spokesperson, said in Geneva, adding that most were following orders to move north towards the coast but that there were no safe routes or destinations.

As the fighting raged, the US military said trucks started moving aid ashore from a temporary pier, the first to reach the besieged enclave by sea in weeks.

The World Food Programme, which expects food, water, shelter and medical supplies to arrive through

the floating dock, said the aid was transported to its warehouses in Deir Al Balah in central Gaza and told partners it was ready for distribution.

The United Nations earlier reiterated that truck convoys by land - disrupted this month by the assault on Rafah - were still the most efficient way of getting aid in.

"To stave off the horrors of famine, we must use the fastest and most obvious route to reach the people of Gaza - and for that, we need access by land now," deputy U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq said.

US aid was arriving in Cyprus for delivery to Gaza via the new pier, Washington said.

Hamas demanded an end to Israel's siege and accused Washington of complicity with an Israeli policy of "starvation and blockade".

UPDF man among

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where some UPDF members had gathered for organisational work, and opened fire, killing two men on the spot.

UPDF spokesperson Aongya Marma claimed that around seven to eight armed members of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) carried out the attack.

"We are calling for justice." When contacted, PCJSS Langadu Upazila Committee General Secretary Manishankar Chakma rejected the allegation and denied any involvement in the attack.

Langadu Police Station Officer-in-Charge Harunur Rashid said the bodies of the victims bore gunshot injuries.

"The bodies have been sent to Rangamati General Hospital for autopsy. We will take necessary legal action after an investigation into the incident," he added.