



# Six months in review

## BEST OF DHALLYWOOD

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**ZAHID AKBAR**

In the first six months of this year, around 30 films have been released in the country, with only a few achieving notable commercial successes. However, several movies and songs have generated significant buzz in the entertainment industry and among audiences.

**Early releases: A slow start**

From January to March, a few films, including *Shesh Bazi*, *Rukhe Darao*, *Chhaya Brikkho*, *Kagojer Bou*, and *Peyarar Subash*, were released, but none made a significant impact commercially or critically. The situation changed with the arrival of April.

**Eid-ul-Fitr releases**

The festival of Eid has always been an opportune time for film releases due to higher audience turnout. Eleven films were released during Eid-ul-Fitr. Leading the charge was Himel Ashraf's *Rajkumar*, starring Shakib Khan. Although it had an extended run in multiplexes, it fell short commercially compared to last year's blockbuster *Priyotoma*.

Among other notable releases, Mishuk Moni's *Deyaler Desh*, starring Sariful Razz and Shobnom Bubly, received praise

for Bubly's performance. Mostafa Kamal Raz's *Omar*, featuring Razz as its lead, also garnered attention and was released internationally. Gias Uddin Selim's much-anticipated *Kajol Rekha*, featuring Sariful Razz and Mondera Chakroborty, sparked discussions among critics and

international film festivals, including Iran's prestigious Fajr Film Festival, *Fatima*, featuring Tasnia Farin in her first Bangladeshi silver screen project, generated buzz but failed commercially.

### Eid-ul-Azha releases



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

audiences but did not perform well at the box office. The simultaneous release of three films featuring Razz failed to engage as many viewers as anticipated. Additionally, *Mona: Jinn-2* had a modest run in multiplexes.

**Post-Eid-ul-Fitr releases**

After winning awards at various

During Eid-ul-Azha, five films were released. The standout was Shakib Khan starrer *Toofan*, directed by Raihan Rafi, which was both commercially successful and well-received by audiences. According to the production house Alpha-i, *Toofan* set a record for the highest number of shows at Star Cineplex and was released internationally,

winning the hearts of viewers.

**Chart-topping songs**

Despite numerous releases, few songs gained widespread attention. However, songs from Shakib Khan's films stood out. The duet *O Rajkumar* from *Rajkumar*, sung by Somnur Monir Konal and Balam, became a crowd favourite. Prince Mahmud's *Borbaad*, sung by Alif, from the same film was also well-received. The duet *Ninduke* from *Lipstick*, sung by Nancy and Imran, and Mithun Chakra's *Bisorjoner Betha* from *Deyaler Desh* were popular among listeners.

The biggest hit of the first half of this year is perhaps the song *Laage Ura Dhura* from *Toofan*. A duet by Pritom Hasan and Debosrie Antara, it gained significant popularity across all audience segments, bringing emerging musician Antara into the limelight. The song *Dushtu Kokil* by Dilshad Nahar Kona from the same film is currently trending and well-received by listeners.

Although the beginning of the year didn't quite start on a high note for Dhallywood, it picked up its pace during Eid as audiences flocked to theatres to watch their favourite stars. Anticipation mounts high for the remaining six months of the year, hoping to prove fruitful for the industry.

## Rituparna Sengupta to star in Bangladeshi film

Indian actress Rituparna Sengupta is set to collaborate with Rashid Polash on his latest directorial film *Tari*.

The director informed The Daily Star that the actress has given her initial confirmation over the phone. "We will officially sign the agreement with the actress soon," Polash said.

He also mentioned that some parts of the film have already been shot in Rajshahi. They plan to complete the remaining scenes in September when Rituparna arrives in Dhaka. In the movie, Rituparna will play the role of an extra artiste.

The story of *Tari* is written by Ahadur Rahman, with the screenplay and dialogues by Golam Rabbani. The director plans to release the film this year under the Punya Films banner.



## 'Despicable Me 4' tops box office on opening weekend

Animated comedy *Despicable Me 4* soared to the top of the North American box office during its opening weekend, according to figures from industry tracker Exhibitor Relations released Sunday.

The fourth main instalment in the *Minions* franchise, featuring Will Ferrell as the voice of a new villain, garnered USD 75 million in ticket sales in the United States and Canada since its release on Friday by Universal Pictures.

This is an exceptional opening for the fourth instalment of an animated series, second only to *Toy Story 4*, stated box office analyst David A Gross.

# NEWS

## Lavish lifestyle with illegal money

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is the sign of cowards. Rather, an organisation becomes efficient through proper self-criticism. We do not want to shy away from criticism. We want to accept criticism and ensure maximum transparency in the judicial process," he said.

The National University organised the discussion titled "Bangabandhu's commentary on corruption and building corruption free society" at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital's Segunbagicha.

The chief justice said corruption has increased in comparison with the gradually increasing rate of literacy.

"Laws alone do not solve all problems and address corruption. Awareness and social movement are needed for this."

Justice Obaidul said young people have to ask whether their parents earned their money in a fair way.

"Wives must be curious about whether a part of the wealth of their husbands is illegal. Friends and families should be aware whether their relatives were making their incomes in the right way. This is the first step of social awareness. If the corrupt father, husband or colleague cannot be isolated and boycotted, the deep wounds from corruption will never be healed and the disease will

not be cured," he added.

He said corruption is not only depriving the people from the benefits of development, but is also destroying the traditional values.

"The show of wealth has now become a matter of competition and enjoying luxury services with illegal money has become the latest fashion. No one wants to know about the source of this money. Rather, many are feeling jealous ... . Corruption has exhausted our sense of shame and made the pride of honesty meaningless."

The chief justice said strict enforcement of laws is needed to fight corruption.

## France faces

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common ground.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, a centrist and close ally of Macron, tendered his resignation but the head of state rejected it.

"The president has asked Gabriel Attal to remain prime minister for the time being in order to ensure the country's stability," Macron's office said in a statement.

A fragmented parliament will make it hard for anyone to push through a domestic agenda and is likely to weaken France's role in the European Union and further afield.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin was seen entering the Elysee presidential palace shortly after Attal, suggesting the president was canvassing opinions from his allies about what to do next.

Leaders of the component parties of the NFP met overnight and were due to meet again later yesterday to discuss who should replace Attal and what strategy the alliance should adopt, said a source at the Communist Party, one of its smaller members.

The NFP, hastily assembled for this election in an attempt to unify the left-wing vote against the far right, has no single leader and did not say before the election who would be its pick for prime minister.

Tondelier, one of a number of NFP figures seen as potential candidates for the post, said on France Inter radio it could be someone from the hard-left France Unbowed party, the Greens or the Socialists, the three largest parties in the alliance.

## Generous exit policy offered to borrowers

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another year, read BB notice.

Under the facility, borrowers will not be eligible to get new loans until they have adjusted the full loan amount.

The central bank said that this facility would not be considered as rescheduling or restructuring of loans.

BB asked banks for proper provisioning against the loans and taking security before adjustment of

the loans, it added.

Banks will have to take legal action to recover the loans if the borrowers fail to repay the loans after getting the facility.

Earlier in May 2019, the central bank introduced a one-time exit policy for defaulters to bring down the high bad loans in the country's banking sector. The bad loans then amounted to Tk 110,873 crore.

"The exit policy should have been left to the banks' discretion," said

Monzur Hossain, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

This policy will affect the banks' profitability, while the loan defaulters will be tempted by the facility, he said.

Mohammad Nurul Amin, former chairman of the Association of Bankers of Bangladesh, echoed the same. "Defaulters are likely to be encouraged to not repay loans due to the facility."

## Israeli tanks storm

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against Hamas infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, and that it had taken out of action more than 30 fighters.

The new Israeli offensive comes as Egypt, Qatar and the United States stepped up efforts to mediate a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas as the Gaza offensive entered its tenth month.

Mediators were in contact with Hamas amid "intensive Egyptian meetings this week with all parties", Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News

said.

At least 38,193 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 87,903 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 40 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

Gaza residents said tanks advanced from at least three directions yesterday and reached the heart of Gaza City, backed by heavy Israeli fire from the air and

ground. That forced thousands of people out of their homes to look for safer shelter, which for many was impossible to find, and some slept on the roadside.

Medics at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital in Gaza City had to evacuate patients to the already crowded and under-equipped Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian health officials said. An Israeli strike in the eastern suburb of Shejaia killed four Palestinians, medics said.

## 'Khaleda's life at risk'

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suffering from multiple critical illnesses and needs to be treated at a multi-disciplinary treatment centre abroad."

Fakhru alleged that the government was intentionally ignoring the issue of sending Khaleda abroad for treatment.

He voiced his concerns, saying Khaleda had to be admitted to hospital frequently as her illnesses were getting complicated.

Demanding her immediate and

unconditional release, Fakhul said, "She has been subjected to serious injustice because of political vendetta. By denying her treatment abroad, she is slowly being driven closer to death."

The BNP chairperson returned home on July 2 after spending 10 days at Evercare Hospital following the procedure for pacemaker implantation.

The 79-year-old former prime minister has long been battling various ailments, including liver

cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chief has frequently received medical care at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Khaleda's doctors have advised sending her abroad since she was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis in November 2021.

## Prof Yunus challenges court order

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allegations brought against his clients, including Prof Yunus, were completely fabricated and baseless.

The six others are Nurjahan Begum, Md Shahjahan, Nazneen Sultana, Hizatul Islam, Nazmul Islam, and Ashrafur Hasan.

On June 25, two Supreme Court lawyers, who are also accused in the same case, filed another petition with the HC challenging the Dhaka court's

order that framed charges against Prof Yunus and 13 others.

SC lawyers Md Yousuf Ali and Jafrul Hasan Sharif submitted the petition saying that they have not committed any offence and that the trial court issued the charge-framing order using an AI tool, which is not permitted.

The entire amount of Tk 25.22 crore was part of the entitlement of Grameen Telecom's listed

164 employees. The employees contributed money to their trade union for paying for expenses, including lawyers' fees, they said.

The trade union representative paid the fees to them (lawyers Yousuf and Jafrul) out of that amount and the same does not constitute any offence and therefore, the instant proceedings are liable to be quashed to ensure justice, the SC lawyers stated in the petition.

## Spare no one involved

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candidates, who took part in the January 7 polls, compete to establish supremacy.

The gap within the party leaders further widened following AL's decision to open the field for all partymen to contest the upazila elections without allocating the party

symbol to anyone.

According to Human Rights Support Society, a rights organisation, a total of 1,004 incidents of political violence, including 781 incidents of post-polls violence, took place in the last six months, resulting in the death of 91 people. Of them, 70 were ruling partymen.