

Bangla music loses its REBELLIOUS ICON

The iconic musician passed away at 6:50am on Thursday from a massive heart attack and multiple organ failure. The 63-year-old was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Virginia, where he was supposed to perform at a show.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"I cannot believe that we are seeing scenes like this on the streets of Bangladesh, our own people being treated like this, unbelievable," wrote Shafin Ahmed four days ago on his Facebook profile. Little did he know that this would be the last visual he would have of his beloved motherland. All his life, Shafin had raised his voice against whatever he perceived as injustice— which also led him to leave the band he helped make legendary, Miles.

The iconic musician passed away at 6:50am on Thursday from a massive heart attack and multiple organ failure. The

63-year-old was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Virginia, where he was supposed to perform at a show. However, right before the show, he fell ill and at one point, becoming unconscious in front of the organisers. According to his brother, Hamim Ahmed, Shafin had been battling heart issues for the past 15 years, overcoming multiple cardiac-related incidents.

The news of Shafin Ahmed's demise came as a total shock to Bangladesh's cultural sector. "I still cannot believe this," said Runa Laila to The Daily Star. "He was a musician of the highest level and was extremely popular among the youth. Owing to his parents, he had an unmatched musical pedigree and could sing Nazrul Sangeet as well as his own band compositions."

Miles keyboardist Manam Ahmed, who shared the stage with Shafin for decades, said, "I am lost for words. The memories of the good times that we spent together are all rushing back to me,"

he said, sharing that some of Manam's greatest compositions were given life by Shafin Ahmed. "Dhiki Dhiki, Chaad Tara and Jala Jala were only a few of the songs that we collaborated on. May he rest



as when Shafin *bhai* did it, it was like listening to two people performing at the same time, I will miss him so much."

Musicians all around the country poured their tributes through limited internet access in the country yesterday, including James, Arnob, Rafa, Jon Kabir, Sharmin Sultana Sumi and Artcell, among others.

Born in Kolkata's Anthony Bagan Lane to legendary cultural duo of Kamal Dasgupta and Firoza Begum, Shafin started his musical journey at the age of nine. While he was trained in classical and Nazrul sangeet by his parents,

Shafin, along with his elder brother Hamim, became exposed to Western music while studying in the UK, which led to the formation of Miles.

On his near four-decade stint in Miles, Shafin composed and sang evergreen hits like *Phirye Dao*, *Dhiki Dhiki*, *Jala Jala*, *Chand Tara Shurjo*, among numerous others. He was also successful as a solo act, producing and voicing songs like *Aj Jonmodin Tomar*, *Harano Shukhand Legend*.

Shafin had left Miles on three separate occasions, the last of which was in 2021 due to disputes with his brother, Hamim Ahmed. He had continued performing as "Shafin Ahmed- Voice of Miles" for the remainder of his career. Despite said disputes, Shafin performed and collaborated on every album of the band, starting with *Miles* (1982) and progressing to *A Step Farther* (1986), *Protisruti* (1991), *Prottasha* (1993), *Prottoy* (1996), *Proyash* (1997), *Probaho* (2000), *Protiddhoni* (2006), *Proticchobi* (2015), and *Proborton* (2016). Besides being a musician, he was an adept cricketer in his youth. He also forayed into politics, being elected as the vice chairman of Jatiya Party in 2021.

Shafin Ahmed's name will be synonymous with Bangla rock music as an instantly recognisable icon, who never shied away from speaking his mind.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



"He was a sensation amongst the youth, a musician of high pedigree"

Runa Laila



"We made some magical memories together, I am in shock"

Manam Ahmed



"He was a fashion icon for youths when I was growing up"

Latiful Islam Shibli



"I am grief-stricken, he will live forever with his music"

Fahmida Nabi



"The way he played bass and sang, it was like seeing two people perform"

Fuad Almuqtadir

NEWS

Indian union govt sole authority

FROM PAGE 12
External affairs ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal told a weekly media briefing, "I can confirm that we have received a diplomatic note, a communication from the Bangladesh side protesting the comments made by the West Bengal CM. It is essentially on the lines described in the reports you must have seen today."

He cited the Indian constitution to point out that the union government has the sole authority regarding foreign affairs.

Asked about India's stance on

the quota reforms agitation and the violence, Jaiswal said India considers the situation as "an internal development of that country".

Asked about anti-India slogans raised during the protests, he said, "Our ties with Bangladesh are very strong and warm ... we are hopeful that the situation in Bangladesh will return to normal very soon."

Jaiswal said that over 6,700 Indian students returned from Bangladesh since the violence erupted and mentioned the "excellent cooperation from the Bangladesh government" in

repatriating them safely.

Mamata in a post on X also said, "Hundreds of students and others are returning to West Bengal/ India, from the trouble-torn Bangladesh. I have asked our state administration to render all help and assistance to the returnees..."

"I cannot make any comments on the situation in Bangladesh as it is another country and only the Indian government has the right to speak about it. But if helpless people (from Bangladesh) knock on Bengal's doors, we will give them shelter," she said.

Arrives a show like no other

FROM PAGE 12
ensuring the safety of the ceremony and events throughout Paris.

Against the backdrop of the War in Ukraine, athletes from Russia and Belarus will compete as neutrals. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict in Gaza, coupled with France's significant Muslim and Jewish populations, has led Israel to implement unprecedented security measures for its teams.

While the essence of any Games is that it brings many nations to a focal point, promising several records and milestones, this edition of the Olympics in Paris could be a bit more

than just that.

The Argentina-Morocco game in Saint Etienne in the men's football tournament, which began two days before the opening ceremony, had already seen chaotic interruption from the crowd which led to the game being suspended for about two hours before Morocco were declared eventual winners.

Meanwhile, claims of a spying scandal using drones have been made by the New Zealand women's football authorities, accusing unauthorised surveillance during a training session from their Canadian rivals. Both these incidents are now

being investigated by the relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, New Zealand women's football has accused their Canadian rivals of unauthorised drone surveillance during a training session. Both this incident and the disruption of the Argentina-Morocco match are currently under investigation by the relevant authorities.

The logistical and security challenges reflect a world grappling with uncertainty and conflict. Yet, as Paris stands on the brink of hosting the 33rd Summer Olympic Games, the famed city promises a spectacle unlike any other.

Quota reform protesters

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organisers and announce a programme, Asif said.

Asif told The Daily Star in the afternoon that they will announce a fresh programme after a meeting with other leaders of the protests.

Around 7:15pm, Asif said he and Nahid were cornered by the law enforcement agencies, adding that they would hold a press briefing between around 8:00pm to 9:00pm.

This correspondent saw a policeman in uniform at the entry to the hospital around 9:00pm.

On the third and seventh floors,

at least seven men introducing themselves as detectives did not let this correspondent talk to them.

The men were in front of the two cabins, where Nahid and Asif were being treated.

Wishing for anonymity, one of the men said, "We have strict instructions from higher authority to restrict the entry of anyone in these cabins."

Abdul Hannan Masud, a coordinator of the protests, said on the phone that he and others were also stopped by the men.

"We left the hospital without meeting with Nahid and Asif," he

said.

On Saturday, Nahid was picked up allegedly by law enforcers from a house in the capital's Sabujbagh. He was found the next day with injuries.

Asif earlier said he was abducted and kept in confinement for five days.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they were not involved in the matter.

Mohibullah Khandakar, a doctor at the hospital, said policemen in plain clothes had been at the hospital's waiting room since morning.

He denied that the internet had been disconnected.

ACC fails to estimate value

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According to the progress report, the ACC could not determine the value of some assets found during the investigation. Their records will be collected, and the value will be measured by engineers or experts if necessary.

Of the assets, Benazir has 25 acres of leased land in Sualak Mouza of Bandarban Sadar upazila, two plots of 14 kathas in the name of Jissan Mirza in Dosarpara of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan and Dhaleshwari Cooperative Society of Baluchar Mouza of the upazila, a seven-storey building on 3 kathas in Bailjuri Mouza of Uttara in Dhaka and six flats in PC Culture Housing of Adabor in the name of Jissan.

"If the value of these properties is

fixed, the amount of Benazir family's wealth will increase further. There is a possibility that they have assets abroad. The ACC will collect the information in phases," said an ACC official, seeking anonymity.

According to the progress report, Benazir has movable and immovable properties worth Tk 9.25 crore, Jissan Mirza worth Tk 21.34 crore, Farheen worth Tk 6.10 crore, and Tahseen worth Tk 4.75 crore. The value mentioned in the deeds of immovable assets has been taken into consideration, the report said.

Responding to three petitions of the anti-graft body, a Dhaka court had ordered the authorities concerned to seize and freeze the movable and immovable assets worth Tk 63.46 crore in their names in three phases.

2 more hurt in previous clashes

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Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Flash floods, landslides kill seven in Vietnam

AFP, Hanoi

Flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy rain have killed seven people in northern Vietnam and swept away homes, disaster officials and state media said yesterday.

Five people died in Son La and two others were killed in Dien Bien following the downpours.

Rescue workers are also searching for 10 others reported missing in the mountainous provinces, officials added.

According to Tuoi Tre newspaper, flash floods early yesterday swept away 10 houses and damaged eight homes in Muong Pon commune of Dien Bien province.

Putin meets Syria's Assad amid calls to defuse tensions with Turkey

AFP, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin held talks with Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad in Moscow amid calls for Russian mediation to cool tensions between Turkey and Syria.

Wednesday's talks between the pair -- the first since March 2023 -- come after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan flagged the potential of a three-way meeting to

discuss normalising ties between Ankara and Damascus.

Putin highlighted his concerns over the situation in the Middle East, which he said was "tending to escalate," in opening remarks between the pair which were aired on state television yesterday.

Moscow is Syria's most important ally, having effectively saved Assad's government through its military intervention in 2015 during a civil war.

"I am very interested in your opinion on how the situation in the region as a whole is developing. Unfortunately, it is tending to escalate, we see this. This concerns Syria directly," Putin said.

Assad said his visit to Moscow was a "very important" opportunity to discuss "events that are taking place today in the world as a whole and in the Eurasian region", according to a translation into Russian.

Israeli forces advance

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Reuters via a chat app.

Deir Al-Balah, where tanks haven't yet invaded, is currently overcrowded with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, displaced from other areas of the enclave, home to 2.3 million people. "Netanyahu spoke in a play, he spoke to clowns," said Burai.

Diplomatic efforts by Arab mediators, backed by the United

States, to conclude a ceasefire deal, seemed to be on hold, as Israel was expected to send a delegation for more talks next week.

In northern Gaza, an Israeli air strike on a house in the Sheikh Radwan suburb killed four people, medics said, while seven Palestinians arrived at a hospital in central Gaza who had been detained by Israeli forces and released in an area close to the border.