



Anonno Mamun



Saif Chandan



Saikat Nasir



Shaheen Sumon

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## FILM INDUSTRY AT A STANDSTILL

### How long till cameras roll again?

ZAHID AKBAR

The film industry has been in a slump ever since the anti-discrimination student movement took centre-stage. The release of new films and shooting schedules has been on hold for quite some time. With the formation of the interim government, there's a slow but cautious move toward planning new film productions. However, many scheduled shoots are still indeterminate, with no clear timeline for when filming might fully resume.

Industry insiders point to one major cause: The reluctance of production companies. In the current political climate, investors are hesitant to back new films. Producers prefer to wait until the situation in the country stabilises before committing to any major projects.

According to industry experts, it could take up to six months for things to return to normal. The ongoing political uncertainty has created a sense of caution among producers, who are choosing to steer clear of new ventures for the time being.

As a result, the cameras remain idle, with no new films entering production. The industry remains in a state of uncertainty, waiting for a more stable and favourable environment to bring back the magic of cinema.

One of the most anticipated films set to begin production is the big-budget project *Borbaad*, starring Shakib Khan. Initially slated to start shooting at the end of September, the film has now been delayed. The production company has yet to confirm a new date, leaving the schedule in limbo. Directed by Mehedi Hasan Hridoy, the film pairs Shakib Khan with Kolkata actress Idhika Paul.



Captured at BFDC in 2019

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

In addition to *Borbaad*, another Shakib Khan starrer *Sher* was set to begin filming in December. However, that project has also been pushed back for the foreseeable future. With two major productions now on hold, it's clear that the uncertainty in the industry is affecting even the biggest stars and their high-profile projects.

Local famed director Saif Chandan's upcoming project *Shahab* was set to be shot in September this year. Starring Sariful Razz and Idhika Paul, the film is now postponed until further notice due to the ongoing industry crisis. For now, there's no clear timeline for when production might resume, reflecting the broader uncertainty gripping the film industry.

Similarly, Saikat Nasir's *Masud Rana*,

starring Puja Chery, is another film on the list, however, the director remains optimistic, hoping to get the cameras rolling again in the coming months, despite the setback.

Another film starring Puja Chery and Ador Azad titled *Dorodhiya* was announced earlier this year. There is no update for the film's shooting yet.

Several directors have spoken about the resumption of shooting for new films.

Shaheen Sumon, the general secretary of the Bangladesh Film Directors Association, recently told The Daily Star, "Currently, no new film shoots are happening at the BFDC. Filmmakers from outside may be working on projects, but for now, it seems the next few months will remain quiet. We anticipate that directors may resume shooting new

films after this period. A clearer picture of when new shoots might begin should emerge within the next month."

Filmmaker Anonno Mamun remarked, "All the shoots that were planned have been postponed for the time being. Those who used to produce films are taking some time off. There was a plan to shoot the film *Sher* starring Shakib Khan, in December, but that too has been put on hold. Production companies have stepped back a bit. It seems that we might start shooting this film sometime next year. It's unfortunate that, just as the Bangladeshi film industry was experiencing a resurgence in recent years, we now find ourselves in this situation. I hope things will get back on track soon."

Director Saikat Nasir shared "We had originally planned to shoot the film *Masud Rana* abroad this August. Unfortunately, those plans have been put on hold for now. We're hopeful that we can resume shooting within the next two or three months. Given the current economic challenges in the country, addressing people's fundamental needs—such as survival, healthcare, and education—must take precedence. I believe things will improve soon; we just need to be patient a little longer."

Filmmaker Saif Chandan believes that the current situation is not suitable for shooting, rather, it's time to focus on nation-building. "My big-budget film *Shahab* was set to start shooting in September. Unfortunately, the shoot has been postponed, and there's no clear timeline for when it might resume. The production company is currently hesitant to proceed. While there's hope that filming might happen in the future, the exact timing remains uncertain."

## 'Mother of Democracy': Movie to be made on Khaleda Zia

A filmmaker has expressed interest in making a movie about BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, now that Sheikh Hasina's regime has ended.

Director MK Zaman is set to direct a film titled *Mother of Democracy*. The title has been registered with the Bangladesh Film Directors Association.

Akhond Entertainment PLC is producing the film, with the script already completed and pre-production currently in progress. Filming is planned to begin next month, on September 25.

The director refrained from disclosing the cast at this time, suggesting that there will be surprises in the announcement.

## James denies political ban on 'Bangladesh' song amid rising rumours

Nagarboul James's iconic patriotic anthem *Bangladesh*, created by Prince Mahmud, has sparked new controversy. The song names key figures in the nation's formation, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and former president Ziaur Rahman.

After the fall of the Awami League government, a rumour claimed James hadn't performed *Bangladesh* for eight years due to its mention of Ziaur Rahman, alleging a political ban.

James, however, has finally addressed the issue, clarifying that he never made such a statement.

James' manager Robin Thakur explained, "James is a professional artiste solely focused on connecting with his audience through music. He has no political aspirations. The statements attributed to him are completely false."



## NEWS

### Women's T20

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take place across two venues in the UAE – Dubai and Sharjah.

With the BCB going through a sea of changes following the change of government, a number of directors of the board as well as the board president Nazmul Hassan Papon have refrained from office duties. Compounded with travel advisories on citizens of four participating countries and the ever-evolving security situation in Bangladesh, it was a matter of time before the ICC made the final call over the tournament.

"It is a shame not to be hosting the Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh as we know the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) would have staged a memorable event," ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice said in a statement.

"I would like to thank the team at the BCB for exploring all avenues to try and enable the event to be hosted in Bangladesh, but travel advisories from the governments of a number of the participating teams meant that wasn't feasible. However, they will retain hosting rights. We look forward to taking an ICC global event to Bangladesh in the near future."

### Banking, revenue sectors need

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They said the previous government left the country in ruins. They said deep reforms and restructuring were needed in the banking sector, revenue administrations, education, and industry.

"We are a witness to what happened over the last 15 years. The Bangladesh private sector is with you 100 percent," said Mahubul.

Yunus asked the delegation "to think outside the box to achieve greatness as a nation".

Senior business leaders, including FBCCI President Mahubul Alam, Tapan Chowdhury, Kutubuddin Ahmed, AK Azad, Simeen Rahman, Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Fazlul Hoque, and Mohammad Hatem, attended the meeting.

### ACC to probe

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Meanwhile, financial crackdown on Awami League ministers, lawmakers and leaders continued yesterday with the freezing of more bank accounts of the officials of the past regime. Financial regulatory bodies also took other restrictive measures against several more officials.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday sought details of all types of bank accounts and transactions of Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and his family members to check if they have been paying their taxes properly. Selim, a former member of parliament and one of the Awami League's presidium members, is also a cousin of Sheikh Hasina.

Meanwhile, the BFIU instructed all banks to freeze accounts of former education minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury Nowfel and his family members.

It also issued a similar instruction regarding former state minister for power Nasrul Hamid and his family members.

Banks were also asked to block the

transactions of any business account of Nowfel and their family members, including his parents, for a period of 30 days.

Citing a provision of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012, the agency also ordered banks to block the locker services of the persons, if there is any, for 30 days.

The BFIU also sought an update of the accounts within five working days since the issuance of the letter.

In another instruction, the anti-money laundering agency ordered banks to lock the accounts of Biplab Kumar Sarker, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, for 30 days. The BFIU also asked banks to provide transactions and other details of Biplab.

Meanwhile, the BFIU also has asked banks to freeze accounts of former BSEC chairman Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam and his family members.

Banks have also been asked to suspend locker facilities extended to Islam and his family members for 30 days. The BSEC chairman resigned from his post on August 10 citing health reasons.

### Help the govt carry out

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"Ensuring every citizen's right to vote is the main tool of the people's political empowerment," he said.

"Let us play our responsible role from our respective positions to ensure effective state reforms and establish the discrimination-free democratic state desired by the youth, shunning the path of revenge and vengeance," Tarique said.

He described the deposed Awami League government as "the fallen anti-people forces" and called for bringing them to book to uphold the spirit of the student-led uprising.

The BNP acting chief credited the "ally force of the movement", alluding to his party, for "timely steps" to prevent the Sheikh Hasina government from making the situation worse.

He welcomed the interim government's initiative to prepare a list of the victims of violence during the uprising and extend necessary support to their families. They should be given a state reception and honour, he added. The BNP acting chairman also backed the demand for observing August 5 as a national day.

He slated Hasina for "grasping the freedom of the press" and called on the media to question her activities.

"The people expect the newspapers to write fearlessly that 'Hasina fled'. If any media adopt any evil strategy to use different words instead of 'Hasina fled', it will make your freedom of conscience questionable to the people," he said.

He said the media should also broadcast special programmes on the suffering of the victims of enforced disappearance, murder and abduction in the last 15 years.

"Ask why the investigation into the case of Sagar-Runi murders has not been completed even in one era," he said.

Continuous reporting on Hasina's wrongdoings will stop people from taking the same path in future, according to him.

**EXTRADITE HASINA: FAKHRUL** BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday asked India to extradite Hasina for her trial as per the people's demand.

"It is our call to you that you should hand her over to the government of Bangladesh in a legal way," he said after paying tribute to party founder Ziaur Rahman in Dhaka.

"Staying there, she [Hasina] has started various plots to thwart the revolution that happened in Bangladesh," he alleged.

### Dipu Moni, Joy

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unruly people chanted slogans demanding their execution. They continued their protest inside the courtroom until the hearing was completed.

The incident happened despite the presence of a huge number of law enforcers on the court premises.

The remands were granted after Mohammad Tofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Mohammadpur Police Station and investigation officer of the case, produced them with a 10-day remand appeal.

### Hasina sued for genocide

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director (admin) of the investigation agency.

"Once we complete the preliminary investigation and visit to the place of occurrence and the tribunal is reconstituted, we, through the prosecution, will seek arrest warrants against all the accused," he said.

The other accused are Obaidul Quader, AL general secretary and former road transport and bridges minister; Rashed Khan Menon, former minister; Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, former mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation; Hasan Mahmud, former minister; Haji Selim, former lawmaker; Salman F Rahman, former advisor to prime minister; Shamim Osman, former Narayanganj lawmaker; Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former security advisor to the prime minister; AKM Shahidul Haque, former inspector general of police; Benazir Ahmed, former inspector general of police; Ziaul Ahmed, former additional director general of Rab; Harun Or Rashid, former additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP); Biplab Kumar Sarker, former deputy commissioner of DMP; Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee; Prof Muntassir Mamoon, member of Nirmul Committee; Tureen Afroz, former prosecutor of ICT and member of nirmul committee; Imran H Sarker, convener of Gonojagoron Mancha; Mozammel Haque Babu, chairman of Ekattor TV; Ahmed Zobayer, former managing director and CEO of Somy TV; Subhash Singha Roy, editor of abnews24.com; Naimul Islam Khan, former press secretary of prime minister; Aziz Ahmed, former army chief; and M Manzur Ahmed, former DG of NSI.

Besides them, some unnamed ministers, state ministers, lawmakers, unnamed individuals from law enforcement agencies, and the then policymakers of some electronic and print media were accused.

According to the complaint, the accused, by giving directives and plans, committed crimes against humanity and genocide by killing Hefajat activists in Dhaka and surrounding areas and in different districts, including Chattogram, Narayanganj, and Cumilla, between May 5 and 6, 2013.

**OTHER CASES**  
In the capital's Jatrabari, Hasina, her son Joy, daughter Putul, sister Rehana, and 17 others were sued over the killing of fruit seller Farid Sheikh at Mayor Hanif Flyover Toll Plaza on August 5.

The victim's father, Sultan Miah, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shakil Ahmed. The magistrate recorded the case and asked the Police Bureau of Investigation to submit a report on October 1.

In Sutrapur, a case was filed against Hasina and 49 others over the death of Md Omar Faruque, a student of Kabi Nazrul Government College on July 19.

In the remand appeal, Tofazzal said both accused were aware of the violence and killing of the victim on July 19 during the violence centring the quota reform protests.

So, they need to be remanded to find out the masterminds and instigators behind the murder and their whereabouts, he said.

Dipu Moni was arrested from the capital's Baridhara DOHS area on Monday while Arif Khan Joy was arrested from Dhanmondi area yesterday.

On August 13, Amir Hamza Shatil, a resident in Mohammadpur area, filed the murder case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six others with a Dhaka court.

In this case, the names of Dipu Moni and Arif Khan Joy were not included in the first information report (FIR), but later they were shown arrested.

This was also the first case lodged against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina after she resigned and fled to India amid a mass uprising on August 5.

Judicial Magistrate's Court, which ordered the police to record the case at Ashulia Police Station within three days.

In Narayanganj, another case was filed against Hasina, seven ministers and lawmakers, and 179 others over the killing of Md Jony, 17, a bus driver's assistant, in Kanchpur area of Sonargaon upazila on July 20.

The victim's father Md Yeasin filed the case, said Sonargaon Police OC Md Kamruzzaman.

In Rangpur, Hasina, her sister Rehana, and 49 others were sued over the killing of Sajjad Hossain, a vegetable trader, on July 19.

Zitu Begum, wife of Sajjad Hossain, filed the case with the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Rangpur. The court directed Rangpur Kotwali Police OC to proceed with the investigation.

In Joypurhat, a case was filed against Hasina along with 216 others in connection with the death of Mehedi Sheikh, 25, a three-wheeler driver, in front of Joypurhat Sadar Police Station on August 5.

The case was lodged in the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court of Joypurhat by Mehedi's wife, Jesmin Akter Srishtee. Magistrate Atikur Rahman directed the Joypurhat Sadar Police OC to register the case.

In Bogura, Hasina and Quader were sued over the killing of a rickshaw puller Kamar Uddin, 40, in Nawabbari Road area of the district town on August 4.

The victim's wife, Tahmina Begum, filed the case with Bogura Sadar Police Station, said OC Saihan Oliullah.

Earlier on Monday, Hasina and 18 others were accused in a case filed over the killing of auto-rickshaw driver Manik Mia during the quota reform movement in Rangpur.

Manik Mia's mother, Nurjahan Begum, filed the case with the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Raju Ahmed Babu in Rangpur.