



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Actors Equity Bangladesh: Members call for leadership overhaul

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During the anti-discrimination student movement, questions arose about the role of Actors Equity Bangladesh, the professional organisation of television actors in the country. Leaked conversations from a secret WhatsApp group, ‘Alo Ashbei’, intensified the criticism, as several members of the organisation were associated with the group. This controversy eroded the trust of many artistes in the organisation, leading to widespread calls for reform.

Some actors sought to arrange a meeting with the executive committee of the organisation but were told that the committee would only meet with its official ‘members’ and had a prior commitment on September 7. Despite this, the actors went ahead with their planned meeting on that day, where they openly voiced their dissatisfaction and demanded the resignation of the committee members by September 10.

However, the current committee members of Actors Equity Bangladesh neither apologised nor resigned by the given deadline.

On Tuesday (September 11), over 50 artistes, including Mostafizur Noor Imran, Azmeri Haque Badhan, Nazia Haque Orsha, Shamol Mawla, Shohel Mondol, Khairul Basar, and Manoj Pramanik, gathered at Rabindra Sarobar in Dhanmondi to discuss the shortcomings of the organisation. They unanimously agreed that the current executive committee members were unfit to continue in their positions.

Led by actor Mostafizur Noor Imran, the group proposed 22 reforms, including state recognition of acting



as a profession and the introduction of a new registration process for actors.

Mostafizur Noor Imran told The Daily Star that they want all artistes to unite under one umbrella. “We don’t want any separate organisations. We want artistes from all mediums—be it theatre, OTT, television, film, or others—to be under one roof. Actors can have their own political preferences, but that shouldn’t overshadow their passion for acting. While there hasn’t been any official confirmation yet, we are still in communication with them. We aim to select an adviser who can help us address our issues. From there, we hope to establish a reformation committee so that all our voices are heard.”

At the gathering, actor Shohel Mondol emphasised the need for meaningful discussions on reform with those in power. Actress Azmeri Haque Badhan echoed this sentiment, comparing the current situation to the remnants of autocratic regimes in Bangladesh. In an interview with The Daily Star, Shohel Mondol expressed hope for creating an open space for dialogue and reform within the organisation. He noted, “While there were rumours of an internal meeting, no official communication had been made.”

Shohel also raised the issue of why certain artistes were no longer part of the organisation, urging reflection on the matter. He stressed, “The goal is not to create a new organisation but to reform the existing one to be more equitable and fairer for all.”

The artistes collectively called for unity, insisting that the reforms should create a more inclusive and member-friendly organisation, eliminating disparities between the hardworking artistes who entertain the audience.

Shailene Woodley to portray Janis Joplin in upcoming biopic

A highly anticipated biopic about Janis Joplin’s life is moving forward, with actress Shailene Woodley cast to portray the legendary rock singer.

It was announced on Tuesday that the actress, who is also producing the film alongside Tower Hill Entertainment, has secured US \$2.49 million in funding from the California Film Commission to support the project.

Janis Joplin passed away in 1970 at the age of 27, and numerous attempts have been made to create a biopic about the iconic singer.

Over the years, several actresses, including Amy Adams, Zooey Deschanel, Pink, and Melissa Etheridge, were linked to projects that ultimately never made it to production.

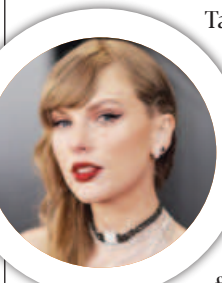


Taylor Swift endorses Kamala Harris after US presidential debate

Taylor Swift, one of pop music’s most influential figures, has publicly endorsed Kamala Harris for president following her debate against Donald Trump. Swift shared the announcement on Instagram, stating that her decision came after thorough research.

“I will be casting my vote for Kamala Harris and Tim Walz in the 2024 Presidential Election,” Swift posted on Tuesday night. “I’m voting for @kamalaharris because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them.”

The Grammy-winning artiste also commended Harris’s running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, for his long-standing advocacy on LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive health, and women’s rights.



NEWS

Harris rattles Trump

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Philadelphia was his “best debate” but snap polls and commentators said Harris had won, with her campaign quickly challenging him to a second debate in October.

With less than two months until election day, Harris was under pressure to deliver in front of an audience of tens of millions after her sudden rise to the top of the Democratic ticket in place of US President Joe Biden.

She started on the front foot by surprising Trump by approaching him to shake his hand before they took to their lecterns – and then kept the upper hand.

Trump repeatedly raised his voice as he hit back at the vice president on immigration and the economy, branding her a “Marxist” and blaming her for what he said were the failings of President Joe Biden’s administration.

Harris responded by looking on in amusement before declaring that she represents a fresh start after the “mess” of the Trump presidency – and saying: “We’re not going back.”

One of their most intense exchanges was on abortion.

Trump insisted that while having pushed for the end of the federal right to abortion, he wanted individual states

to make their own policy.

Harris said he was telling a “bunch of lies” and called his policies “insulting to the women of America.”

Another jarring clash came as Trump doubled down on his unprecedented refusal to accept losing to Biden in the 2020 election, before trying to overturn the result.

Harris responded by mocking his catchphrase as a reality TV star, saying that Trump had been “fired by 81 million people” and calling him a threat to democracy.

The former prosecutor pointed out that Trump is a convicted felon, called him “extreme” and said it is “a tragedy” that throughout his career he had used “race to divide the American people.”

The rivals also clashed on foreign policy, with Harris telling Trump that Russian President Vladimir Putin would “eat you for lunch” when it came to the war in Ukraine and that world leaders were “laughing” at him.

Trump shot back by accusing Harris of being weak on the war in Gaza, saying she “hated Israel”.

But Harris, who spent five days intensively preparing for the debate, repeatedly managed to needle Trump into finger-jabbing insults and

meandering invective.

She elicited an angry response when mocked the size of his trademark rallies, one of his favorite topics, saying that attendees were leaving early out of “exhaustion and boredom.”

Trump repeatedly attacked Harris on migration, but she also managed to make him lose his cool on what should have been a winning topic.

He ended up talking at length about a debunked conspiracy theory that Haitian immigrants have been eating local people’s pet cats and dogs in Ohio – before being corrected by the moderator that authorities have said this didn’t happen.

Biden said the Harris-Trump debate “wasn’t even close”, in a post on X.

The last presidential debate in June had resulted in a crushing victory for Trump, after Biden delivered a catastrophic performance that ended up dooming his reelection campaign.

A CNN snap poll after the debate said Harris performed better than Trump by 63 percent to 37 percent of registered voters.

In a sign Trump realized things had not gone as well as he hoped, the former president made an unusual appearance in the debate “spin room” afterwards to speak to journalists.

Delhi to deal with this thru diplomatic channels

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government of the day. How we deal with that is through the diplomatic channel, not necessarily through reports which will be reported by the press,” ANI quoted Jaishankar as saying in response to a question.

Hasina fled to India on August 5 after her ouster in the face of a student-led mass uprising. She has been living in India since then.

However, the interim government’s decision to revoke her diplomatic passport has raised questions about how long Hasina can stay there and whether she faces a possible extradition.

The Awami League president is now facing 153 cases, including 135 for murder, seven for crimes against humanity, three for abduction, seven for attempted murder and one for attacking a BNP procession.

On Sunday, Md Tajul Islam, chief prosecutor to the International Crimes Tribunal, said steps would be taken to bring Hasina back home under the existing extradition treaty with India.

UN probe team to arrive September 14

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Office in Geneva, adding that the team received the commitment of full cooperation from the interim government and security forces for the mission.

Earlier on August 22-29, an advance UN team visited Bangladesh and held meetings with student leaders of the recent protests, advisors of the interim government, the chief justice, senior officers of the police and armed forces, lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders, representatives of political parties and minority and indigenous communities.

The team discussed the modalities for an investigation into human rights violations and abuses in the context of the recent violence and unrest, as well as other aspects of human rights including civic space, the need for truth, justice, healing, reparation and reconciliation and other reforms.

About 650 people were killed during student protests and in the aftermath in Bangladesh between July 16 and August 11, said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in its preliminary report on August 15.

Of them, nearly 400 deaths were reported from July 16 to August 4 while around 250 people were killed between August 5 and 11. There were several thousands who were injured.

“The fact-finding mission will investigate the patterns and trends of the human rights violations, who ordered shooting during the protests etc. It will not be able to investigate all the killings but the emblematic ones,” a UN official told The Daily Star yesterday.

The mission will meet the victims, injured people, witnesses, law enforcers, home, law and foreign affairs ministry advisers and other stakeholders as part of their investigation.

The UN expert team will collect the evidence of rights violations, prepare a detailed report on the root causes of the violations and recommend the next course of action for the government of Bangladesh.

This will also include recommendations for necessary reforms in the security sector.

After completion of the one-month probe, the UN mission may take one or two more months to prepare the report.

“The report will give a foundation

for the prosecution by Bangladesh authorities,” the official added.

The UN conducted many such fact-finding missions to many countries for human rights violations. For example, it sent a mission to Myanmar after the allegation of Rohingya genocide, to Ukraine, Russia, Iran, Palestine, Kenya and Ethiopia.

“In some cases, the mission was deployed for war crimes, crimes against humanity or human rights violation,” the UN official said.

The UN mission investigating the rights violation means this will be an objective investigation, said rights activist Shirin Huq, who is a member of the Committee for the Protection of Fundamental Rights.

“It is also great that the mission will also be probing the rights violation that took place in the aftermath of August 5,” she told The Daily Star yesterday.

The challenge, however, will be an objective prosecution after the UN submits its report.

“We will need a very competitive and objective team of prosecutors for justice so that it cannot be questionable at any point in time,” Huq said.

Power supply

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feet per day (mmcf) of re-gasified LNG to the national grid.

The terminal was damaged on May 27 when the cyclone Remal hit the coastal area. Since then, it has been out of service. Several attempts were made to resume operations after repair works abroad but failed.

Subsequently, Bangladesh’s LNG supply capacity dropped to only 600 mmcf from 1,100 mmcf for the last three and half months, inconveniencing the power, fertiliser and industry sectors.

Considering the national importance of the FSRU to meet the demand for power, fertiliser and gas in the industrial

sectors, Summit’s officials along with its international partners have been working tirelessly around the clock to resume gas supply to the national grid.

“Summit has spent millions of dollars in repair-related expenditure,” it added.

The process to purchase more LNG is ongoing, a Petrobangla official told The Daily Star. The Summit terminal will resume operation once the LNG cargo reaches Bangladesh, he added.

Power cuts are getting more frequent as power generation has failed to keep up with the high demand caused by the rising mercury since the first of this month.

Appointment of 8 DCs

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Sabet Ali, who was initially made Tangail DC, will now serve as the DC of Panchagarh. Sharifa Haque will be posted to Tangail instead of Nilphamari, Rajib Kumar Sarkar in Lakshmipur instead of Natore, and Mohammad Nairuzzaman in Nilphamari instead of Panchagarh.

In another development, the government yesterday formed a

committee to probe a scuffle and commotion involving several deputy secretaries on Tuesday.

MA Akmal Hossain Azad, senior secretary of the health and family welfare ministry, has been tasked with the investigation and asked to submit a report within seven working days, said a press release of the public administration ministry.

Pintu.

The BNP acting chairman said his party’s goal is to ensure political freedom and simultaneous economic emancipation for the people of the country.

Noting that BNP’s politics is for development and raising production in the country, he said. If BNP could come to power getting the public mandate in the election, its government would unlock the prospects of different local areas for the economic emancipation of the people.

He said they have been able to overthrow the dictator with the support and cooperation of the people of Bangladesh.

“If we are able to form a government getting your support and cooperation in the coming days, we’ll unlock the doors of these potentials so that the people of Bangladesh will be able to earn economic emancipation,” he said.

Tarique demanded the release of all leaders and activists, including Abdur Salam Pintu of BNP and also other opposition parties, who have been kept detained in jail in “false” cases.

BNP leaders Ahmed Azam Khan and Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, Tangail district BNP president Hasanuzzaman Shaheen and its general secretary Farhad Iqbal, among others, addressed the event presided over by Gopalpur upazila BNP president Jahangir Alam.