



Shankha Dasgupta

Syed Ahmed Shawki

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Directors relieved post-censorship, looking forward to OTT Awards

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The third iteration of the *Blender's Choice–The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards*

is set to take place later this year, with submissions open until October 8. As Bangladesh's OTT scene continues to evolve, the awards have become a prestigious platform for celebrating both on-screen and behind-the-scenes talents. To celebrate their hard work this award ceremony is returning once again.



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Notable figures in the industry, including director Shihab Shaheen who directed some landmark projects in OTT, including *Syndicate* and *Kachher Manush Durey Thuiya*, praised the awards for recognising

the best in digital content. He expressed cautious optimism about the new political environment, stating, "I am cautiously hopeful. While people remain sensitive on many issues and are becoming polarised, I believe the situation is improving compared to the previous regime, where we could rarely tell stories as we wished."

This year, the awards broadened the categories to honour set designers, costume designers, and other creative professionals. Shankha Dasgupta, director of *Guti*, applauded the inclusivity, mentioning, "I appreciate The Daily Star for recognising those behind the scenes—like art directors, costume designers, and makeup artists. I trust the jury will ensure that the most deserving talents are celebrated."

Multiple award recipient, *Karagar* famed director Syed Ahmed Shawki expressed how eagerly directors anticipate this event, calling it a vital platform alongside the National Film Award. "As OTT has flourished in our country, this platform has become a fitting tribute to the tireless efforts behind the scenes. This appreciation is a great source of inspiration, and the people from the fraternity always look forward to it," he said.

With growing recognition for digital content creators, the awards are set to celebrate the best of Bangladesh's flourishing OTT industry.

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NEWS

Depression to cause more downpours

FROM PAGE 12
likely to move west-northwestwards further.

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at different places across the country today, it added.

In Cox's Bazar, bodies of two fishermen, who went missing after a trawler went down in the Bay on Friday, were recovered at Inani Beach yesterday afternoon.

One of them was identified as Mohammad Abdul Karim, 35, of Banshkhali Raipur Union of Chattogram. The identity of the other could not be confirmed, said Inani Police Outpost Inspector Rezaul Karim.

However, nine other fishermen, who were in the trawler, survived, said boat owner Abul Bashar.

Several hundred tourists faced immense sufferings due to waterlogging in Cox's Bazar town.

In Sunamganj, a woman drowned, and another one went missing after a boat capsized during a storm in the Naluar Haor area under Dirai upazila on Friday evening.

The deceased is Rahima Begum, 75, of Kaldhar village under Dirai upazila. The missing woman was Mollika Begum, 35, a resident of the same village, police said.

In Noakhali, at least 17 fishermen went missing after 10 trawlers capsized in the Meghna river near Hatia upazila between Friday afternoon and 8:00pm.

Fishermen on nearby trawlers and boats rescued 120 people alive, but 17 fishermen were still missing, said Milton Chakma, acting upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), of Hatia.

Rescue operations were hampered due to rough weather, he added.

Flood situation in some low-lying areas in the district deteriorated due to incessant rain since Friday evening.

[Our Correspondents from Cox's Bazar, Noakhali and Moulvibazar contributed to this report]

Beware of attacks

FROM PAGE 12
in an attack in Gopalganj yesterday [Friday]. Another leader was killed. This attack indicates that they [Awami League] are still lurking like hyenas and they may strike any time. We must resist their attacks."

The BNP organised the rally to pay homage to those who lost their lives in the recent student-led mass uprising and the struggle against authoritarianism.

Fakhrul said the democracy-loving people have waged movements by sacrificing their lives and enduring repression.

He thanked all political parties and organisations who stood by the BNP and worked with it during the long struggle for democracy.

He also praised the BNP's leaders and activists.

"We all now say that we have achieved freedom, and perhaps we

have. But the evil forces around us continue to expand their influence and attempt to divide us. Now we must maintain the unshakable unity with which we fought for 16 years. We must not fall into their plots under any circumstances."

Fakhrul said people believe that the interim government will create a democratic environment and reform the democratic institutions to establish a democratic state through a meaningful and fair election.

He also urged the government to withdraw all the cases filed against them opposition leaders and activists during Hasina's regime.

"On the eve of the International Day of Democracy, we want to pledge that we will work together to transform Bangladesh into a true democratic state and strengthen its institutions.... Let us move forward in favour of democracy, people, and humanity."

Nagorik Committee

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country," Samantha said.

"Different domestic and foreign allies of fascism are currently trying to divert the people. These incidents are adding fuel to their attempts."

The interim government failed to meet people's expectations in this regard, she added.

"The government has not asked why the law enforcement agencies are not working. Government action on any issue is sluggish."

The committee condemns the

government's inaction regarding "mob justice" across the country since August 5, she said.

"The inaction surprised us. We know that the fascist government relied on police and administration. We know it would be tough to make police and administration work. But we also witnessed the silent role of the other law enforcement agencies."

The delay in publishing the list of the martyrs of the recent mass uprising is not acceptable and "many injured are not receiving proper treatment."

Israeli air strikes hit house

FROM PAGE 12
In an earlier statement, Bassal said rescuers were continuing to search for the missing.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strike.

Bassal said Israeli forces carried out similar strikes in some other parts of the Hamas-run territory overnight, killing at least 10 people.

Five people were killed in northwestern Gaza City when an air strike hit a group of people near Dar Al-Arqam school, he said.

Three others were killed in a strike in the Al-Mawasi area of the southern Khan Yunis governorate, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge, Bassal added.

No work, no pay

FROM PAGE 1
Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), announced the decision after a view exchange meeting on the current labour unrest at Ashulia, which houses more than 400 factories.

Three advisers to the interim government -- including Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan, the adviser on labour and employment ministry -- the government higher-ups, a group of former BGMEA presidents, factory owners, senior army officers, police officers, union leaders and millers attended the meeting.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), supported the BGMEA decision and said the BKMEA member factories will also follow the same decision if the unrest does not stop today.

Most of the factories in Ashulia were running yesterday until lunchtime, after which the workers did not return to their workstations.

So, if the unrest continues, the factory owners will shut their units that cannot be run, Islam said.

If the government assures safety, the production units will be run as normal, said AK Azad, chairman and chief executive officer of Ha-Meem Group which employs 75,000 workers and officers mainly at Ashulia.

"If the unrest continues, we will shut the factories."

The government formed a committee headed by an additional secretary of the labour ministry to find out the reason for the unrest and the committee is scheduled to submit the report after one month.

"But one month is too long -- we want an immediate decision from the government for running the factories," Azad said.

Ha-Meem Group could not run

its factories at Ashulia even with the help of the police as a group of outsiders came to the gate and called the workers to join the movement.

As many as 20 industrial police members were deployed in his factories at Ashulia, but it was not possible to run the units.

Ananta Garments has been bearing Tk 1.2 crore as operational loss for every day of unrest, said its managing director Inamul Haq Khan.

So, over the last 13 days, the company lost Tk 15 crore.

Yesterday, which was the 14th day of the unrest, he could open his factory.

"Still, it is uncertain whether we can return to normal production as the unrest is continuing in the Ashulia industrial belt," he said.

Work orders are diverting to India, Pakistan and other countries as international retailers and brands are worried and asking about the frequent unrest in Bangladesh, said Kalpan Hossain, managing director of DEKKO Legacy Group.

The current unrest has been taking place for three reasons: instigation of outsiders, some logical and illogical demands by the workers, and turf war over jhoot (scrapped clothes) trading, said Md Moin Khan, general officer commanding (GOC) of the 9th Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army.

The army will continue patrolling the industrial belts so that normalcy can be restored and production resumed in the affected factories, he added.

Md. Sibgat Ullah, deputy inspector general of Industrial Police, said they have already arrested many wrongdoers involved in the unrest.

He also suggested clearing the workers' salaries, which were supposed to be done in the first week of a month.

As of yesterday, 4,094 of the 9,481 factories have completed the

payment to the workers, he added.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation, asked the factory owners to reopen their units and to meet the demand of the workers.

The federation will help in the smooth running of the factories, he said, while asking the factory owners not to blacklist the workers for their alleged involvement in the unrest.

"The basic causes for the unrest need to be found out -- there is an instigation by the defeated forces," said Montu Ghosh, president of the Garment Workers Trade Union Centre.

Babul Akhter, general secretary to the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, urged the factory owners to sort out their mid-level management, become sincere in meeting the workers' demands, take care of unionism and give equal attendance bonuses and other allowances.

The government will try to ensure the safety of factories by deploying full force in the industrial zones, said Adilur Rahman Khan, the adviser to the industries ministry.

The owners have been requested to keep their factories running; if there is any unrest in any factory, the government will take measures and special measures against the wrongdoers, he said.

If any quarter is found involved in the unrest, the government will also take measures against them, Khan added.

Asif Mahmud Sajeeb Bhuiyan, adviser for the labour and employment ministry, suggested the factory owners meet the genuine demands of the workers.

The government is considering ramping up open market sales by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh in the industrial belts so that the workers can buy commodities on the cheap, he said.