



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

This is the only popular award that recognises behind-the-screen heroes: AISHA

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards is back for another thrilling season, celebrating the finest digital content from the past year. Aisha Khan, renowned for her role in *Kaiser* and the host of last year's event, shared her excitement about the show's return, offering valuable insights on its significance and future improvements.

Aisha highlighted the unique platform that OTT provides for artistes, allowing fresh talent to emerge, while also reviving the careers of seasoned performers. "OTT has given us many new faces and brought back some of the greats," she noted, emphasising the impact this medium has had on Bangladesh's entertainment industry.

One aspect that makes this award

show stand out, according to Aisha, is its recognition of the often-overlooked talents behind the scenes. "It's the only award in the country that honours those working behind the camera, which makes me incredibly proud to be part of it," she shared. For her, this focus on the unseen contributors sets the show apart.

As for making the event even better, Aisha suggested adding more creative elements to the programme. "Beyond musical and dance performances, introducing fun, innovative skits could make the show more engaging for the audience," she proposed.

With Aisha's passion and thoughtful suggestions, the upcoming season promises to be an even bigger and more entertaining celebration of Bangladesh's digital content creators.



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NEWS

Metro line-5

FROM PAGE 12
The project's revised cost is Tk 33,472 crore.

The physical work on MRT Line-1 and Line-5 (northern route) started in March and July last year, respectively, more than three years after the projects were approved in October 2019.

According to the planning ministry official, Japan is financing the two projects, which will continue.

The official however added that should the interim government make any different decisions, the planning ministry will act in accordance.

The project authority of MRT Line-1, the country's first underground metro rail line, has so far been able to hire contractors for only one out of 12 packages. The project deadline is set for December 2026.

Under the Tk 52,561 crore project, the authority will build a 19.87km underground line from Dhaka airport to Kamalapur and an 11.37km elevated line from Dhaka's Natunbazar to Narayanganj's Pitalganj.

Similarly, the project authority of MRT Line-5 (northern route) has so far hired contractors for only one out of 10 packages.

The 20km line stretching from Hemayetpur to Bhatara will have underground and elevated sections. The deadline for the Tk 41,239 crore project is December 2028.

The proposed MRT Line-2 will be 36km long from Gabtoli to Narayanganj via Mohammadpur, Nilkhet, Azimpur, Central Shaheed Minar, Gulistan, Sadarghat, Mugda, Demra, and Chattogram Road.

The cost of the project will be around Tk 61,000 crore.

The DMITCL in September 2022 sent a preliminary development project proposal (PDPP) to the planning commission for the project's feasibility study. The commission in August last year approved the PDPP in principle and sent it to the Economic Relations Division to look for a financier, according to a project document.

Shibir now out into the open at DU

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He also said the full committee of the university unit will be unveiled soon.

After the fall of Ershad in 1990, Paribesh Parishad, a platform comprised of the DU authorities and student representations, slapped a ban on the activities of Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, a party that actively opposed Bangladesh's independence struggle and sided with the Pakistan army during the Liberation War.

Members of Shibir's predecessor -- Islami Chattra Shangha -- formed Al-Badr and were involved in the 1971 killings of Bangalee intellectuals towards the end of the war. Some members of Al-Badr had been convicted and executed by the International Crimes Tribunal during the first and second terms of the Awami League-led government.

Over the last two days, following the revelation of Shadik and Farhad's identities, different student bodies came up with mixed reactions.

Talking to The Daily Star, Maeen Ahmed, general secretary of DU Chhatra Union, said, "Paribesh Parishad is a social or political pact, in which the university administration and student organisations have a stake. I think that honouring the pact, the previous decision regarding Shibir should have been reviewed or reformed. The university administration should have tried to learn Shibir's current stance on the grounds on which it was banned."

At Saturday's meeting, which was attended by the two Shibir leaders, some left-leaning student organisations raised questions before the vice-chancellor.

DU Chhatra Union General Secretary Maeen said, "I asked the VC, 'How did you find him [DU unit president of Chhatra Shibir]?' 'Shouldn't you have taken the opinions of other student organisations?' But the administration has acted irresponsibly."

He, however, said he appreciates that an organisation has chosen to come out into the open instead of keeping itself under wraps.

"Because the good and bad deeds

of covert politics cannot be assessed and those behind them cannot be held accountable," added Maeen.

Nahiduzzaman Shipon, general secretary of DU unit Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, said it should be a collective decision of all organisations whether Shibir can be allowed on campus or not. "All stakeholders including social, political and cultural organisations, should be involved in taking decisions in this regard," Shipon told The Daily Star.

Asked, Sarjis Alam, a key coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said they would hold a discussion yesterday before making comments.

Meanwhile, in a press statement yesterday, Farhad denied any involvement with BCL.

"I have not been involved with any activities of the Social Welfare and Research Institute unit of Chhatra League. I have never submitted any résumé to anyone for any position in BCL," he said.

Farhad said they consider the controversy over his alleged involvement with BCL a "conspiracy to destroy the spirit of the anti-fascist movement". He said he was the president of Kabi Jasimuddin Hall debating club and the general secretary of Social Welfare and Research Institute debating club.

Meanwhile, a photo of Tanbir Hasan Saikat, general secretary of BCL DU unit, exchanging floral greetings with him went viral on Facebook on Sunday night.

In another picture, Farhad was seen sitting next to Tanbir and BCL central unit's technical education affairs secretary Rakib Sirazy at an iftar mahfil of the debating club.

Regarding the photos, Farhad said, "When I was the president of hall debating club and general secretary of Social Welfare and Research Institute debating club, my photos with political persons attending various debate events were posted on social media ... all of those were debating club-related events, not political events."

Their brutality

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According to the case statement, Shahadat had left home around 2:00pm on August 13, telling his wife that he would return by 7:00pm.

When he did not come home and his phone was switched off, his wife Sharmin began looking for him. It was not until the next evening that Harun saw a post on Facebook showing Shahadat's body lying near the Badna Shah Mia shrine in the city's Probortak intersection.

More than a month later, when the video went viral, Shahadat's family identified him and found out how he was killed.

"Now we can say he was brutally tortured to death in a planned manner -- he was called over the phone before the incident," said Shahadat's uncle Harun.

Shahadat's phone has been missing since the murder, said his wife Sharmin. "We want justice. How can anyone who is mentally sound torture someone to death while singing?"

Mohammad Solaiman, the officer-in-charge of Panchlaish police station, said CCTV footage from the area.

The investigation is ongoing, the OC said, adding that police are trying to determine the motive behind the murder and identify those responsible.

India invites

FROM PAGE 12
of World Affairs (ICWA), whose council includes India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, said two other sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the matter was confidential.

It was not immediately clear if Myanmar's military government would also be invited to the event, which the sources said would be on the topic of "Constitutionalism and Federalism". They gave no further details.

Widespread protest in Myanmar over the 2021 coup turned into a nationwide rebellion, with an armed resistance movement combining with some established ethnic armies to seize control of wide swathes of territory from the military.

Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 12
name in the title of the report is wrong and misleading.

The report also mentioned that his wife is involved with the RACE business even though she holds no shares in the company. This indicates that the report was made to damage his and his family's dignity and reputation, reads the rejoinder.

It is also not clear why The Daily Star portrayed a picture of Sarafat and titled the news defaming him personally whereas Imam, the person who is being investigated by CID and BSEC for the stock manipulation, has not been portrayed or highlighted in the said article.

Moreover, the Canadian University of Bangladesh (CUB) is a not-for-profit trust.

The CUB, like all other private universities, participated in RAJUK's lottery system and was allotted the plot for establishing the university's permanent campus following the established legal procedures.

The other applicants' private universities were also allotted similar plots during the process. The land is the sole property of the CUB. The plot allotment price was declared by the government and like other private universities, the CUB paid for the land in full.

Sarafat resigned from his position as chairman of Padma Bank in January 2024 due to physical illness.

His name has been linked to the allegations in the news report without fully understanding the facts and circumstances. The allegations are a result of journalism lacking proper investigation.

More importantly, the report cited ongoing investigations that are not part of the public record and should remain confidential to avoid bias and ensure a fair judicial process.

The rejoinder called for publishing the correct news incorporating the information provided with the same importance to ensure the correct information.

OUR REPLY

Our report was based on the CID

investigation report and we did not mention any information or comments beyond the findings.

The investigation found that Sarafat, the chairman of RACE Asset Management, has manipulated the stock prices of many companies for financial gain and caused losses of crores of taka to general shareholders.

Sarafat did not refute RACE's involvement in the irregularities.

In the rejoinder, Sarafat says that he resigned from the position as chairman of Padma Bank. The report also mentioned him as the former chairman of the bank.

According to CID findings, Sarafat, his wife Anjuman Ara Shahid and Imam invested the money from the 10 mutual funds of RACE and bought shares of the then Farmer's Bank (now Padma Bank) and became directors of the bank's board.

Sarafat, however, did not dispute this fact in the rejoinder.

He did not give any response in the rejoinder regarding the extension of the tenure of the mutual fund by 10 years in collusion with the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and Investment Corporation of Bangladesh without returning the entire money to the investors in the fund, which CID mentioned in the report.

As such, we stand by our report.

37 Khulna rivers

FROM PAGE 12
The recommendations include allowing floodwaters to flow into adjacent plains during monsoon, removing unnecessary sluice gates and dams, and clearing encroachments from riverbanks and connecting canals.

Participants also called for a comprehensive study to determine the actual number of rivers in the country and to create a database for monitoring.

Gauranga Nandy, chairman of Center for Environment and Participatory Resources Chairman, conducted the discussion while Kudrat E Khuda, convener of Paribesh Manch, presided over the event.