



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**I believe people might go back to simply listening to music, as they did in the past. With time becoming more limited, only songs that truly touch the hearts of the listeners will stand the test of time."**

## SHAH ALAM SHAZU

National award-winning singer Fahmida Nabi, whose enchanting voice has graced hits like *Lukochuri Lukochuri Golpo*, *Dur Dwipabashini*, and *Ektu Jodi Takao Tumi*, remains one of the most beloved names in Bangladesh's music scene.

Often regarded as a 'pure artiste,' Fahmida's musical journey feels almost inevitable, given her lineage—her father, Mahmudun Nabi, who was a legendary playback singer—and music has always been a part of her life.

Currently, Fahmida is busier than ever. The versatile artiste has recently recorded three new songs and is preparing for two live performances in the United States, set to take place soon.

"I'm particularly excited about these songs because they were all penned by a group of talented female lyricists. Working with female artistes is a special joy for me," the renowned singer shared in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star.

Besides lending her voice, the singer has also composed the music for the tracks. All three songs will soon be available on her official YouTube channel.

"The music videos have already been shot, and post production is underway. Ashik Mahmud, a very talented videographer, directed the videos. While choosing the words,

I kept the listeners in mind, and I believe these songs will resonate deeply with them. As for my performance, I leave that for the audience to decide," she added with a modest smile.

Speaking about the themes of her new songs, Fahmida explained, "One song, titled *Jonaki O Jonaki*, was written by Husne Ara Jolly. I composed and performed it. The song reflects how nature, much like fireflies, yearns for freedom and light, especially now, as trees and plants are being destroyed."

The rest two—*Sedino Mukhor Chhilo* and *Kacher Manush Dure Jay*—were written by Farzana Rahman and Ila Majid, respectively.

Despite her packed schedule, Fahmida never stops working on new music. "I'm always busy with music. I try to release a new song every two to three months on my YouTube channel," she said.

Her work in the film industry continues to flourish as well. Following in her father's footsteps, Fahmida also has a versatile record in playback singing. Recently, the singer recorded several playback songs, including a track for an upcoming movie, composed by Pintu Ghosh, which is set to release at the end of this month. She also contributed a song for the film *Chador*.

"There's something magical about singing for films," she said. "I absolutely love it."

When asked about being labelled a 'pure artiste,' Fahmida remained humble. "I

don't think too much about titles. I'm just incredibly grateful for the love people give me. I want to keep that love alive by staying true to good music. That's something I'll always hold on to."

Offering advice to up-and-coming artistes, she said, "Humility, practice, and knowledge are key. There's no substitute for practice. The more they learn, the better they'll do."

Fahmida is also eager to learn from the younger generation. "I pick up a lot from them. I'm always trying to learn new things from younger artistes," she said.

As for what makes a song truly great, Fahmida believes it's a combination of elements. "Great lyrics, great composition, and great vocals—these are what make a song timeless."

Wrapping up the conversation, Fahmida shared her thoughts on the future of music consumption. "I believe people might move away from watching music videos and go back to simply listening to music, as they did in the past. With time becoming more limited, only songs that truly touch the hearts of the listeners will stand the test of time."

Looking ahead, Fahmida announced her upcoming performance in Los Angeles, under the banner of the Sonar Bangla Foundation. She'll be sharing the stage with fellow Bangladeshi singer SI Tutul.

## Monihar Cinema Hall gears up to reopen as Monihar Cineplex

Jashore's Monihar Cinema Hall, a beloved and iconic theatre, is being modernised into a cineplex under the banner of Monihar Cineplex, with over a thousand seats being refurbished.

Manager and accountant Tofazzal Hossain informed local media that 90 percent of the renovation work is complete, and the project is being managed independently.

The cineplex is being built on the first floor of Monihar Cinema Hall, starting with 66 seats. Hossain noted that other floors will be upgraded later.

Set to open in November with the film *Dorod*, Monihar Cineplex is just about finishing up with embellishment and screen installation.



## MOUSUMI HAMID featured in tribute song for cancer survivors

After a six-year break, actress Mousumi Hamid has made a comeback with a new song released last Sunday, on the occasion of World Breast Cancer Day.

The song, titled *Olpo Ektu Jiboner Gaan*, has been voiced by Tasnova Tabassum Atoshi. While Atoshi has directed short films before, this marks her debut as a singer.

The lyrics were written and composed by Udayon Rajib, with music arranged by Autumnal Moon.

The music video, directed by Atoshi, was released on her YouTube channel and is dedicated to cancer fighters and those who have lost their battle.

Mousumi last appeared in a music video in 2018, featuring in Asif Akbar's hit song *Agun Pani*.



# NEWS

## SC restores

FROM PAGE 12  
Chowdhury, and Justice Md Rezaul Haque.

The apex court bench also condoned 286 day's delay in filing Jamaat's restoration petition after this court had dismissed its appeal against the HC verdict.

On September 1 this year, lawyer Shishir Manir submitted the restoration petition to the apex court on behalf of Jamaat Secretary General Miah Golam Parwar seeking necessary directives.

On that day, the lawyer told The Daily Star that the Appellate Division earlier dismissed the Jamaat's appeal without holding a complete hearing.

On November 19 last year, a five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by the then chief justice Obaidul Hassan, dismissed the Jamaat's appeal for "default" as its counsels did not appear before the court on that day.

Yesterday, Jamaat's lawyer Barrister Ehsan Abdullah Siddiq told the SC bench that senior counsel AJ Mohammad Ali, now dead, for the party in this case could not attend the court for placing arguments due to political programmes, including countrywide strikes, and his illness.

Maulana Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of the Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, along with 24 others, filed a writ petition with the HC on January 25, 2009, seeking its order declaring the Jamaat's registration illegal.

The petitioners said that the Jamaat is a religion-based political party, and it does not believe in the independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh.

Following the writ petition, the HC on August 1, 2013, declared the Jamaat's registration with the EC illegal.

The EC scrapped the Jamaat's registration in October 2018, making it clear that the party will not be able to contest the upcoming national election.

In the verdict, two judges of the three-member HC bench declared the registration illegal. However, the other judge disagreed with the decision made by his two colleagues.

The Jamaat then filed the appeal with the apex court challenging the HC verdict.

Attorney Ehsan Abdullah placed arguments on behalf of the petitioner, while a number of pro-Jamaat lawyers, including its leader Md Jashim Uddin Sarker and Shishir Manir, were present at the court during yesterday's hearing.

## Sonali Life rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1  
Insurance Company Limited, and provided crucial financial support by injecting personal loans to settle initial claims.

b). In October 2023, when Mr. Quddus was elected Chairman of the company, he discovered that Mr. Rashed Bin Aman, the then CEO and CFO, was misappropriating company funds, manipulating data and illegally using the digital signatures of key personnel to execute a hostile takeover of the company.

c). Being so aware of, Mr. Quddus signed an agreement with PWC, a world renowned audit firm, on November 16, 2023, to investigate the roles of suspected employees. The audit firm sought information from Mr. Bin Aman, but he failed to provide any response to any of PWC's inquiries.

d). Summary findings by the audit firm on December 19, 2023, said the

then CEO and CFO misappropriated company funds.

e). Mr. Bin Aman, realising the severity of the situation, remained absent from his duties and was subsequently removed from his position. The company then filed several cases against him.

f). Thus, the allegation against Mr. Quddus of plundering money is akin to someone being an outsider in his own home which has no basis.

g) Following Mr. Aman's defalcations, the CFO of the company requested Mr. Quddus on February 4, 2024, to urgently provide details of his receivables for the company's records. Mr. Quddus responded with supporting documents on February 6, 2024. The BFIU report, which was the basis of The Daily Star article, failed to consider, amongst others, this information when preparing their report.

h). The news report falsely pointed

## Ex-MP Sumon arrested

FROM PAGE 12  
his head on the CMM Court premises before journalists around 12:30pm. This is second time we were attacked for defending our clients," said an Awami League-backed lawyer.

"We have rights to defend our clients in court. We are being harassed in various ways for attending court proceedings," he added.

Ridoy filed the case on September 23 with Mirpur Model Police Station and named 50 individuals, including Sumon and several senior Awami League leaders.

Sumon was arrested in the city's Mirpur early yesterday.

## Peace talks 'depend' on US election: Zelensky

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the prospect of peace talks with Russia "depends" on the outcome of next month's US presidential election.

Asked whether he thought Moscow was ready for negotiations with Kyiv, Zelensky told journalists in comments released Tuesday: "First of all, it depends on the elections in the United States. I think they will be watching the policy of the United States."

Shortly before his arrest, around 1:15am, he posted on his verified Facebook page, stating, "I am going with the police. Will see you at the court. Pray for me."

Sumon was elected as an independent MP from Habiganj-4 in the last general election, defeating Awami League candidate Md Mahbub Ali, former state minister for civil aviation and tourism, by nearly one lakh votes.

Sumon, a Supreme Court lawyer, was expelled from Jubo League central committee in 2021.

He became a public figure for sharing his views on financial crime, corruption, and other issues.

finger at Mr. Quddus and his family based on an inconclusive BFIU report. The BFIU itself forwarded its report to other regulatory bodies for further investigation.

i) The reporter falsely alleged, based on flawed BFIU report, the irregularities in purchasing luxuries cars, flats, birthday and marriage anniversary gifts, overseas treatment costs and so forth without independently varying the allegations.

k) The report pompously alleged that Tk. 169.09 crore has been withdrawn in cash during 2013 to 2023 pointing it risky indicating embezzlement, implying it as a crime, based on the flawed BFIU report.

l) Regarding the company's headquarters, owned by Mr. Quddus, the report alleges that no board meeting agenda included the purchase of the building, and that no approval was granted by the board or IDRA. It also claims that

Tk. 139.10 crore was paid for the building to benefit Mr. Quddus's companies, and that only a payment of Tk. 18.17 crore as rent is documented. These assertions are entirely false and misleading.

m) Relevantly, regarding the sale of the building owned by Mr. Quddus, an MOU dated December 12, 2022, was executed between the company and Mr. Quddus. This was evidently discussed in the 42nd Board Meeting as a proposed sale of the company's existing headquarters, subject to approval from IDRA and RAJUK. However, since no approval from IDRA was granted, subsequent formalities such as seeking permission from RAJUK, executing a registered sale deed, mutation, and transferring the title were not carried out.

n) Newspapers like The Daily Star should refrain from publishing reports based on the BFIU's findings without first independently verifying the

## UK MPs call for scrutiny

FROM PAGE 12  
Chowdhury, who has a travel ban on him by the Bangladesh government, is currently living in one of the luxury properties, a \$14 million townhouse in London's upscale neighbourhood of St John's Wood, according to I-Unit.

He was filmed in London walking past a luxury apartment block, where he owns six properties worth over \$9 million, a small part of his UK property empire.

Over in Bangladesh, he is under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission for amassing assets abroad worth crores of taka through corruption and irregularities. His bank accounts have been frozen.

Labour MP Phil Brickell, who is on the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on anti-corruption, has urged HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), to ensure that British estate agents, law firms and lenders had abided by their regulatory obligations in Chowdhury's property deals.

Brickell called on the three regulators to ensure that companies involved in the transactions "undertook adequate checks on the source of Mr Chowdhury's wealth and funds", Guardian reports.

He wants regulators to check whether UK firms filed "suspicious activity reports", which they must submit to law enforcement if they are concerned about potential money

laundering, and whether they may have committed a criminal offence if they failed to do so.

"Showing that the UK is serious about making London the anti-corruption capital of the world requires proactive, swift and robust investigation where allegations of these kinds emerge," he said in the letters seen by the Guardian.

A spokesperson for the SRA told the Guardian: "We take the issue of potential breaches of money-laundering regulations very seriously and will take action if we find firms are not meeting these obligations."

The FCA and HMRC declined the Guardian's request for comment.

Meanwhile, members of the parliamentary APPG on anti-corruption and responsible tax met last week to discuss how to assist Bangladesh in tracking UK assets linked to people under investigation by Dhaka authorities, Guardian reports.

The chair of the group, Joe Powell MP, has written to the National Crime Agency urging it to investigate assets in the UK linked to members of the former Bangladeshi regime, including Chowdhury.

In the documentary, it was said that Chowdhury owns 54 properties

information.

o) The allegations reported against Mr. Mostafa Golam Quddus and his family in the news report are baseless and unfounded, and it constitutes a valid case for seeking damages, and we reserve the right to take appropriate legal action if necessary.

**Our response**  
Our report was based solely on the findings by Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), a government agency.

The rejoinder basically makes two points—1) the BFIU report is inconclusive and 2) a former official along with some other unnamed officials was involved in much of the irregularities.

None of these issues were the subject of our story. Also, none of the facts reported in our story was our own, and we did not claim so.

We stand by our report.

in Dubai.

In undercover footage, Chowdhury boasted about owning a penthouse in the prestigious Opera District, and land records confirm he is the listed owner of a luxury apartment there, costing more than \$5 million.

Newly leaked property data from 2023 show that Saifuzzaman Chowdhury is the listed owner of more than 250 luxury apartments in the UAE worth over \$140 million.

The records reveal his wife Rukhmila Zaman, also under investigation for money laundering in Bangladesh, is the listed owner of another 50 properties in Dubai worth upwards of \$25 million.

With the new data leak, it is calculated that Chowdhury and his wife have spent nearly \$170 million buying over 300 high-end apartments in the UAE.

## Death toll tops 1,550

FROM PAGE 12  
Lebanon's biggest public health facility, located in Jnah a few kilometres (couple of miles) from the city centre, the health ministry said.

There was no evacuation warning for the densely populated neighbourhood that has seen an influx of people displaced from areas further south.

The hospital sustained minor damage in the strike, with windows shattered and solar panels destroyed, its director said.