

MY DHAKA

REDISCOVERING BIOSCOPE in the bustling heart of Dhaka

JANNATUL BUSHRA

In the vibrant and ever-evolving neighbourhood of Dhanmondi, where sleek cafés, trendy boutiques, cineplexes, and contemporary high-rises often eclipse tradition, the revival of the bioscope by Muhammad Hiru is a fascinating story!

I often pass by the lakeside roads of Dhanmondi and spot Hiru in different locations with his iconic red-covered bioscope box – a quaint, hand-cranked film projector closely tied to the early development of visual entertainment.

But as often as I see him, I somehow still fail to recognise him! One day, he's the familiar face by the lakeside, and the next, he's completely transformed, hidden behind a vibrant joker costume, trying to lure in curious onlookers. It's almost as if he becomes a different person altogether, blending into the scene so seamlessly that you wouldn't even realise it's the same Hiru with his red bioscope box. This puzzled me for a while, so I asked him about it.

Turns out, it's all about the heat! On cooler days, he wears that flashy outfit to catch people's attention. But when the temperature starts to rise, Hiru ditches the joker costume. "Too hot to wear that thing," he explained with a grin.

Makes sense. It's hard to entertain a crowd when you're melting in a heavy costume.

Seeing his passion and dedication, I couldn't help but ask him how he came to pursue a career with the bioscope. "I grew up in Bogura, in the far north of our country," he began. "My most vivid memories from childhood are of the village fairs, where the bioscope shows would light up the night. It was there that I first fell in love with the magic of storytelling through that magic box."



His words painted a picture of a simpler time. "I crafted my bioscope box entirely on my own, without any master to guide me," he said with quiet pride. "From the moment I first saw one, I just knew – I would make one someday. And here I am, living that dream."

"But following a dream comes with its own set of consequences," Hiru admits. "The reality of pursuing art in our country is that it rarely provides a sustainable income. I struggle financially every day. I usually stand here after 5PM. Some days, I have a steady stream of customers, but on others – especially when the weather is harsh – I hardly get any."

He lingers for a moment, then states, "To make ends meet, I also do decoration work, mostly for small parties. Recently, people have started hiring me to entertain children at birthday parties," he says with a faint smile. "But even that offers little stability in a city like Dhaka. No matter how hard I try, the weight of financial insecurity is always there. Yet, it's my passion for this art that keeps me going."

His eyes sparkle as he speaks of winter and the festive seasons. "There's a special joy in watching children rush toward my bioscope during this time. Their eyes, full of excitement, warm my

heart and remind me why I continue this work."

What truly moves me is Hiru's unwavering passion for the bioscope. It feels good to see him there, standing as a slice of tradition amidst all the modernity of Dhanmondi. Even in the sweltering heat, when he might forgo the joker costume, Hiru never abandons his passion or dedication. On those scorching days, you'll find him wearing only a simple, colourful cap – not as eye-catching, perhaps, but unmistakably Hiru!

Hiru typically sets up after 5:00pm in front of Anam Rang Plaza at 6/A Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi.

DB searches ex-minister Golam Dastagir's home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives early Saturday conducted a raid at the house of former textile and jute minister Golam Dastagir Gazi in Dhaka's Siddheswari.

As part of the regular operation of DB, a team searched the house as per the rules and regulations, according to a press release sent by Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Seeing the police, the building's security guard fled. Later, with the help of the local police station, the DB team entered the house and conducted the search operation, it also read.

"Based on specific information, the search operation was conducted as part of the arrest of the accused named in an FIR ...," added the press release.

However, an employee of the house told The Daily Star, "The cops broke the lock of the gate and entered the house and vandalised the CCTV camera first. Later, furniture in four rooms of the house was also vandalised."

Dastagir was arrested in Shantinagar area of Dhaka on August 25. He is now behind bars.

7kg gold recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials recovered 60 gold bars weighing around 7kg from a plane at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

The bars, wrapped in two packets, were left abandoned under two seats of a US Bangla Airline, says a press release by Mizanur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID).

The officials recovered the gold bars worth around Tk 7.86 crore after the aircraft landed at the airport around 4:00pm and all the passenger were evacuated, it added.

No one was arrested in this connection. CIID officials said smugglers sometimes leave gold in this manner to avoid arrest. Many with security passes work as their agents and take the gold out of the airport.

3 hurt in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A car hit a group of pedestrians near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday afternoon, injuring three.

The accident occurred in front of the airport's third terminal around 1:30pm.

A video of the incident went viral on social media. Ershad Ahmed, officer-in-charge (OC) of Airport Police Station said three men were injured, with two sustaining broken legs and one minor head injury.

The car was being driven by its owner, Mustafizur Rahman, who was detained at the scene, the OC said.

According to Mustafizur, a front tire burst caused him to lose control of the vehicle.

BNP at odds with student movement

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Towards that end, immediate reforms towards holding elections are necessary," Fakhrul added.

BNP leaders held a meeting with the 12-party alliance at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office on Thursday, where they emphasised national unity, discussed the issue, and conveyed the message that they are against removing the president for the time being, sources said.

"We don't want any new complications centring the president's removal, as we are passing a critical time. Any new complication will only hamper the electoral process. So, what the BNP said is also very much our view," Shahadat Hossain Selim, spokesperson of the 12-party alliance, told The Daily Star yesterday.

BNP standing committee members Nazrul Islam Khan and Selima Rahman, vice chairmen Abdul Awal Mintoo and Mohammad Shahjahan were present at the 12-party meeting.

The BNP also held a meeting with the Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote and conveyed the same message.

Fariduzzaman Farhad, coordinator of Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote, said that they also did not want any move that would create a constitutional vacuum.

"We are very much aligned with BNP's stance. We want a clear election roadmap," he said.

Andaleev Rahman Partha, chairman of the Bangladesh Jatiya Party, said, "We are also of the view that creating a constitutional vacuum will not be wise. We are of the same opinion as that of the BNP."

He, however, said the parties were yet to talk about this issue formally.

Saiful Huq, general secretary of the Revolutionary Workers Party, and also a leader of Ganatantra Mancha, said if the president did not resign voluntarily, any initiative to remove him would complicate the already volatile political situation and that might hamper the election process.

"So, we don't want any such complications right now."

He, however, said the Ganatantra Mancha's official stance was yet to be decided.

On October 23, three top BNP leaders met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and warned of a potential constitutional crisis as a consequence of the president's removal.

Set up separate secretariat for judiciary

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for the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary.

Supreme Court lawyers have long been demanding a separate secretariat for the judiciary.

Before the proposal was sent to the law ministry yesterday, opinions of judges of both the Appellate and High Court divisions were solicited, officials said.

Although Bangladesh is a constitutional democratic state, there are limitations in implementing the principle of separation of powers and ending the executive branch's tendency to interfere in the judiciary, reads the concept.

"The manifestation of a culture based on the rule of law and constitutional obligations has been severely affected since independence. Article 22 of our constitution declares the separation of the judiciary from the executive branch as a basic principle of the state," it says.

"In the era of globalisation, the application and practice of the principle of separation of powers... in the democratic state structure to curb the absolute powers of the executive or the government is well known."

In a modern state, if the three organs are not separated, the coherent practice of the constitution faces obstacles. "As a result, the need to maintain a proper balance of powers between the various departments of the state is disturbed on the one hand, and the democratic foundation of the state as a whole is

weakened on the other."

"The highest court of Bangladesh in the judgement of the Civil Appeal Case No. 79/1999, better known as Masdar Hossain case, of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has cleared the way for the separation of the judiciary from the executive by making a complete outline. One of the basic foundations of the separation of powers outlined in the judgement is the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary. In the judgement of Masdar Hossain case, the issue of institutionalisation of judicial separation has come up several times to ensure judiciary's independence. And the best effective way to separate the judiciary is to establish an independent judiciary secretariat. For this reason, in the judgement, the Supreme Court has considered the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary by completely abolishing the joint jurisdiction of the law ministry and the Supreme Court in running the current dual rule that is the subordinate court judges' recruitment, transfer, discipline etc as an important adjunct of the separation of powers."

In the context of the unforgettable July-August mass uprising, now is the best time to ensure true independence of the judiciary by implementing the verdict of the Masdar Hossain case, says the concept.

"The first step in this effort is to establish a separate judiciary secretariat completely independent of the executive branch. It is possible to establish the rule of law through

efficient, impartial and quality judicial work in our country only by establishing a separate judicial secretariat.

"In Article 109 of our Constitution, the power of supervision and control of all subordinate courts and tribunals has been delegated to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. At present, Bangladesh Supreme Court Registry provides secretarial support to the Supreme Court and High Court Division in the management and control of various matters of subordinate courts. But this supervision and control of the High Court Division is not absolute, because in the existing structure, the High Court Division exercises its supervision and control powers after receiving various proposals related to subordinate courts from the ministry of law. But in terms of Article 109 of our constitution, the supervision and control of subordinate courts and tribunals is the exclusive prerogative of the High Court Division. Therefore, the establishment of a separate judicial secretariat is essential for the smooth implementation of this constitutional obligation.

"Besides, the scope of work of the Supreme Court registry has increased at a fast rate due to various reasons, including the increase in the number of cases, administrative activities of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, and the rise in the number of subordinate court judges. Considering this context, it has become necessary to set up a separate secretariat."

Saudi opens resort island at futuristic mega-city

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's planned futuristic mega-city known as NEOM yesterday announced the opening of its "first physical showcase": a luxury Red Sea island featuring restaurants, hotels and yachting berths.

The opening of the island, known as Sindalah, comes amid persistent doubts about NEOM's viability and ahead of a major investor forum sometimes referred to as "Davos in the Desert" which will begin in Riyadh on Tuesday.

"NEOM is committed to supporting the Kingdom's new era of luxury tourism, with the opening of Sindalah," chief executive Nadhmi al-Nasr said in a statement.

Russian army claims new advance in east Ukraine

AFP, Moscow

Russia said yesterday its military had advanced further in east Ukraine, capturing a frontline village just a few kilometres north of a key Ukrainian-held industrial hub.

Moscow has made steady gains on the battlefield for months, pressing their advantage against overstretched and outmanned Ukrainian forces.

Russian army units "liberated

the settlement of Izmailovka," the Russian defence ministry said in a daily briefing, using the Russian spelling for the village.

Izmailovka had a population of just under 200 people before the conflict.

It lies eight kilometres (five miles) north of the key industrial hub of Kurakhove and just a few kilometres north of Kurakhivka, a small town on a stretch of frontline Moscow is trying to surround.

ICT shows

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The six are former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, sacked army officer Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan and police officers Abdullahil Kafi, Arafat Hossain, Abul Hasan and Mazaharul Islam.

The authorities were ordered to produce them before the tribunal on November 20.

Following the third petition, the tribunal issued arrest warrants for 17 former and current police personnel, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman, on similar charges of crimes against humanity.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul did not reveal the names of the other accused, saying they might go in hiding if their names were disclosed.

Upon arrest, they will have to be produced before the tribunal on November 20.

ICT Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumdar and members Justice Md Shafiq Alam Mahmud and Mohitul Haque Enam Chowdhury passed the orders after hearing the petitions.

The reconstituted tribunal, on

the first day of its proceedings on October 17, issued arrest warrants for former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 45 others for their alleged role in crimes against humanity and genocide during the student-led mass uprising.

At least 863 people, as per the health ministry, were killed and thousands injured during the uprising.

More than 60 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide have been filed against Hasina, her party leaders and officials of her administration with the ICT investigation agency and the prosecution team so far.

The Awami League government had formed the ICT in March 2010 originally to try the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

It later constituted ICT-2, and at least six Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders were executed following the judgments of the two tribunals. The two tribunals were merged later. The interim government reconstituted it in mid-October after taking charge in August.

President has to go

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way as such a failure would have dire consequences for the entire country," Mostafa Jamal Haider, head of the 12-party alliance and chairman of Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), told reporters emerging from the meeting.

He went on to call for speeding up the reforms so that elections could be held at the earliest.

He also called for unity among all parties, including the BNP.

BNP leaders on occasions have said that removing the president would create a crisis the nation does not desire.

The alliance leaders also enquired about the process of removing the president so that no constitutional crisis is created as a consequence.

Following the meeting, Nasiruddin Patwary, convener of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, called on the BNP to "understand the pulse of the people" and cooperate in removing "the cobra sitting in the president's house".

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday emphasised the importance of adhering to constitutional processes and avoiding hasty decisions regarding the removal of the president.

"We will not make any hasty declarations. We have a forum for discussion, and we will convene a standing committee meeting to clarify our stance following our discussions," he told reporters after laying wreaths at the grave of BNP founder and former president Ziaur Rahman.