



Hill Film Festival: A celebration of Indigenous voices and global cinema

The 6th Hill Film Festival is set to take place in Rangamati from December 26 to 28, followed by its Dhaka phase from January 2 to 4. With each edition, the festival has grown in scale and significance, becoming a vibrant celebration of diverse cinematic voices.

This year, the 6th edition received submissions from 14 countries, with 60 films entered, including from Bangladesh, Iran, Turkey, Brazil, the United States, France, India, Taiwan, Finland, South Korea, Japan, South Africa, Vietnam, and Kyrgyzstan.

Of these, 37 films from 12 countries were selected, representing 15 languages and competing across seven categories: feature fiction, feature documentary, short fiction, short documentary, student, vlog, and experimental.

The festival aims to bridge the existing gap, providing a stage for Indigenous films and introducing them to wider audiences.

The programme also includes three curated sections—*Indigenous Mirror*, *Whispers From The Next Door*, and *Hill Film Festival Retrospective*—alongside special screenings and artistes' discussions.

Azmeri Haque Badhan steps away from 'MEYEDER GOLPO'

Actress Azmeri Haque Badhan has decided to be no longer a part of Lamia Chowdhury's highly anticipated film, *Meyeder Golpo*.

When asked about her departure from the film, Badhan shared with Daily Samakal, "I am no longer involved with the project, so I prefer not to discuss it further."



Lamia, addressing the situation, said, "Several factors come into play when making a film, and business considerations are one of them. Because of this and other reasons, we couldn't reach an agreement. The project that was planned with Badhan is currently not happening."

Despite this setback, Lamia remains hopeful about the film's future.

MOSTAFA MONWAR, DEEPANWITA MARTIN star in Indian film on refugee crisis



Bangladeshi actors Mostafa Monwar and Deepanwita Martin will lead the Indian film *The Clouds Wake No Clocks*, directed by Aniket Dutta. Co-written by Dutta and Roshni Sen, the film explores the struggles of a Rohingya family seeking refuge in India.

Produced by Christoph Thoke (Germany), Sebastian Popp, and Jeremy Chua (Singapore), the story follows Khalid, Sharmin, and



their eight-year-old son Shoab as they flee persecution, crossing the border into India. The film depicts their fight for survival in an unfamiliar land.

Monwar and Martin will portray Khalid and Sharmin in this international project, shedding light on a harrowing journey of displacement and resilience.

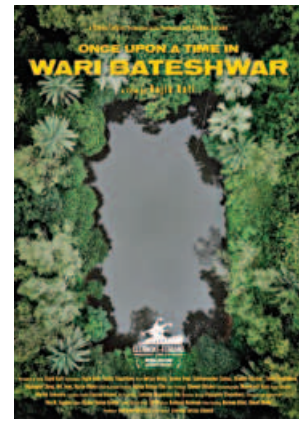
Bangladeshi short film makes it to Clermont-Ferrand Int'l Festival

This year, Bangladeshi director Rajib Rafi's short film *Once Upon a Time in Wari Bateshwar* has secured a spot in the competition category of the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

Following the Cannes Film Festival, this event stands as France's second-most significant film festival.

This renowned short film festival is set to run from January 31 to February 8.

According to the filmmaker, the film is a



magical realist journey between the strange and the terrifying. The film, shot entirely with a drone, offers stunning visuals and a distinct non-human perspective.

Produced under the Khona Talkies banner, the project was led by producer Ashiq Mostafa, with Adnan Ahmed as the co-producer.



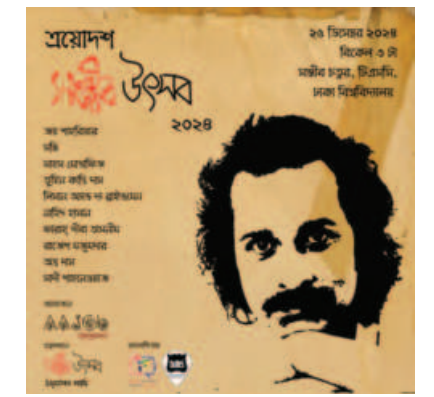
Mou in a double role for BTV anniversary

Sadia Islam Mou will be seen in a special drama celebrating the diamond jubilee (60th anniversary) of Bangladesh Television (BTV). Interestingly, she will be playing a dual role in the drama, titled *Shonar Shinduk*. The drama is scheduled to air on December 25 at 9:05pm.

Written by Ali Imran and filmed by Anwar Hossain Bulbul, the drama is produced by Mahbuba Ferdous.

Alongside Mou, the cast includes Golam Kibria Tanvir, Azam Khan, Faruq Ahmed, and Masud Rana Mithu, among others.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



The 13th Sanjeeb Festival, celebrating the birth anniversary of legendary lyricist and musician Sanjeeb Choudhury, will feature performances by artistes including Joy Shahriar, Sandhi, Sahas Mostafiz, Tuhin Kanti Das, Lisan & The Blindmen, Nahid Hasan, Farah Diba Tasnim, Rajesh Majumdar, and Ontu Das.

Date: December 25

Time: 3pm

Venue: Sanjeeb Chattar, TSC, Dhaka University.

COUNTRYWIDE

Seed crisis worries Barguna potato growers

Demand 800 tonnes, BADC supplied 93 tonnes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Acute crisis of quality seeds in the ongoing potato cultivation season has become a cause of concern for the potato growers in different upazilas of Barguna.

Local potato growers are worried as Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) could not supply sufficient quantity of the seeds in the face of their growing demand.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), this year the demand for potato seeds in six upazilas of Barguna is nearly 800 tonnes but BADC supplied only 93 tonnes.

Many growers, who have prepared more lands than the previous year for potato farming, are the worst sufferers due to shortage of seeds.

Local farmers said due to BADC's failure to supply quality seeds many of them were compelled to buy substandard seeds at high prices from local markets.

DAE sources said this year a total of 975 hectares of land have been brought under potato cultivation in six upazilas of Barguna.

Of the land, 540 hectares are in Patharghata upazila, 140 hectares in Sadar, 128 hectares in Betagi, 70 hectares in Taltali, 62 hectares in

Amtali and 35 hectares in Bamna upazila.

Farmer Mohammad Hafiz of Sonali Bazar area in Patharghata upazila said usually potatoes grow well in sandy land and our area is on the shores of the Bay of Bengal.

Due to high potato prices in local markets more farmers opted for potato cultivation but the crisis of quality seeds has dashed their hopes, Hafiz said.

Mohammad Sobhan, another farmer of Uttar Rupadhan village, said quality of the seeds supplied by BADC is quite good, while each kg of seeds costs only Tk 65 Tk 70.

But due to crisis of quality seeds farmers have been buying substandard seeds from local markets at Tk 100 to Tk 110 per kg.

Another farmer Jahangir Khan of the area said he had a plan to cultivate potatoes in more land than before but could not do so due to unavailability of quality seeds.

More farmers would have come forward for potato cultivation if quality seeds were available, he added.

Contacted, Patuakhali BADC (Seed) Deputy Assistant Director Mohammad Nannu Mia said supply of potato seeds were a bit less at the beginning of the season, but later it was increased as per demand.

Tulip quizzed in UK over graft allegations

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On Thursday, she welcomed the official to her office and gave her response to allegations that she helped her family embezzle up to £3.9 billion from the Russia-backed Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project.

Her explanation about the Russia deal was accepted at face value and the fact that her holding the meeting does not indicate that there is any kind of civil service investigation into her, the Sunday Times said.

According to the report, the Cabinet Office said: "As previously stated, the minister has denied any involvement."

Tulip, who represents the constituency of Hampstead & Highgate,

was unavailable for comments.

As economic secretary to the Treasury, she is responsible for tackling corruption in the UK's financial markets.

Daughter of Sheikh Rehana, Tulip is accused of helping her aunt Hasina broker a corrupt deal with Russia for the £10 billion Rooppur plant in 2013.

The same year she posed for a picture with Russian President Vladimir Putin and her aunt at a signing ceremony for the deal, the report said.

Citing sources close to her, the Sunday Times said allegations that she co-ordinated meetings between Bangladeshi and Russian officials are "trumped-up charges" and "completely politically

motivated".

She is said to have repeated this view — and her belief that she is the victim of a "political hit job" — during her discussion with the PET official.

According to a source, she explained that she visited Moscow more than a decade ago to see her aunt because it was easier to fly to Russia than Bangladesh. However, on Saturday the Daily Mail said that fresh questions had been raised over a \$1 billion arms deal that was also signed at the meeting, the Sunday Times reported.

It also mentioned that the Mail said Hasina signed a deal for a \$1 billion loan to Bangladesh to buy Russian weapons and military equipment.

Tulip was a Labour

councillor at the time and became an MP in 2015. A party spokesman told the Mail: "The dealings of two countries from two years before Tulip became an MP have absolutely nothing to do with her."

Tulip, 42, has previously said that she only posed for Putin after he said: "Is your family here? I'd like a picture."

The Mail on Sunday reported that Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had a team of five officials gathering "documentary evidence" relating to Tulip and others, and was likely to write to them within weeks.

Depending on Tulip's response, investigators will decide whether to issue first information reports,

which would make her an official suspect.

It is understood that Tulip has not yet been contacted by any of the relevant authorities, the Sunday Times reports.

A source told the British newspaper that officials were nervous about the potential for further embarrassment arising from her close relationship with Hasina, who, since being ousted, has been accused of crimes against humanity, including killing hundreds of protesters. Hasina fled to India in August following an uprising.

Tulip does not deny being close to Hasina, and previously praised her aunt as a "great role model", Sunday Times mentioned in its report.

Outrage over humiliation

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"We have identified 10-15 people. They are residents of a village neighboring that of the freedom fighter. But we don't know their political identities yet."

Freedom Fighter Abdul Hai Kanu, who had to endure the humiliation, alleged the attackers were Jamaat activists.

Hours after the incident, he felt compelled to leave his ancestral land on Sunday afternoon and take shelter in a relative's house in Feni.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Kanu's wife Rehana Begum said, "My husband left yesterday [Sunday] afternoon as he was mentally devastated and scared. Our house has been attacked twice since August 5 — on August 19 and September 2 — by Jamaat activists."

Kanu is a resident of Ludhara village under Cumillia's Chaudagram

and a former member of the Krishak League's central committee.

Police said he was accused in two cases — one for murder and another for defamation.

Yesterday, a video went viral on social media, in which a group of people ordered Kanu to leave the area by nightfall. They were seen putting on a garland of shoes around his neck.

Kanu said he was on his way to buy medicine around 11:30am when one Hashem obstructed him and took him to Kuliara Primary School.

"They dragged me by the collar to the school, placed a sharp knife at my neck, and then threatened to kill me," Kanu told The Daily Star.

"They also beat me, forced me to wear a garland of shoes around my neck, and ordered me to leave the district by nightfall."

He added, "Putting a string of shoes around my neck is similar to putting one around all freedom fighters in Bangladesh. I want justice."

Kanu alleged that Abul Hashem Mazumder and Wahid Mazumder, who are involved with Jamaat politics, led the attack.

Locals said Hashem was an expatriate.

About the cases against him, Kanu said his political rival and former Railway Minister Mujibul Haque implicated him in "false cases".

Contacted, Mahfuzur Rahman, ameer of Chaudagram Jamaat-e-Islami, said he cannot confirm whether any of his partymen were involved in the incident.

Meanwhile, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday afternoon issued a statement condemning the incident.

"We strongly condemn the defamation of Freedom Fighter Abdul Hai in Chaudagram on Sunday. The police and local administration have been directed to investigate the incident and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice," reads a Facebook post from the CA press wing.

However, the post noted Kanu stands accused in nine cases, including one for murder.

"We urge everyone to refrain from taking the law into their own hands," it added.

Chaudagram Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Rahamat Ullah visited Kanu's home yesterday afternoon and assured his security should he return home.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi in a statement condemned the incident and demanded punishment to the criminals.

Gaza truce

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have been for months.

"This ceasefire can last six months or it can last 10 years, it depends on the dynamics that will form on the ground," Chikli told Israel's Kan radio. Much hinged on what powers would be running and rehabilitating Gaza once fighting stopped, he said.

Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza has since killed at least 45,317 Palestinians, according to health officials in the Hamas-run enclave. Most of the population of 2.3 million has been displaced and much of Gaza is in ruins.

One of Gaza's few still partially functioning hospitals, on its northern edge, an area under intense Israeli military pressure for nearly three months, sought urgent help after being hit by Israeli fire.



Many growers, who prepared their lands for potato farming, face acute seed crisis. The photo was taken from Barguna's Patharghata upazila. PHOTO: STAR