

FROM BAILEY ROAD TO 'MISS NORTH AMERICA': Zarin's inspiring journey

Pageantry was the perfect platform for a person naturally gifted with height and a symmetrical face, to do exactly what Zarin desires. She soon became the first runner-up at the Miss Canada World competition.

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHEWAZ

When NSU graduate Zarin Mahmood landed in Canada in 2017, she had left behind a life of relative certainty to enter the grind of a life far away. Discarding her desire to pursue business, which was her major in university, she jumped on the opportunity to complete a Master's in Technology Innovation Management at Ottawa's Carlton University.

However, she never imagined in her wildest dreams, that she would pursue pageantry. "It was difficult enough when I switched from business to STEM, and I was mentally struggling. Peer pressure was also eating away at my confidence – I had to make something of myself soon."

After graduation, Zarin found success, joining an IT firm and going on to later secure a job as an IT Project Manager in a Canadian governmental institution. "There's immense pressure for girls my age to get married when we move abroad, but I knew I wanted to do something more, I wanted to inspire."

Pageantry was the perfect platform for a



PHOTO: COURTESY

person naturally gifted with height and a symmetrical face, to do exactly that. She soon became the first runner-up at the *Miss Canada World* competition. I actually stumbled across this opportunity, but tried to make the best of it anyway." That leap of faith emboldened the Zarin, who had spent nearly eight years behind a desk in Canada. "For an introvert, it is very difficult to be the centre of attention like that! But the first pageant, which took place in June 2024, gave me a new set of directions for life."

At this point of the interview, I asked her if she was at all surprised when she beat 45 women to claim the title of Miss North America. With astounding confidence, she replied, "I was somehow confident I would win. A lot of credit goes to my mother, who acted as a mentor, inspiration, and strict coach throughout the entire process."

At the final junction, Zarin was asked that if she could spend some time with any historical figure, whom she would choose to do that with. "I chose Mother Teresa. I could not think of a better human being off the top of my head

– she helped hundreds of thousands of people. Wanting to do somewhat of the same thing, she was the perfect answer."

Zarin Mahmood's pageantry titles make her the first Bangladeshi to achieve them. Seemingly at her peak, what does the young IT professional want to do next? "My primary aim has always been to help women. I want to build a platform, where women who are struggling with a new environment, can reach out. At the risk of sounding tacky, I really do want to break barriers, inspire change, and cultivate environments where women can thrive confidently."

Beyond her professional work, she has actively contributed to her community. She served as an executive member of the Greater Vancouver Bangladesh Cultural Association (GVBCA), where she helped organise cultural events, engaged youth, and fostered connections within the Bangladeshi community in Vancouver, BC. Zarin is also a skilled Nazrul Geeti singer, having performed at various events since her school days.

Now to address the elephant in the room – does the newly crowned Miss North America want to join the Bangladeshi showbiz industry? "There's no such plans at the moment," laughed Zarin, rather amused. "However, if there is a project that I can leverage towards women's empowerment, I am all for it."

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PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHE

Out and About in DHAKA



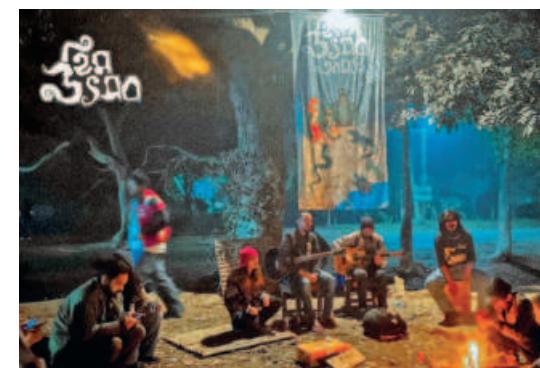
Kite Festival: 'Sakrain'

January 14 | 10am-10pm
Central Field, Dhaka University



Play: 'Khona'

January 14 | 7pm-9pm
Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy



Him Utsab

January 16-18 | 10am-12am
Jahangirnagar University

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Cunk on Life



HBO Max
The Pitt



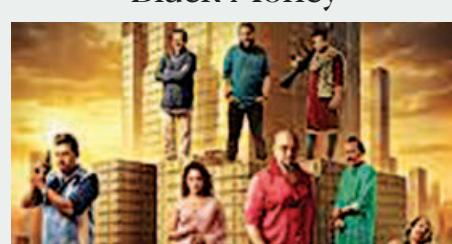
Disney+
Goosebumps: The Vanishing



Chorki
Dui Shaw (Beshura)



Bongo:
Black Money



1-MINUTE REVIEW

'LUCKY BASKHAR'

a well-told tale of man manufacturing luck

Lucky Baskhar, a Telugu film written and directed by Venky Atluri, uses a narrative style that builds tension before a twist, then revisits certain moments to explain the events leading up to it.

This relationship drama, centred around a financial scam, marks one of Atluri's finer works to date, bolstered by a strong performance from famed Dulquer Salmaan. He seamlessly transitions from a regular man struggling to survive to a clever banker eager to make fast money.

The film opens with Baskhar (Dulquer Salmaan) addressing the audience directly, sharing his story. Its production design meticulously recreates a lower middle-class neighborhood in Bombay

from 1989-92, with Nishim Ravi's camera weaving through the worn-out walls of the houses and the cramped, narrow alleys.

In the latter part of the film, the director ramps up the intensity, diving into the dark world of money laundering and exposing how everyone, from bank managers to small business owners, is either knowingly or unknowingly involved in a vast scam.

Baskhar's character transforms throughout, rising from poverty to wealth, while also revealing his growing arrogance. Sumathi, his wife played by Meenakshi Chaudhary, serves as his moral compass, but the question remains: will her resistance be enough to make Baskhar confront his true self?



WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

Adam Brody and Leighton Meester

Last Monday, *Gossip Girl* famed Leighton Meester and *The OC* famed Adam Brody stunned on the 2025 Golden Globe red carpet in perfectly coordinated ensembles. After staying off the radar for a while, the adored Hollywood couple's presence delighted netizens on Instagram.

Brody, 45, donned a striking teal suit paired with a black bow tie, a white rose boutonniere, and glossy black oxfords, exuding effortless charm. His signature curls and radiant complexion, prepped by popular groomer Kim Verbeck with Dermalogica products, completed the look.

Meester, 38, dazzled in a slinky citrus gown with a plunging neckline, paired with sparkling diamond jewellery and silver pointed-toe heels. Her soft updo with curtain fringe and peach-toned makeup added a touch of refined glamour to the evening.

Adam Brody and Leighton Meester



WHAT'S PLAYING

'Eka Ghor Amar' by TAHSAN KHAN AND SHITHI SAHA

The recently released song *Eka Ghor Amar*, heartily rendered by Tahsan Khan and Shithi Saha, stands out as a reflection of the duo's vocal chemistry and emotional depth.

Not only has the track resonated with listeners, but it has further solidified Tahsan's reputation as a master of melancholic ballads while highlighting Shithi's vocal finesse.

At its core, *Eka Ghor Amar* is an introspective take on solitude, heartbreak, and lingering memories of a love that once was. Inspired by a time when his home felt complete with the presence of someone special, Tahsan channeled the emotions of losing that connection into this piece. The song picks up the weight of loneliness through its hauntingly soothing melodies.

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Lonely Home

