

## TAHSAN to host ‘Family Feud’

Globally popular show **Family Feud** is coming to Bangladesh through OTT platform Bongo. The programme will premiere on a television channel on January 27, and subsequently be released on the OTT platform. Renowned musician and actor Tahsan Khan will host the show.

A press conference was held at a five-star hotel in the capital on Tuesday.

Regarding his role as host, the singer said, **“Family Feud** has captured the hearts of audiences in more than 75 countries worldwide, and now it’s here in Bangladesh. I feel deeply honoured and delighted to host such an international show for the first time.”

Special episodes of the programme will feature well-known personalities such as Manoj Pramanik, Shahnaz Khushi and Brindaban Das, among others.



PHOTO: COURTESY

## Papia Sarwar to receive posthumous Rabindra Padak



The 43rd Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad will posthumously honour the revered Rabindra Sangeet singer Papia Sarwar, with the Rabindra Padak.

The award honours her remarkable contributions to Bengali music. Her unique voice and masterful interpretations of Rabindra Sangeet and modern Bangla songs have cemented her enduring legacy.

The event set to be held at the Chhayanaout Shangskriti Bhavan auditorium in the capital’s Dhanmondi area from January 23 to 25, will additionally feature performances and discussions aimed at celebrating the lasting impact of Rabindranath Tagore’s works on Bengali culture.

She served as general secretary and later as an executive committee member of the Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad, promoting Tagore’s works.

## Sabina Yasmin set to return to music

After her courageous battle against cancer, the iconic singer Sabina Yasmin is ready to make her musical comeback through two major events in Dhaka on January 31 and February 1, followed by a stage show in Chattogram.

She expressed her joy at returning, saying, “By Allah’s grace, I am returning to music. Music has been my life for six decades, and it is where I find my greatest



happiness. Coming back to music feels wonderful.”

The songstress shared that several music directors have approached her about recording new songs. She therefore intends to work on new recordings alongside her stage performances.

She is set to rehearse with instrumentalists from January 26 to 28 to refine her skills before the shows.

## ‘Chaalchitro’ to stream on Hoichoi this February

The much-anticipated film **Chaalchitro**, which initially released in theatres on December 20, marked Ziaul Faruq Apurba’s debut in Tollywood. OTT platform Hoichoi has now officially announced that the film is set to release on February 7.

The storyline of **Chaalchitro** is centred around a 12-year-old case.

Notably, director Pratim D Gupta revealed plans for a sequel just seven days after the film’s theatrical release.

The next installment will pick up where the first part concluded. Produced under the banner of Friends Communication, the film

features Ziaul Faruq Apurba alongside an ensemble cast including Raima Sen, Tota Roy Chowdhury, Anirban Chakrabarti, Bratya Basu, and Shantanu Maheshwari, among others.



## Berlinale to feature ‘Shudhu Takar Jonno’ by Tabib Mahmud and Rana Mridha

Indian Bengali film **Baksho Bondi** (Shadowbox) has been nominated for the prestigious 75th Berlin International Film Festival. It notably features the title track sung by Bangladesh’s **Gully Boy** famed duo, Tabib Mahmud and Rana Mridha.

The song, titled **Shudhu Takar Jonno**, was written and composed by Tabib Mahmud, with music arranged by Shubbro Raha. The 75th edition of the Berlin International Film Festival announced the list of selected films yesterday, with **Baksho Bondi** featured in the Berlinale Perspectives category. This section showcases 13 films from emerging directors worldwide.

Earlier in 2023, Tabib and Rana made waves with their song **Chap Nai**, which was featured in the Indian series **Kaala**, directed by Bejoy Nambiar for Disney+ Hotstar.

## NEWS

### Trump targets US diversity scheme

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receive government contracts from hiring employees from marginalized backgrounds - what the order called “illegal DEI discrimination and preferences” - and asked government agencies to identify private companies that might be subject to civil investigation.

In a government memo issued on Tuesday, federal agencies were told to put diversity staff on paid leave “immediately” - specifically by 17:00 local time (22:00 GMT) yesterday.

The order also stipulates that federal and private-sector employment preferences for military veterans could continue.

Trump signed a memorandum that ends a Biden administration initiative

to promote diversity in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), ordering the FAA Administrator to immediately stop DEI hiring programmes, the White House said.

He also touted a huge AI project in a shock-and-awe start to his second presidency - but faced defiance including a rare public dressing down from a bishop.

Flanked at the White House by the chiefs of Japanese giant Softbank, Oracle and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, Trump announced a venture called “Stargate” which will “invest \$500 billion, at least,” in AI infrastructure in the United States.

“This monumental undertaking is a resounding declaration of confidence in America’s potential,”

said Trump.

Trump also faced fresh criticism from an unexpected and powerful voice Tuesday when a Washington bishop told him from the pulpit that he was sowing fear among America’s immigrants and LGBTQ people, reports AFP.

“I ask you to have mercy, Mr President,” the Washington National Cathedral’s Mariann Edgar Budde told an unsmiling Trump, seated in the front pew for the customary inaugural service next to his wife Melania.

Early yesterday, Trump blasted Budde on his Truth Social platform, calling the Episcopal bishop “nasty” and demanding an apology.

### Laid-off

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Yesterday’s demonstrations demanding the reopening of the factories began at 3:00pm in the Kashimpur (Mouzar Mil) area on the Chandra-Nabinagar highway. The protests blocking the highway caused massive traffic jams, leading to sufferings of passengers.

At one point, the agitated workers vandalised a number of vehicles. They also attacked journalists and damaged their motorcycles, said Abu Taleb, senior assistant superintendent of police of Gazipur Industrial Police-2.

Rahimul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kashimpur Police Station, said a truck and three buses were torched during the protests. The situation remained tense late into the night.

Tariqul Islam, public relations officer of Beximco Industrial Park, regretted the violence and damage caused during the protests.

### Norway’s Schibsted Media to cut 13 percent of workforce

AFP, Oslo

Norwegian media group Schibsted Media, owner of major newspapers in Norway and Sweden, said yesterday that it was cutting 13 percent of its workforce in the face of falling print circulations and stagnating advertising revenue.

Around 350 full-time staff positions will be cut by the group, which currently has some 2,800 employees in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Poland, it said in a statement.

### 18,000 workers in depths of despair

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able to travel to Malaysia has gripped these families, many of whom are now grappling to repay loans they had taken to pay the recruiting agencies.

Md Ratan, a man from Tangail, took a loan to pay Tk 4 lakh to a recruitment agency. “I am drowning in debt. The loan instalments and interest are unmanageable. I’ve had to sell land just to survive,” Ratan said.

Md Kawser, who paid Tk 6 lakh, expressed similar frustration. “The government’s negligence has worsened our situation. Every assurance feels hollow,” he lamented.

Md Khulkun, another worker who missed the deadline for entry into Malaysia, said, “I was promised I’d be sent by January. But now the interest on my loans keeps growing, and I can’t even bear my family’s basic expenses. We want to go to Malaysia by February.”

After the debacle under its watch, the previous regime failed to make any progress in resolving the crisis in the last two months before its ouster.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim’s visit on October 4 last year after the political changeover finally cast

a ray of hope for the distraught families of the stranded workers.

During a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Anwar said he would consider the entry of the 18,000 Bangladeshi workers as soon as possible if all conditions are met.

The interim government then made repeated assurances to address the plight of these workers. But as the wait got longer, the workers formed a human chain in front of the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment in Dhaka, demanding urgent action on December 29 last year.

They withdrew their protest after receiving assurances that their demand would be met.

The workers blocked the Karwan Bazar roundabout in Dhaka yesterday as frustration boiled over again. Police removed them after an hour and a half.

Later, they marched to the ministry and blocked the road in front of it, staying until 1:00pm.

Once again, Adviser Asif Nazrul assured them they would be sent to Malaysia in phases, starting in late March or early April.

Speaking to the protesters, the adviser

promised that workers with BMET cards and visas would begin travelling to Malaysia by the end of March in phases.

“Those without BMET cards but with visas will be prioritised next. Workers without visas or BMET cards were advised to reclaim their passports and funds from the recruitment agencies, with the ministry offering support through local police stations if agencies refused to comply,” he told them.

The ministry’s Secretary Ruhul Amin said two committees—one in Bangladesh and one in Malaysia—were formed to address the issue.

“We’ve held a joint meeting with Malaysia and plan another next month. If all goes well, we hope to send these workers to Malaysia by late March or early April,” he said.

The crisis came after Malaysia reopened its labour market to Bangladeshi workers in 2022, following a four-year suspension due to recruitment irregularities.

Between August 2022 and April 2024, nearly 450,000 Bangladeshi workers migrated to Malaysia, making it the second-largest job market for Bangladeshis after Saudi Arabia.

### Only farmers

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commander added.

At the meeting, Col Md Imran Ibne A Rouf, sector commander of BGB, Rajshahi, led the Bangladesh team, while Arun Kumar Gautam, DIG of BSF’s Malda sector, led the Indian team. Lt Col Golam Kibria and 119 BSF Commander Suruj Sing were also present at the meeting.

Tensions between the two forces had recently escalated due to the BSF’s alleged construction of a barbed wire fence near the zero line at the Chouka border on January 7 and the felling of mango trees in Bangladesh by Indian nationals near the Chouka and Kiranganj border areas on January 18.

### 2 stabbed

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Sub-Inspector Maruf Ahmed, told this newspaper that unidentified people were made accused since the attackers had face masks. He added the family suspects a man named Yasin Sikdar, who had been arrested on charges of kidnapping Kader’s brother Mintu Sikdar four months ago, was involved in the attack.

Mintu alleged Yasin and his associates had been threatening the family since their release on bail.

A senior police officer, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that they suspect “transactions of money” might be a reason behind the attack.