



Anjan Dutt calls for resolving 'Bangladesh issue' to boost Kolkata-Dhaka film ties

National Award-winning filmmaker and musician Anjan Dutt has called for resolving political tensions between Bangladesh and India, highlighting the untapped potential in both nations' film industries.

"Art unites where politics divides", urging both countries to boost cultural collaboration.

He praised Bangladesh's rich heritage and talented filmmakers, actors, and musicians, advocating for substantial partnerships between Kolkata and Dhaka.

Dutt also expressed concern over modern filmmaking trends that prioritise technical aspects over the actor-focused direction. His remarks come ahead of his new film *Ei Raat Tomar Amar* directed by Parambrata Chattopadhyay, where he stars alongside Aparna Sen.

'Laapataa Ladies' bags Japan Academy Film Prize nomination

Kiran Rao's film *Laapataa Ladies* has recently earned a nomination for the Japan Academy Film Prize. After its theatrical release in Japan in October, last year, the film was well-received by audiences and successfully ran for 100 days at the box office.

It is now nominated in the esteemed Best International Film category at the 2024 Japan Academy Film Prize.



Laapataa Ladies is competing in the category alongside Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, Yorgos Lanthimos' *Poor Things*, Jonathan Glazer's *The Zone of Interest*, and Alex Garland's *Civil War*.

The winner will be presented with the award during the event's ceremony on March 14.

Directed by Kiran Rao, *Laapataa Ladies* stars Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, Sparsh Shrivastava, Chhaya Kadam, and Ravi Kishan, among others.

Curtain falls on the sixth National Sculpture Exhibition

The sixth edition of the National Sculpture Exhibition, organised by the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), concluded last Monday after a month-long display.

Inaugurated on December 21, 2024, the exhibition was extended by seven days, with the closing ceremony held at the Academy's National Art Gallery Auditorium.

Dr Syed Jamil Ahmed, director general of BSA, chaired the ceremony,



which included reviews by Dr Abdus Sattar and speeches by professor Nazma Khan Majlis and other

directors of BSA's departments.

The director general highlighted the exhibition's role in inspiring creativity across multiple art forms. He also announced the upcoming *Festival of Multilingualism* set for February.

This year's event featured 178 artworks by 159 artists, with 13 awards presented, celebrating the BSA's efforts in promoting the art of sculptures since 1982.

JAMES to headline 'Gala Night' concert in Chattogram

Bangladesh's rock icon, Nagar Baul's James, will headline the much-anticipated *Gala Night* concert at the Flower Fest 2025, set to take place at MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram on February 6.

Organised by the Chattogram District Administration, the event will see James take the stage after performances from leading bands including Artcell, Shironamhin, Lalon, AvoidRafa, Arbovirus, Unmaad, and Teerondaz.

The concert marks the conclusion of the month-long Flower Fest at Faujdarhat DC Flower Park. The event gates will open to audiences in the afternoon, with performances starting at 6:30pm, culminating in James taking the stage as the final act.



Industry leaders to address challenges in Bangladeshi cinema



The Bangladesh Film Students' Association (BFSA) will host the National Film Conference at Dhaka University, today at 3pm, to address critical issues regarding reforming the country's film sector.

The event, under the theme *Shongskarey Cholochitra, Poribortone Desh*, will bring together over 500 filmmakers, students, and professionals.

Key topics include outdated certification laws, inadequate film distribution infrastructure, and the need for improved film educational facilities. Industry leaders, including interim government advisers, will propose solutions to help elevate the film industry.

The conference will also explore the development of Gazipur Film City and seek government support to combat piracy and enhance local production, aiming for a brighter cinematic future.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Pakhider Bidhansobha'



Step into the mystical world of *Pakhider Bidhansobha*, a captivating Sufi-inspired play based on Farid-Ud-Din Attar's poem *Mantiq-ut-Tayr*.

Staged at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, this theatrical journey, directed by Dr Ahmedul Kabir and performed by Dhaka University's theatre students, will explore the quest for self-introspection and enlightenment.

DATE: FRIDAY-MONDAY | FEBRUARY 7-10
TIME: 4PM AND 7PM ONWARDS
VENUE: BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMY

NEWS

Muggings even in daylight

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3,000," he said.

Police officers say the actual number of muggings could be higher because many people do not even file general diaries.

Tanvir Islam, a software engineer, said he was mugged on the walkway along the Turag river in Mohammadpur's Dhaka Udyan area two weeks ago.

"But I did not go to the police," he said.

He said he caught a man who tried to snatch his phone in Nobodoy Housing on September 17.

"I handed the man to the cops and filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station. But the police kept my phone as evidence, and advised me to get a court order to get it back. Who would want this kind of hassle?" he asked.

"No hour is safe on some streets of Mohammadpur. Not only are they robbing, but they are also stabbing and hacking people."

Mohammadpur resident Rokhsana Parvin said her 20-year-old son was mugged on December 20 near Kisholoy Girls School and College on Tajmahal Road.

"The police told us to file a GD," she said, adding that the phone remains unrecovered.

A PERSISTENT THREAT

Locals say mugging incidents are prevalent in Bosila, Tin Rastar Mor, Dhaka Udyan, Nobodoy Housing, Chand Udyan, Bosila Garden City, 40 Feet Road, Chandrima Housing, Ekota Housing, and Nabinagar.

On October 19, three people were mugged on 40-Foot Road around 3:30pm.

The next day, a gang of robbers wielding machetes stopped a microbus of a company in Mohammadia Housing around 9:45am and took away Tk 10.75 lakh in cash.

On October 21, a female university student was mugged near her home in Nobodoy Housing around 6:30am. In a 33-second security camera footage that went viral, a young man in black shorts and four others with knives are seen snatching her purse.

On October 24, several men entered a grocery store on the 40-Foot Road, held the shopkeeper at knifepoint, and looted the cash register.

Recently, a video went viral on social media showing a teenage boy hacking another boy with a machete in broad daylight in the Dhaka Udyan area.

Locals say teen and youth gangs are often behind these reckless crimes.

There are allegations that during the Awami League regime, these gangs were protected by the Chhatra League

and Jubo League.

Locals say turf wars among these gangs have also become common in recent weeks.

Amid the situation, the army has set up camps in the area to curb crime.

According to an intelligence report, there are at least 432 spots where muggings take place frequently. Of those places, Mohammadpur has 108.

The report mentions 205 individuals identified as active muggers in Mohammadpur.

Contacted, Mohammad Ibne Mizan, Deputy Commissioner (Tejgaon Division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "A large number of homeless people live and work in Mohammadpur. The suspects can easily flee to Gabtoli, Old Dhaka, and Keraniganj through the Beribadh."

"We made a list based on last year's data. Police will now increase vigilance and patrolling."

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam at a crime review meeting of Dhaka Metropolitan Police recently said the police must make every effort to stop crimes like extortion and mugging.

At the meeting, DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali said police would practice a zero-tolerance policy for snatchers and extortionists.

China's DeepSeek AI

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is driving transgender people back into the closet and out of public life altogether," Joshua Block, with the ACLU, said earlier on Monday.

Trump also signed an executive order that "mandated a process to develop an 'American Iron Dome'."

The short-range Iron Dome air defense system was built by Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems with US backing, and was built to intercept rockets fired by the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas in Gaza towards Israel.

Trump's administration on Monday fired more than a dozen Justice Department lawyers who brought two criminal cases against him, an official said.

The officials were fired after Acting Attorney General James McHenry, a Trump appointee, concluded they "could not be trusted to faithfully implement the President's agenda because of their significant role in prosecuting the President," a Justice Department official said.

Trump's plans have been heavily criticised by advocacy groups, which say his actions would be illegal.

"President Trump has made clear that a key priority for his administration

ACC sues S Alam's son, 51 others

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Mohammad Selim Uddin, former director and chairman of Islami Bank's Executive Committee; Syed Abu Asad, former nominee director; Dr Tanvir Ahmad, former member of the Executive Committee and vice chairman; Md Manzur Hasan, assistant vice president and branch manager of Islami Bank; Muhammad Sirajul Kabir, senior vice president and former branch manager, among others.

The ACC had previously filed two cases against Ahsanul for embezzlement from the same bank.

On December 19, the ACC filed a case accusing Ahsanul Alam of embezzling thousands of crores of taka from Islami Bank, and 56 others.

On January 9, the ACC filed another case involving the embezzlement of approximately Tk 994 crore from Islami Bank. Ahsanul Alam, along with 54 others, was accused in the case.

Shinepukur, Beximco

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Beximco's laid-off factories have been demanding the reopening of 16 units that were closed in December.

"Beximco's loan scandal has surpassed the scandal of the Bangladesh Bank reserve heist," said the adviser.

The conglomerate's loans are over Tk 40,000 crore, including Tk 28,544 crore taken by its 32 textile and apparel subsidiaries.

"Of those 32 factories, 16 exist only on paper. But these factories were used [as collateral] to take loans."

The Bangladesh Bank will conduct a forensic audit to investigate whether there were irregularities and on what basis the loans were provided by Janata Bank and other financial institutions to the industrial establishments of Beximco Industrial Park, he said.

Beximco owes Janata Bank Tk 23,285 crore, Sonali Bank Tk 1,424

crore, Agrani Bank Tk 420 crore, Rupali Bank Tk 987 crore and National Bank Tk 315 crore, United Commercial Bank Tk 333 crore, AB Bank Tk 938 crore, Exim Bank Tk 497 crore, Global Islami Bank Tk 61 crore, Dutch Bangla Bank Tk 94 crore, IFIC Bank Tk 78 crore and Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund around Tk 87 crore.

Departmental and legal actions will be taken based on the audit findings, which will be complete by February.

The FID along with BB will take departmental action, including the dismissal of the receiver, for failing to implement the advisory committee's decision on the closure process of Beximco's laid-off companies.

This includes not arranging for the announcement of the committee's decision via TV scrolls, he said, adding that the FID will take steps to replace the receiver.

Going against people

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The BNP leader noted that the people will ultimately determine the future of political parties.

"At the end of the day, it is the people who will decide whether we are popular or not. We must stand with them and ensure they stay with us."

He said that the public is now more aware and willing to place their trust in the BNP.

"If anyone within the party acts in a way that breaks this trust, neither I nor the party will support them. I will not shelter such individuals."

"The party must be selfish in this regard. If any party member erodes public trust, we cannot own them in the party. We have endured

adversities, oppression, and torture to reach this point. We cannot afford to compromise on this matter."

Tarique said that the party would not tolerate individuals who harm its reputation for personal gain.

"We have already severed ties with those who acted against the party's interests. Some may question what will happen next, but I am taking action based on the information available. I am making my stance clear as I proceed."

"I want to make one thing clear: we will not associate with individuals who engage in wrongdoing or unethical practices. As a political party, we are striving to do our best."

Girls' football match called off

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They addressed the crowd and termed the women's football match "anti-Islamic".

One speaker was quoted as saying, "Islam teaches us to keep women within the confines of modesty. By promoting women's sports, you are encouraging immorality. We warn you to stop these activities, or there will be resistance in future."

They then marched to the football pitch and proceeded to tear down the

fence. The incident was livecast on Facebook.

Samiul Hasan Emon, president of the T-Star Club and a local BNP leader, said the protesters' actions caused damages of over Tk 1 lakh.

Akkelpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Anisur Rahman said madrasa students and local Islamists were involved in dismantling the fence.

He, however, said that no formal complaints had been filed.

Ex-ADC, 2 cops

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time, he added.

The court set February 23 for the next hearing and progress report regarding Arshad Hossain, while hearings for the other two individuals were scheduled for March 24. The arrestees are to be kept in jail until then.

The trio were already in police custody over various allegations, and sources said they were part of the six police officers against whom the ICT issued arrest warrants on Monday.

300,000 Palestinians return

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In a separate statement, it said more than 5,500 government employees were working to facilitate the return of hundreds of thousands of displaced people from the southern and central governorates to Gaza's north, reports Al Jazeera online.

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that Gaza had brought Israel "to its knees", in a reference to the recent ceasefire in the Palestinian territory.

"The small, limited Gaza brought the Zionist regime, armed to the teeth, and fully supported by America, to its knees," Khamenei said during a meeting with officials in Tehran.

Also yesterday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Esmail Baqaei, criticised US President Donald Trump's idea to move Palestinians out of Gaza to other locations such as Egypt or Jordan, reports AFP.

Qatar reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution. "Our position has always been clear to the necessity of the Palestinian people receiving their rights, and that the two-state solution is the only path forward," foreign ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari told media, when asked about Trump's comments.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces have arrested at least 25 Palestinians since yesterday evening, according to the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoners Society.

"The occupation forces continue to carry out field investigations in several towns in addition to the widespread abuse, attacks and threats against citizens, as well as acts of vandalism and destruction in citizens' homes," the joint statement said.