

Sabina Yasmin to make her grand comeback tomorrow

Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin is set to make her grand comeback in the exclusive HSBC event titled **Ami Achi Thakbo**, on January 31 and February 1 in the capital.

These performances will mark her much-awaited return after a year of personal trials. Sabina Yasmin, a cornerstone of Bengali playback music for over six decades, will sing 12 to 15 of her classic hits, accompanied by a 16-member orchestra led by Foad Nasser Babu and Jahangir Sayeed.

Musicians like Ujjal Sinha, Nur E Alam Shojib, and Monir uz Zaman will perform live with a focus on original instrumentation.

Md Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, called the event a tribute to Yasmin's remarkable career.

Known for songs like **Shob Sokhire Par Korite** and **O Amar Bangla Ma**, Yasmin has received numerous awards, including the two highest civilian awards, the Swadhinata Padak and Ekushey Padak.



Mithila-Nayeem arriving this Valentine's Day

FS Nayeem and Rafiath Rashid Mithila, a popular duo from the TV drama scene, are now set to hit the big screen with their upcoming film **Jole Jwole Tara**. Directed by Arun Chowdhury, the movie has been in the works since the two actors signed on three years ago.

The project, which received a government grant for the 2020-21 fiscal year, began filming in October 2021 in Manikganj during the pandemic. Despite wrapping up in just three weeks, the film's release has faced several delays. Last year, it was even scheduled for release, but the plan was shelved due to the mass student-led protests in July. Now, the director intends to release the film on Valentine's Day.

The film additionally features performances by Fazlur Rahman Babu, Monira Mithu, Azad Abul Kalam, and Noor Imran Mithu.



Jonas Brothers to star in new Disney holiday film

The Jonas Brothers are making their return to Disney with a holiday film, tentatively titled **Jonas Brothers Christmas Movie**.

The comedy will follow Kevin, Joe, and Nick Jonas as they encounter a series of escalating challenges while racing from London to New York to celebrate Christmas with their families. The film is set to premiere later this year on Disney+.

The band joined Disney's Hollywood Records in 2007 after parting ways with Columbia Records following their debut album, **It's About Time**. That same year, they made their Disney Channel debut on **Hannah Montana** with Miley Cyrus.

The Jonas Brothers made their film debut in 2008 with Disney Channel's **Camp Rock**, starring alongside Demi Lovato.



Shajal confirms role in 'Jinn 3'

At the heels of the success of **Jinn**, Jaz Multimedia's horror franchise is set to continue with **Jinn 3**, once again featuring Shajal Noor in the lead role.

Kamruzzaman Roman will direct this third instalment in the film franchise, expected to release during Eid.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Shajal confirmed the news, stating, "This is wonderful news for me, and **Jinn 3** will be full of surprises for the audiences. We will start shooting very soon. Nusraat Faria and several other artistes will also be part of the film."

The first instalment brought Shajal immense love from the audience. "A film only gets a sequel when it attains widespread appreciation from audiences. I am happy to see the **Jinn** franchise progressing creatively," the actor added.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'Dhaka Makers 3'

The third edition of **Dhaka Makers**, backed by City Bank, is just around the corner, bringing five days of vibrant festivities celebrating art, design, and craftsmanship.

With over 80 makers, 19 workshops, over 300 art pieces, and over 10 heritage crafts, this edition promises an immersive experience for art enthusiasts, designers, and craft lovers alike. From fashion and lifestyle to art and sustainable goods, **Dhaka Makers 3** is set to be a hub of inspiration and community engagement.

DATE: JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 3
TIME: 10AM – 10PM
VENUE: ALOKI, TEJGAON

Sundance Film Festival announces Short Film Award winners

The 41st Sundance Film Festival, a leading independent film event, which ran from January 23 to 28, screened over 100 films across venues in Park City and Salt Lake City, Utah.

From 12,098 short film submissions, **The Masterpiece** by Alex Lora Cercos won the Short Film Grand Jury Prize.

Other winners include **Say Hi After You Die** (Short Film Jury Award, Kate Jean Hollowell), **The Stag** (International Fiction, An Chu), **Bob's Funeral** (Nonfiction, Jack Dunphy), and **Bug Diner** (Animation, Phoebe Jane Hart).

Special Jury Prizes for Directing were awarded to Masha Ko (**The Looming**) and Makoto Nagahisa (**Pisko the Crab Child is in Love**).



NEWS

Arakan Army disrupts trade

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to an associate of a high-ranking Myanmar military officer. "The seizure seems intended to put pressure on the junta. The Arakan Army is also trying to secure a share of the cross-border trade."

Jasim Uddin, general manager of Teknaf Land Port, the only private land port in the country, highlighted the sharp decline in trade since November 2023.

"Before then, around 50 cargo ships docked every day. But after the fighting intensified along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, the number dropped. Since July 2024, when the fighting reached Maungdaw township, only three to five ships have been arriving each month," he said.

Port officials said three ships had to wait for several days to return to Myanmar from Teknaf due to threats from the Arakan Army.

Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of Bangladesh

Border Guard 2 Battalion in Teknaf, said they were not formally informed of the issue. No business representative reported it. "The incident occurred in the Myanmar waters with Myanmar vessels, so there is nothing we can do about it."

The BGB official assured that they are ensuring the security of Bangladeshi people along the border.

DECLINE IN TRADE

Trade through Teknaf Land Port has significantly dropped over the last two fiscal years, according to data from Teknaf Customs.

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, 1,88,999 tonnes of goods worth Tk 1,545 crore were imported from Myanmar, while Bangladesh exported 2,941 tonnes of goods worth Tk 6.72 crore.

However, in 2023-24 fiscal year, imports dropped to 71,741 tonnes, valued at approximately Tk 808 crore. Exports also saw a significant decline, with only 704 tonnes of goods worth Tk 2.45 crore.

In the first six months of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh imported 11,129 tonnes of goods worth around Tk 113 crore through Teknaf Port. During the same period, 636 tonnes of goods valued at approximately Tk 64 lakh were exported to Myanmar.

The imported items include dry fish, frozen fish, betel nuts, onions, ginger, coconuts, wood, and other goods. Bangladesh's main exports to Myanmar are cement and potatoes.

Contacted, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star that the ministry was not in a position to contact the Arakan Army. Bangladesh maintains formal communication with the Myanmar Army governing the country. "We hope that the Arakan Army will release the ship for their own interest."

Asked about the slump in the trade, the official, who preferred anonymity, said the trade between the two countries is not that significant for Bangladesh.

AL won't be allowed

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repented or apologised for this?" Shafiqul Alam told a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy.

"Have Awami League men said, 'We do not support the killings carried out by Hasina'? We want leadership with a clean image. I don't see it. Rather, many are lying and spreading rumors and propaganda," he said.

Shafiqul also wrote on Facebook, "Unless AL apologises for these massacres, killings and blatant corruption and until its tainted leaders and activists submit to justice system and they are purged and tried over their crimes -- and until AL separates itself from its current leadership and its Fascist ideology, there is no way it will be allowed to hold protests."

The interim government will not allow any attempt to push the country towards violence, he wrote.

"Since it took over in early August, the Interim Government has not stopped or banned any lawful protests. We believe in freedom of assembly and freedom of association. One report this morning said at least 136 protests took place alone in Dhaka in the past five and a half months. Some of these protests triggered massive

traffic congestion. Yet, the IG [inspector general of police] has never imposed any restrictions on the protests.

"But should we allow the Fascist Awami League party to hold protests? The video footage of July and August clearly show that AL party activists took part in the killings of peaceful protesters who included young students and minor children. The party leadership headed by Sheikh Hasina is responsible for the massacres, murders and mayhem during the July mass uprising."

He further said, Hasina established a kleptocracy and murderous regime. Under her watch, 234 billion dollars were siphoned off by her cronies, according to an independent panel. Her family is now being investigated for making billions of dollars from corrupt deals, he wrote.

He added that no country allowed a bunch of killers and corrupt gangs to make a comeback. "No country allows a reset without accountability. The interim government represents the will of the Bangladeshi people who will react to the protest by the killers. We will not allow any attempts to push the country into violence. Anyone [who] dares to hold illegal protests under the AL banner will face the full power of the law."

Implementing

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increase food production, expand industrialisation, and ensure economic freedom.

"So, I think the revenge of the leaders and activists of the BNP will be successful on the day we are able to implement the 31-point outline. Only on that day will we succeed in taking revenge on the undemocratic and evil forces who want to subdue Bangladesh," he observed.

The BNP leader said they would begin implementing the 31-point proposal if they come to power, and it would be an ongoing process. "We will make it even better gradually."

He said many people believe the BNP has the brightest prospect of running the country by winning the next election.

Tarique, however, said BNP leaders and activists at all levels must prepare themselves and change their mentality to bring about a positive change in the country.

The BNP leader warned that various quarters are preparing to malign the BNP and are spreading propaganda against the party both locally and internationally. "We'll face them politically."

"But it's the responsibility of all BNP leaders and activists to ensure that the people keep their trust in the BNP. We must change our mindset and be confident that we'll be able to bring about change," Tarique said.

Tarique also responded to various questions from the participants at the workshops.

In response to a question, he said that if the party returns to power, it will take steps to ensure the rights of the physically challenged individuals and provide them with a comfortable life.

The BNP leader said the party plans to arrange health camps soon at the divisional level to provide necessary treatment to people with disabilities.

Tarique said it also plans to establish a mechanism to ensure fair prices for farmers' produce and maintain a balance between demand and supply by dismantling the syndicates.

"Action will be taken against market syndicates if they indulge in any foul play."

He stressed the importance of increasing soybean production in Bangladesh to reduce dependency on foreign countries for edible oil.

Tarique also underscored the need for addressing the problems in the banking sector and restoring public confidence in it, as state reforms will be difficult without strengthening the financial sector.

Bangladesh's tone

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demand stricter measures to curb drug trafficking."

The meeting also discussed India's construction of barbed wire fences within 150 yards of the zero line -- a move that requires mutual consent from both countries.

"Any development within this zone must be approved by both countries. We'll ensure this principle is upheld," the adviser said.

Bangladesh will push for discussions on river water-sharing, seeking fair implementations of existing treaties.

Jahangir said industrial waste from India enters Bangladesh through Agartala, violating the environmental agreement between the two countries.

"Our agreement mentions Effluent Treatment Plants and Sewage Treatment Plants, but it needs to be explicitly stated in the treaty. We'll raise this issue during the discussions."

The meeting at the Secretariat, chaired by the home adviser, was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Home Affairs Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui, and senior officials from the home ministry.

Among other issues at the BGB-BSF conference will be illegal infiltration and human trafficking.

Jahangir pointed out disputes in Feni's Muhuri Char, where issues with border demarcation remain unresolved.

Another key agenda point will be misinformation spread by the Indian media regarding Bangladesh.

"We'll discuss how to prevent false narratives that create unnecessary tensions between the two nations."

Bangladesh will also push for the effective implementation of the Coordinated Border Management Plan to enhance border security and dispute resolution.

Since 1974, Bangladesh and India have signed four key border agreements, including the Land Boundary Agreement (1974); Land Boundary Agreement Protocol (exchange of enclaves/disposal of disputed land) (2011); the Joint India-Bangladesh Guideline for Border Authorities (1975); and the Coordinated Border Management Plan (2011).

Jahangir stated that Bangladesh will seek fairer implementation of agreements, particularly with the 2011 Land Boundary Agreement Protocol, which he said was "imbalanced."

"There are major issues within the 2011 agreement. It should've been structured differently. We've already communicated our concerns to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

Reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to border security and national interests, he added, "We're determined to protect our borders and secure the rights of our people. All discussions will prioritise Bangladesh's sovereignty and well-being."

Evaly's Rassel

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Earlier, the prosecution sought the highest punishment mentioned in the existing law for the couple.

During the trial, the court recorded statements of two prosecution witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

On February 4 last year, Taufiq Mahmud, a customer, filed a case against the couple for misappropriating Tk 14.10 lakh from him.

According to the case statement, Evaly sold various products on different media using "eye-catching advertisements".

Responding to one of the ads, Taufiq ordered a motorbike on March 20, 2021 and paid Tk 2,45,000 for it. On April 3, he ordered two more motorbikes and paid Tk 5,90,000 for those. However, the authorities failed to deliver the three bikes within the stipulated time of 45 days.

Taufiq then contacted Evaly's Dhanmondi office and the authorities concerned issued two cheques as reimbursement. However, the bank requested not to deposit the cheques on the specified date as there was "not enough money".

As none of his money was returned, he sent a legal notice to Evaly on January 28 asking it to return his money within 15 days. That too was not complied with.

Binimoy linked

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"We are now working to replace it [Binimoy] with a new platform under the control of Bangladesh Bank. We are in discussions with the Gates Foundation, which has an internationally applied application already launched in 15 countries. We plan to test and implement it quickly," the BB governor said.

Speaking about problems in tax policy, he said officials of the National Board of Revenue function like a government within a government, with the authority to register taxpayers, assign taxes, impose penalties, and even oversee appeals through their own colleagues.

This leaves no way to circumvent their control, often resulting in the victimisation of taxpayers, he said.

Mansur also said he hoped the reforms in the political and other sectors would bring about the necessary checks and balances, and accountability. "This is the only way to ensure good governance in the country."

NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan said tax rates would be made reasonable in the upcoming budget, which he said would not be an ambitious one.

Import duties will also be adjusted accordingly, and the tax net will be expanded wherever there is potential for revenue collection, according to the

NBR boss.

"Businesses will not be pressured, and the VAT rates will be reduced if necessary," he said, adding, "Taxes can be a pain for the payers, but they should not be killed by it."

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear, said the government must lower the revenue collection target by reducing its expenditure.

"We cannot continue spending more than our income throughout our lives while constantly overburdening the same people for revenue. This is not sustainable," he said.

Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of Mastercard in Bangladesh, said the government should introduce incentives for digital payments.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive director of PRAN-RFL Group, discussed the effects of high duties and taxes on products like juices and biscuits.

Mashrur Arefin, CEO of City Bank, said a group embezzled money from the bank, and the Corporate Social Responsibility funds of the bank were misused by the Shuchona Foundation and the Centre for Research and Information (CRI). Hasina's daughter, Saima Wazed Putul, is the founder of Shuchona while CRI was the Awami League's research wing.