

WHAT'S THE HAPS

'Pet Carnival with Live Music'



Merging entertainment with a cause, the *Pet Carnival with Live Music* is set to take place at the capital's Mirpur area. It promises a blend of music and entertainment, aiming to raise awareness about responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. The line up of musicians includes popular band Shironamhin and renowned singer and actor Tahsan Khan.

Date: Tuesday | February 11

Time: 2pm to 10pm

Venue: National Govt Primary School, Mirpur-2

Jaya elated as 'Putulnacher Itikatha' felicitated at IFFR

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

On February 6, *Putulnacher Itikatha* made its world premiere at the prestigious International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).

Jaya Ahsan, along with the film's team, attended the event in person. Draped in an elegant green embroidered saree, she graced the red carpet with poise and radiance, capturing the attention of the audience and media alike.

In an interview with The Daily Star over the phone from the Netherlands, the actress shared her excitement about the reception of the film, saying, "We had a wonderful turnout at the festival. Everybody loved the film and they expressed it to us with immense praise. I am overwhelmed to be at such a prestigious film festival."

Addressing the film's achievement in the competition, she said, "*Putulnacher Itikatha* has competed in the



Film Festival."

The film is set to have three screenings at the festival, allowing more international viewers the chance to watch the film.

In *Putulnacher Itikatha*, Jaya Ahsan portrays the character of Kushum. Reflecting on her role, she shared, "*Putulnacher Itikatha* is one of my favourite novels. After *Padma Nadir Majhi*, this is one of Manik Bandopadhyay's most widely read works. It is a powerful piece of literature, and I feel honoured to have played the role of Kushum in this remarkable story."

Jaya Ahsan also took a moment to convey her admiration for director Suman Mukhopadhyay, saying, "He has made this film with great care. We have poured our hearts into our performances with utmost dedication and love. The result is a truly wonderful film, and the audience here has embraced it wholeheartedly."

main competition (Big Screen Competition), which is a huge achievement. It is the only Bengali-language film in the primary competition at a prestigious festival like the Rotterdam International

Vikings' guitarist signs with Wampler Pedals as first South Asian artiste



Faruque Hossain, popularly known as Shuvo and the lead guitarist of the Bangladeshi band Vikings, has achieved a trailblazing milestone by becoming the first South Asian artiste to be endorsed by Wampler Pedals. This recognition underscores his impressive musical talent and places Bangladesh on the global music map.

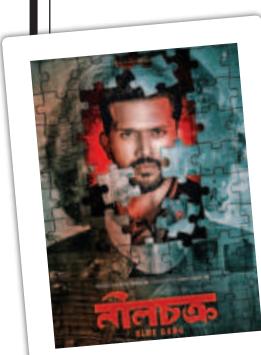
Wampler Pedals, a renowned boutique manufacturer of guitar effects pedals, is based in Martinsville, Indiana, USA. According to the company, Shuvo's ability to deliver deeply soulful and electrifying performances aligns perfectly with Wampler's mission of enhancing musicians' artistry.

By becoming an official artiste of Wampler Pedals, Faruque joins a prestigious group of musicians, including Brad Paisley and Brent Mason.

'Neelchokro' earns spot at Golden State Film Festival

Bangladeshi film *Neelchokro (Blue Circle)* has been officially selected for the Foreign Language category at the eighth Golden State Film Festival 2025, set to take place in Los Angeles from February 14 to 21.

The film will have its world premiere at the festival. Director Mithu Khan told The Daily Star that the English dubbed version of *Neelchokro* has been completed.



Starring Arifin Shuvoo, the film also features Monder Chakraborty, Priyonee Urbee, and Fazlur Rahman Babu, among others. Notably, it marks the big-screen debut of musician Balam. Previously, *Neelchokro* had a special premiere at the American Film Market in Las Vegas for buyers and distributors.

Music icons to unite to honour Shafin Ahmed's legacy

A tribute concert titled *Shafin Ahmed: Echoes of a Legend*



has been organised to honour the late band icon Shafin Ahmed. Scheduled for February 13 at Aloki in Tejgaon, Dhaka, the event will feature performances by Miles, Feedback, Dalchhut, Artcell, AvoidRafa, and rapper Ozzy.

The legendary musician had travelled to the United States last year but fell ill before a concert in Virginia on July 20. After two days on life support, he passed away on July 24. Nearly seven months since his passing, the concert aims to celebrate his legacy.

Organised by Velvet Events, tickets are available on Get Set Rock, priced at Tk 3,000 (VIP) and Tk 1,500 (Regular). Gates will open at 6pm, while the concert is scheduled to begin at 9pm.

NEWS

Pak crackdown on Weekly Sangram

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book "Bhasha andolan: Teknaf to Tetulia," the student community in Feni played an important role in the 1948 movement, with Kobbad Ahmed, the general secretary of the Feni College Student Union, at the forefront. Local political leaders Shamsul Haque Chowdhury and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury were also instrumental in mobilising student support.

Besides, the now late eminent journalist ABM Musa, then a student at Feni College, actively participated in the movement, and Khawaja Ahmed, the editor of the local newspaper "Weekly Sangram," played a crucial role in raising public awareness.

March 11, 1948, was an important day in the nationwide movement. On this day, Feni saw a wave of protests, with students organising strikes, demonstrations, and rallies. The movement gained significant momentum, with students of Feni College spreading the message of resistance throughout the region.

However, the dissemination of information and activism came at a cost. "Weekly Sangram," published by Sujat Press in Feni, faced administrative harassment due to its critical stance and support for the language movement. In 1950, the Pakistani administration banned the newspaper, and in October of the

same year, its editor, Khawaja Ahmed, was arrested under the Public Safety Act.

While the 1948 movement had a limited impact on Noakhali town, the events of 1952 ignited a fierce wave of protest. The declaration of Urdu as the sole state language by Pakistan Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin on January 27, 1952, provoked widespread outrage among the people of Noakhali.

As per Ahmed Rafiq's book, on February 4, 1952, students from Chaumuhani Vidyamandir and other schools organised a strike and held a meeting that evolved into a public gathering.

Meanwhile, in Feni, the All-Party State Language Action Committee, led by Ziauddin Ahmed, the general secretary of the Feni College Student Union, spearheaded the movement.

On February 21, the main day of protest, a complete shutdown was observed in Majidpur town, the administrative centre of Noakhali.

Hundreds of students marched through the town and held a rally in front of the staff quarters of the district administration, writes Ahmed Rafiq.

After receiving the news of student killings in Dhaka on February 21, classes were boycotted and businesses were closed. Spontaneous protests

erupted throughout the town.

In the afternoon, a student-public meeting was held at the premises of Sonamuri High School. The Bar Association of Noakhali also convened a meeting to condemn the police firing and demand justice for the martyrs.

In Feni, the students also took to the streets, chanting slogans like "We want Bangla as the state language!"

The police responded with brutality, resorting to baton charges and arresting student leaders, including Ziauddin Ahmed, Zulfikar Haider Chowdhury, Lutful Rahman, Farman Ullah, and Shamsul Huda, Ahmed Rafiq writes.

The following day, February 22, a complete hartal was observed in Noakhali.

The movement, while facing repression from the authorities, continued to gain momentum, spreading beyond the town of Noakhali to encompass surrounding areas.

Despite facing numerous challenges, the people of Noakhali, particularly the students of Feni, stood united in their demand for the right to the mother language, contributing significantly to the struggle for Bangla as the state language.

Translated and edited by Subrata Roy.

Trump revokes Biden's security clearance

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and ending his daily intelligence briefings.

"JOE, YOU'RE FIRED," he added in all caps.

US presidents are traditionally given the right to receive intelligence briefings even after they step down.

Trump also stepped up his assault on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which distributes humanitarian aid globally.

"THE CORRUPTION IS AT LEVELS RARELY SEEN BEFORE. CLOSE IT DOWN!" he wrote on his Truth Social app about USAID, without offering evidence.

USAID has received the most concentrated fire since Trump launched a crusade led by Musk -- the world's richest person -- to downsize or dismantle swaths of the US government.

On Friday, Musk -- who along with Trump has spread blatantly false information about USAID's finances -- reposted photos of the agency's signage being removed from its Washington headquarters.

The Trump administration has frozen foreign aid, ordered thousands of internationally-based staff to return to the United States, and begun slashing the USAID headcount of 10,000 employees to around only 300. Labour unions are challenging the legality of the onslaught. A federal judge on Friday ordered a pause to the administration's plan to put 2,200 USAID workers on paid leave by the weekend.

Democrats say it would be unconstitutional for Trump to shut down government agencies without the legislature's green light.

The United States' current budget allocates about \$70 billion for international assistance, a tiny fraction of overall spending.

But it gets a big bang for its buck. USAID alone runs health and emergency programmes in around 120 countries, including in the world's poorest regions, boosting Washington's battle for influence against rivals such as China.

"We are witnessing one of the worst and most costly foreign policy blunders in US history," Samantha Power, the USAID chief under former president Joe Biden, wrote in a scathing New York Times opinion piece.

Baltic nations decouple from Russia power grid

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mode" for about 24 hours to test their frequency, or power levels, according to Lithuania's state-run grid operator Litgrid.

"We need to carry out some tests to assure Europe that we are a stable energy system," Litgrid head Rokas Masilius had said last month.

"We'll switch power stations on and off, observe how the frequency fluctuates and assess our ability to control it."

The states will then integrate into the European power grid via Poland.

Authorities have warned of potential risks linked to the change.

"Various short-term risks are possible, such as kinetic operations against critical infrastructure, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns," Lithuania's state security department told AFP.

Poland's power grid operator PSE had said it would use helicopters and drones to patrol the connection with Lithuania.

Lithuanian President Edgars Rinkевичs told LTV1 the countries could not "rule out possible provocations".

In Estonia, police and volunteer defence corps will man critical electrical infrastructure until next weekend because of the risk of sabotage.

Several undersea telecom and power cables have been severed in the Baltic Sea in recent months. Some experts and politicians have accused Russia of waging a hybrid war, an allegation Moscow denies.

A total of 1.6 billion euros (\$1.7

billion) -- mostly EU funds -- have been invested in the synchronisation project across the Baltic states and Poland.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda was sure the switch would go smoothly, telling reporters: "People won't feel it, either in terms of their bills or any inconvenience."

Estonia's climate ministry urged everyone to carry on as usual as "the more regular and predictable the behaviour... the easier it is to manage the power grid".

But some consumers worried about power cuts and home improvement stores in Estonia had noted a sharp increase in sales of generators.

After the Baltic decoupling, the energy system in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad will lose its grid connection to mainland Russia.

Kaliningrad has been building up power generation capacity for years and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed all concerns.

Asked about the cut-off last week, he said: "We have taken all measures to ensure the uninterrupted reliable operation of our unified energy system."

25 cadres reject reform body's proposals

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quota for the admin cadre and the remainder for the other 25 cadres.

"We won't accept any quota in deputy secretary promotions. This proposal must be revised to ensure a 100 percent open competition for all cadres."

The council also issued an ultimatum, demanding that the dismissal orders for officials from different cadres over social media comments be withdrawn.

They said if these "unjust dismissal orders" are not withdrawn within a week, all cadre officials under the council will be compelled to go on work abstention and take further action.

It also said that despite similar allegations surfacing against the administration cadre, the public administration ministry has not yet taken any action.

Tk 2,500 fine for speeding from February 21

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The expressway authorities have recorded an average of over 400 incidents of speeding (above 100 km/h) each month, said another official.

At least 10 major accidents have occurred since the expressway opened, Hasib said.

"Fortunately, none have resulted in fatalities. However, if speeding continues, casualties are inevitable. That's why we told DMP that video-based case filing should begin."

The expressway authority will provide the DMP with a video link to monitor the footage from their office, Hasib said.

Currently, police are filing cases against speeding vehicles on the elevated expressway and Purbachal Expressway using speed guns, Md Sarwar, additional commissioner (traffic) of DMP, told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, speed guns cannot detect the number plates of vehicles that are excessively speeding.

In some cases, the vehicles are out of reach by the time the police check their speed and hence the move towards video-based case filing.

The expressway authorities will set up a video link at the Gulshan Traffic Division office by February 20, he said, adding that case filing is

expected to begin the following day.

The DMP is connected to the vehicle database of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and will file cases by observing the number plates of speeding vehicles.

The notice of the case will be sent to the address listed in the database of the vehicle owner, he said. If the fine is not paid within the deadline, a warrant will be issued, he added.

Built under a public private partnership model, the country's first elevated expressway was partially opened to traffic in September 2023.

Last month, an average of 66,000 vehicles used the expressway per day.

BJP returns

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who helmed BJP's poll campaign, termed BJP's victory in Delhi as a "historic mandate" and a "triumph of development and good governance." He vowed to leave no stone unturned in developing Delhi and improving the overall quality of life for the people.

Senior AAP leader incumbent chief minister Atishi, who replaced Kejriwal following the latter's imprisonment in graft cases last year, won against senior BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri in the Kalkaji constituency.