

Shithi Saha collaborates with Salim Merchant for Valentine's Day

Singer Shithi Saha has collaborated with famed Indian singer and composer Salim Merchant for this upcoming Valentine's Day. Their project marks the first Bengali song in Salim's career.

This song titled *Bristi Bilash* is set for release on February 14 on YouTube.

Shithi Saha delivered the official announcement through her Facebook page. The music video of the song is set to feature both Shithi and Salim. However, *Bristi Bilash* was recorded in India.

The music has been composed by renowned music composer Sajid Sarkar, while the lyrics have been penned by prominent lyricist Shomeshwar Oli.

Last month, Shithi Saha notably released the song *Eka Ghor Amar* with renowned singer-actor Tahsan Khan.



'BANDHOB' to hit theatres this month



Bandhob, produced by Anupam Kotha Chittra and directed by Sujan Barua, is all set to hit theatres nationwide on International Mother Language Day, February 21. The movie was given its release date after successfully passing its censor certification.

Bandhob tells the poignant life story of a child found in a dumpster, abandoned with no known birth identity. It explores themes of identity, survival, and the human condition.

Mou Khan plays the central role, alongside Gazi Rakayet, Joy Raj, Habib Khan, and others in pivotal roles.

Producer Anup Barua explained that **Bandhob**'s release was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the wait, he prioritised *Chaya Brikhho*'s release due to receiving funds from the government for it. Now, with circumstances changed, he feels it's the right time for **Bandhob** to premiere.

Vicky Zahed's 'Neel Shukh' to premiere on Binge

What happens when love turns into obsession? When someone you cherish begins to drift away, do you let them go, or does your world spiral into chaos? These questions lie at the heart of Vicky Zahed's upcoming psychological love story, *Neel Shukh*, set to premiere on Binge on February 18.

The recently released trailer of the web film offers a glimpse into the intense love story of Orpa (Mehazabien Chowdhury) and Maruf (Farrukh Ahmed Rehan), capturing moments of romance, heartbreak, and an unsettling psychological undercurrent.

Vicky Zahed, known for his signature blend of romance and psychological horror, is now all set to present *Neel Shukh*. As the story unfolds, it questions the fine line between love and obsession, devotion and destruction.



'Room Number 2011' to premiere online today

On October 7, 2019, Buet student Abrar Fahad tragically lost his life after a brutal assault, an incident that stirred nationwide outrage. Inspired by Abrar's story, Sheikh Jisan Ahmed created the short film *Room Number 2011*.

The film has already been screened in the United States and is gaining attention from international audiences. In Bangladesh, it has been shown in several theatres, including Monihar in Jessore, and on multiple university campuses, including Jahangirnagar University.

To make the film accessible to Bangladeshi audiences, Aktiful, a social enterprise founded by Bangladeshi American expatriates, has announced that *Room Number 2011* will be released on their YouTube channel today.

Drake surprises Melbourne concertgoers, gives away \$45,000

Last Sunday, Drake was seen handing out thousands of dollars to fans at his Melbourne concert, which is a part of the *Anita Max Win* tour.

When the 38 year-old rapper spotted a woman in the crowd holding a sign that read, "Adonis for President," a reference to his seven-year-old son, he addressed the fan, saying,

"You're showing a lot of love to my son, so on behalf of me and Adonis, we're giving you \$25,000."

Drake spotted another sign saying, "Kiss me, it's my birthday." While he declined the request, he made the fan's night by gifting them \$20,000 for a birthday dinner with their friends.

This act of kindness is just one of many from the Canadian superstar.



Samageet Basanta Utsab

The **Samageet Spring Festival 1431** will celebrate the spirit of spring with festive performances by Kafil Ahmed, Krishnokoli, Leela, Shayan, Indigenous band Rere, and youth band Gangaloring, among others. Honouring economist Anu Muhammad for his contributions to protecting Bangladesh's natural resources, the event will also feature a discussion with writer Nurul Kabir.

Date: Friday | February 14

Time: 9am onwards

Venue: Bottola, Dhaka University

NEWS

Teacher steps down

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Pakistan Public Service exams.

Farid then stepped down in protest against the rebuke. The people across the country spoke out in his support while protest processions and rallies were held in Cox's Bazar, according to M Abdul Alim's book *Bhasha Andolan Kosh Part I*.

On January 6, 1948, Farid joined rallies in Cox's Bazar and delivered speeches demanding Bangla as a state language. He also held meetings with students and progressive political leaders.

On March 11, a general strike for Bangla as a state language was observed spontaneously at Ramu, Cox's Bazar. School and college students joined a rally, where student leaders Obaidul Haque, Afsar Kamal Chowdhury, Rasik Chandra Barua, Zaker Ahmed and several others delivered speeches.

In 1952, a local Rashtrobhasha Sangram Parishad was formed ahead of February 21, the date of the main programme announced centrally from Dhaka.

Ahmed Rafiq wrote in his book *Bhasha Andolan: Teknaf Theke Tetulia* that a general strike was observed in Cox's Bazar on February 21. The educational



Cox's Bazar Central Shaheed Minar

institutions staged a boycott of classes. The local administration did not obstruct the people from protests since Mahakuma Administrator Mouli Gofuruzzaman Chowdhury supported the Language Movement.

The news of the deaths of student protesters in police firing in Dhaka reached Cox's Bazar that night. When Khaled Mosharraf, a Liberation War sector commander who was a 10th grader at that time, learnt about the killings later, he organised his classmates. A procession of students and people led by Khaled and Abdul Mabud Ekhlasi marched the main roads of the town.

After the procession, the protesters held a rally at Baharchhara where

Khaled and other student leaders also spoke.

Another unscheduled rally was held at Bat Tala in the town on February 22, as the students of Chakaria High School launched a strike. Around 250 students also brought out a protest procession.

On February 23, the beach town of Cox's Bazar turned into a town of procession. The protesters chanted the slogan "Rashtrobhasha Bangla Chai (We want Bangla as a state language)". After the processions, they joined a rally outside the Public Library.

At Ramu's Khizir, high school students staged a boycott of classes. Students of Mithachhari and Chakaria high schools also brought out protest processions.

On February 25, students of Eidgaon High School enforced a strike. They also brought out a procession and held a rally presided over by student leader Nurul Azim Chowdhury.

As the news of the killings of students in Dhaka reached remote Teknaf and Ukhia on February 25, a Rashtrobhasha Sangram Parishad was formed there. School students held protest marches in the remote areas on February 26 and 27.

Bangladesh asks for full power supply

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shortage. This led to the shutdown of one unit on November 1, resulting in the plant operating at about 42 percent capacity.

Subsequently, Bangladesh told Adani to keep supplying only half the power.

The state-run Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) said it had been paying \$85 million a month to Adani to clear outstanding dues and has now told the company to resume supply from the second unit.

"As per our requirement today, they have planned to synchronise the second unit, but due to the high vibration, it didn't happen," BPDB Chairperson Md Rezaul Karim told Reuters, referring to some technical problems that stopped the unit from restarting on Monday.

"Right now, we are making a payment of \$85 million per month. We are trying to pay more, and our intention is to reduce the overdue. Now there is no big issue with Adani."

BPDB and Adani officials were due

to meet virtually yesterday following another meeting recently to work out various issues between them, said a source with direct knowledge of the matter who did not want to be named as he was not authorised to talk to the media.

An Adani Power spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In December, an Adani source said BPDB owed the company about \$900 million, while Karim said at the time the amount was only about \$650 million.

The pricing dispute revolves around how power tariffs are calculated, with the 2017 agreement pricing off an average of two indexes. Adani's power costs Bangladesh about 55 percent more than the average of all Indian power sold to Dhaka, Reuters has reported.

A Bangladeshi court has ordered an examination of the contract with Adani by a committee of experts, with results expected this month. This could potentially lead to contract renegotiations.

Last year, Bangladesh's interim

government accused Adani of breaching the power purchase agreement by withholding tax benefits that the Jharkhand plant received from New Delhi, Reuters reported in December citing documents.

Bangladesh officials also said they were reviewing the contract.

A spokesperson for Adani told Reuters at the time that it had upheld all contractual obligations with Bangladesh and had no indication Dhaka was reviewing the contract.

Karim has not replied to Reuters' questions on whether the two sides have resolved their differences.

In November, US prosecutors indicted Adani Group founder Gautam Adani and seven other executives for their alleged role in a \$265 million bribery scheme in India. Adani Group has called the US allegations "baseless".

In September, the Bangladesh government appointed a panel of experts to examine major energy deals signed by Hasina, who fled to New Delhi in August after deadly student-led protests.

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Last year, Bangladesh's interim

It's assault on freedom

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media, particularly on Facebook.

"This mob attack is a serious assault on freedom of expression. Despite the presence of armed security forces, the stall was harassed, and there were even threats to set it on fire. This clearly demonstrates that this extremist group is opposed to the fundamental human rights and freedom of expression of the country's people," the statement read.

This heinous attack is not an isolated incident, it added.

The citizens firmly demanded the immediate arrest of all perpetrators involved in the attack, directly and indirectly, and called for stronger security measures at the book fair.

"It is part of a continuous pattern of violence - from the brutal attack on poet Humayun Azad in 2004 and the murders of writer Avijit Roy and publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan in 2015 to the recent destruction of shrines, bans on women playing football, and ultimatums to rename Begum Rokeya University," the statement said.

"The state must strictly enforce the law without compromise to prevent such violent and illegal activities. If these basic demands are not met, the current director general of Bangla Academy and other responsible persons must be held accountable for this failure," it added.

Former Jahangirnagar University Prof Anu Muhammad, Dhaka University teacher Samina Luthfa, anthropologist Nasrin Khandaker, Rajshahi University teacher Golam Sarwar, filmmaker and teacher Laboni Ashrafi, JU teacher Masud Imran Mannu, Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, physician Harun Ur Rashid, writer and researcher Kallol Mostafa, and lawyer Manjur Al Matin are among the signatories.

In another statement signed by 205 activists, the Network for Democratic Bangladesh said the authorities failed to provide any security for the stall, and both the Bangla Academy and the government bear the responsibility for this failure.

They also urged the authorities to strengthen the security of the book fair and the publishing industry to prevent fascist attacks and to ensure unrestricted freedom for publishing all kinds of books and opinions.

PROBE LAUNCHED

The Bangla Academy formed a seven-member committee that will submit

a report within three working days on whether the stall will be reopened or not, said Dr Selim Reza, secretary of the academy.

He said the stall was closed by the police, not the academy.

The stall has been at the centre of social media discussion since Sunday when multiple posts called for the demolition of the stall for selling exiled writer Taslima's book.

Sabyasachi publisher Shatabdi Vabo confronted an angry crowd that gathered outside the stall on Monday evening.

Khalid Monsur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said the publisher was detained during the incident and later released under his family's custody the same night.

Asked when the stall would be allowed to reopen, he said the academy would take the decision.

Shatabdi's wife Mehran Sanjana told The Daily Star yesterday that she still had security concerns. She claimed they had earlier informed the law enforcers about the threats. She also said she was unaware of her husband's whereabouts.

NO TASLIMA BOOK

Yesterday, Sabyasachi's stall was covered with tarpaulin. This correspondent visited the stalls of several other publishers of Taslima's books but found no one was selling those at the fair.

The salespeople said the books were either sold out or not reprinted for this year's fair.

Ankur published at least six books of Taslima, including "Ka", "Utol Hawa", and "Sei Sob Andhokar". While talking to this correspondent, the book sellers at the stall said they did not bring any of the books this year. One of them said the books were out of print for a long time.

An Agamee Prakashani employee said all of Taslima's books were out of stock.

Its owner, Osman Gani, said the books would be available later but did not specify the time.

He condemned the attack on Sabyasachi's stall. "The incident was against the freedom of thought and expression."

"The chief adviser and another adviser said such mob culture would be controlled with an iron hand. We want to see the implementation of these words, and we are expecting that no such incidents will happen in the future," he added.

N Korea has given Russia 200 long-range artillery pieces: Seoul

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has given Russia 200 long-range artillery pieces, a South Korean defence ministry official told AFP yesterday, as Moscow and Pyongyang deepen their military ties.

The North has given Moscow "some 11,000 troops, missiles, 200 pieces of long-range artillery and a substantial amount of ammunition," the South Korean official said.

North Korea could "additionally supply troops, weapons and ammunition going forward", said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Seoul, Kyiv and Washington have all said that North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia last year to help the Kremlin in its war against Ukraine.

Ukraine previously said it had captured or killed several North Korean soldiers in Kursk.

Yunus leaves for UAE today

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opportunity to present Bangladesh's perspectives on global challenges and international issues," foreign ministry spokesperson Mohammad Rafiqul Alam told the media on Sunday.