

FESTIVE FILMS

Four at the forefront

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Although Eid-ul-Fitr is still a little while away, audiences are ardently anticipating the films scheduled for release during the festive season.

This year, fans can expect an intense showdown between four popular stars. Like every year, a Shakib Khan starrer will hit theatres this Eid, but this time he'll be competing against three other popular actors, setting the stage for an exciting cinematic clash.

Shakib Khan's fans are in for a treat as they will get to witness the superstar in a fierce role in Mehedi Hassan Hridoy's action-packed directorial *Borbaad*.

The filming of *Borbaad* took place in Mumbai, with Idris Paul playing the lead opposite him and veteran actor Mamanur Rashid taking on a significant role, among several others.

Earlier in 2023, Shakib Khan and Afran Nisho competed with their respective Eid films, sparking heated debates among their fans on social media. At that time, Nisho made his film debut with *Surongo*. This Eid, he is set to return as the lead in a new film, once again competing against Shakib Khan's release.

Afran Nisho's upcoming film *Daagi*, directed by Shihab Shaheen, is slated for release this year. Following *Surongo*, Nisho has reunited with

Tama Mirza for this project, alongside the addition of Sunerah Binte Kamal. With anticipation running high among his fans, excitement is building for Eid, when audiences will choose which film captures their interest the most.

Siam Ahmed, known for his captivating charm and swoon-worthy smile, is set to delight his fans with a blend of romance and high-energy action in his upcoming film *Jongli*. The film's posters have already created a buzz online, and excitement soared even higher with the release of its first song, *Jonon Jonom*.

In *Jongli*, Siam Ahmed stars alongside Shobnom Yesmin Bubly, with Prarthana Fardin Dighi also playing a significant role. The film promises an action-packed and thrilling experience.

Shajal Noor, who impressed everyone with his performance in *Jinn*, will once again be seen in the franchise's *Jinn 3* opposite Nusrat Faria. Directed by Kamruzzaman Roman, the shooting is underway, and the film is set to compete with other releases this Eid.

With so many prominent stars sharing the limelight, the big question is: How intense will the on-screen rivalry between the four leading actors be this Eid? Additionally, what other films will be gracing the theatres?



PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED



Bangladeshi artistes to honour Language Movement at Unesco event in Paris

A group of Bangladeshi musicians is set to perform at Unesco headquarters in Paris for the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, a key event highlighted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Ekushey February was officially acknowledged as International Mother Language Day by Unesco in 1999, and it has been observed in United Nations member states since February 21, 2000. This year marks the silver jubilee of this significant recognition.

The two-day event will occur on today and February 21, with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus addressing the inauguration virtually as the guest of honour.

On February 18, Islam Uddin Palakar, rapper Shezan, Shunno's Emil, F Minor, Parsha Mahjabeen, Tuntun Baul, Jalal, Mithun Chakra, and Jahid Nirob departed from Dhaka, for Paris, to attend the International Mother Language Day silver jubilee celebrations.

'Shastriya Sangeet O Nritya Utsab' commences at Shilpakala

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) is hosting a four day *Shastriya Sangeet O Nritya Utsab* to promote classical music and dance.

Organised by the Academy's Music, Dance, and Recitation Department, the event began yesterday and will continue today, then February 23, and 24 at the National Art Gallery auditorium, with programmes starting at 5pm each day.

The opening ceremony features a group dance titled *Shubhechchha O Bhalobasha*, directed by Snata Shahrin.

Performers include vocalists Kabyashree Ray Chowdhury and Ali FM Rezwan, along with various classical dance and music artistes like Jubair



Hossain Naim, Warda Rehab, Priyanka Sarkar, and Anil Kumar Saha, among others.

The free-of-charge event is open to all.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Melody of Mavericks'

Melody of Mavericks is set to be an exceptional five concert, bringing together renowned artistes and bands, including Bappa Mazumder, Meghdol, Kaakaal, and others for a night of captivating performances. The event being held at the picturesque Hatirjheel Amphitheatre with stunning stage designs and a diverse mix of musical genres, will deliver an unforgettable experience filled with melody, rhythm, and vibrancy.

DATE: THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 20

TIME: 3PM-10PM

VENUE: HATIRJHEEL AMPHITHEATER



J-Hope donates 200 million won to children's hospital

BTS member J-Hope recently celebrated his birthday with a philanthropic act, donating 200 million won to Asian Medical Center (AMC) in Seoul. Committed to supporting children in need, he expressed hope that his contribution would aid their treatment and bring them a brighter future.

Grateful for his fans' (Army's) unwavering support, J-Hope shared, "I want to thank you once again. It means a lot to continue making donations annually, starting with my birthday this year."

This is not his first act of generosity—he previously donated 100 million won to AMC in 2022.

Meanwhile, J-Hope is preparing for his *Hope on the Stage* tour, set to begin on February 28 at KSPO Dome in Seoul, before travelling to multiple cities worldwide.



NEWS

Bangladeshi climate

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With livelihoods collapsing, migration has skyrocketed.

Around 84 percent of the families have moved to cities like Dhaka, Khulna, and Chattogram since 2011 in search of work -- often in exploitative industries.

Another 88 percent have sent relatives abroad, mostly to Gulf nations, where many face extreme working conditions.

The study further found that households facing higher climate risks are 161 percent more likely to migrate internally and 214 percent more likely to migrate internationally -- highlighting the critical role of climate induced shocks in driving distress migration.

Households with better education and larger landholdings are 356 percent more likely to migrate internationally, reflecting the dual nature of migration as both a coping and adaptive strategy, the report adds.

Feb 21 gets its first poem in port city

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shekhane ami kadte ashini..." (Those who gave their lives here, beneath the towering Krishnachura of Ramna, where, like sparks of fire, countless stains of blood glow here and there, I have not come here to weep.)

These powerful words, penned by Mahbub-ul-Alam in Chattogram, were triggered by the events of February 21, 1952—making it the first poem written about the historic and tragic day.

However, like other districts, Chattogram witnessed an extensive campaign leading up to March 11, 1948, which had been set as the main day of the movement.

On that day, a complete shutdown was observed across the district, with students striking and boycotting classes.

Three days later, the district administration imposed Section 144, banning all gatherings for a week in an attempt to suppress the movement.

During this period, leaders from the Communist Party and the Chattogram faction of the Chhatra Federation held a secret meeting, leading to the formation of the Muliiti Birodi Sangram Parishad (Anti Principle Struggle Committee), with Rafiquddin Siddique as convener and Mahbub-ul-Alam Chowdhury as joint convener.

The committee's stance was clear: if Bangla was not recognised as a state language, Constituent Assembly members AK Khan and Noor Ahmed would resign.

On March 21 and 24, student



Chattogram Central Shaheed Minar

protests erupted in Chattogram after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, during a speech in Dhaka, declared Urdu to be the sole state language of Pakistan.

In 1950, the Chittagong Bhasha Sangram Parishad was formed, with Rafiquddin Siddique as president and Mahbubul Haq and Mahbub ul-Alam as convener. Meanwhile, figures like Fazlul Kader Chowdhury promoted writing Bangla in Urdu script and Arabic letters.

On February 4, 1952, a complete shutdown was observed, and the Sarbodoloi Bhasha Sangram Parishad was formed, with poet Mahbub ul-Alam Chowdhury as convener, and MA Aziz and railway worker leader Chowdhury Harun or Rashid as joint convener. Other members included Zahur Hossain Chowdhury, Mozafer Ahmed, Krishna Gopal Sengupta, Manindra Majahan, and Sudhansu Bhattacharya.

After the formation of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad around the same time, extensive campaigning took place across Chattogram, with February 21 as the focal point of the movement. The Simantonews paper and the pamphlet "Pakistan's State Language: Bangla or Urdu" by the Tamaddun Majlis also played pivotal roles in the movement in Chattogram.

Launch likely on Feb 26

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the member secretary post.

Sources within the Nagorik Committee say that Adviser Mahfuj Alam wants Nagorik Committee Convener Nasiruddin Patwary to be in the top leadership of the new party.

On the other hand, the former Shibir activists on the platform want Ali Ahsan Zonaed, former president of Shibir's DU unit and a member of nagorik committee's executive body, as the second-in-command of the new party.

Sources said that the key leaders are mulling a senior joint convener post and a senior member secretary post to accommodate former Shibir leaders and avoid a potential split.

Govt may not be sincere in holding polls

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while speaking at a discussion organised by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in the capital's Krishibid Institution auditorium yesterday afternoon.

He criticised LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan for his comments made on Tuesday that Awami League leaders could participate in the elections after apologising to the public.

"This proves that they [advisers] now want to give those fascists a place for their own interests. It is dangerous. Does this mean we should believe they are using various strategies to organise their party by remaining in the government?"

"We will not allow it, and the people of this country will not allow it," Fakhru said.

The BNP would welcome the

formation of any political party, he said, adding, "This does not mean that you [advisers] will form your party while in government, taking advantage of government facilities. This will never be accepted."

The BNP leader also urged the interim government and its chief to act immediately, cautioning that "otherwise, public trust in you will be lost".

Recalling his earlier remarks about neutrality in the interim government, Fakhru said, "When I first pointed out that if the government loses neutrality, another neutral administration will be required, I was criticised. But now, it is being proven."

"At that time, one of the advisers said, 'I'm focusing on 1/11 situation'. We are the victims of it."

"I want to issue a warning again: if anyone thinks of such situations and attempts are made to establish a one-party rule, the people will never accept it."

Fakhru also highlighted the role of student politics in building a new Bangladesh.

"In our assessment, nearly 2,000 young individuals have sacrificed their lives in the movement [July uprising], with 800 of them belonging to Chhatra Dal. In my home district of Thakurgaon, nine lives were lost, and seven of them were Chhatra Dal activists."

"Therefore, those who claim that Chhatra Dal or the BNP had no role in this movement should carefully examine the facts and get a proper understanding of the situation before making such statements."

Tigers look

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excitement in India and Bangladesh. I think the players are focused on how to execute their plans, how calm they can stay on the field," Bangladesh skipper Nazmul Hossain Shanto said at the pre match press conference prior to a training session at the ICC Academy Oval 2 Ground.

While most cricketers were in jovial mood and honed their skills with both bat and ball during the two-and-a-half hours' session, veteran Mahmudullah not being involved in any batting drills and only having chitchats with selector Abdur Razzaq raised eyebrows.

Mahmudullah had also skipped batting during the warm-up game on Monday. When senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin was asked whether the 39-year-old had any injury issues or if it was just a ploy by the cricketer to remain calm before the big contest, the experienced coach didn't divulge much info on the issue, just saying: "He is okay. Nothing to worry about."

The India team trained at the main stadium in the afternoon. Out of nine wickets at the venue of which three remained under cover, Indian bowlers, especially their spinners, were seen practising at one of the uncovered wickets, while others were mostly engaged in running, football drills and warm-ups.

However, Indian team arrived late to training session due to heavy traffic, deferring scheduled press meet of captain Rohit Sharma by 35 minutes.

Indian journalists mostly questioned Rohit on the team's chances of winning the title, skipping any question regarding the Bangladesh game. The India media manager, too, did not allow any Bangladeshi journalist to ask anything about the match.

On February 19 and 20, activists secretly put up posters across the city, evading police surveillance. Various clubs and organisations also prepared to ensure the movement's success.

On February 21, a full-scale hartal was observed, and multiple processions were organised across the city. These were followed by a rally at Lalbagh Maidan, chaired by Mozammel Ahmed, with over 40,000 people in attendance.

Meanwhile, news of student deaths at the hands of the police in Dhaka sent Chattogram into a state of intense turmoil.

Students and locals organised a procession towards the old Wazirullah Institute, while another, led by Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury, also marched through the streets. Separate processions were organised by Chittagong College and Medical College.

The same slogans echoed throughout the city: "Rashtrabhasha Bangla chail" (We want Bangla as the state language) and "Chhatra hottoya bichar chail" (We demand justice for student killings).

Poet Mahbub ul-Alam, who was ill at home, then wrote the poem "Kadte ashini, phaashir dabi niye eshechhi" (I have not come to weep, I have come to die). At a rally in Lalbagh Maidan on February 23, Mahbub ul-Alam recited the poem himself, and it was later distributed among the public.

The Simantonews paper and the pamphlet "Pakistan's State Language: Bangla or Urdu" by the Tamaddun Majlis also played pivotal roles in the movement in Chattogram.

The government is expecting \$4 billion in budget support from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, according to finance ministry officials.

On the other hand, foreign-funded project utilisation has to be sped up such that development partners disburse the funds, Raihan said.

The development spending in the revised budget has been slashed by Tk 49,000 crore to Tk 216,000 crore.

The revised ADP will be finalised next week at a meeting chaired by the planning adviser. It will then be placed at the meeting of the National Economic Council for final approval, said planning ministry officials.