

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

‘Rebuilding the Nation’ concert to celebrate the spirit of July Uprising

A massive open-air concert titled **Rebuilding the Nation**, under the banner of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (SAD), is scheduled for tomorrow at the Sher-E-Bangla Nagar in Agargaon, Dhaka, the former venue of the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF).

The concert, inspired by the spirit of the July Uprising, will feature performances by renowned rockstar Nagar Baul James and popular bands including Artcell, Chirkutt, Shonar Bangla Circus, Bengal Symphony, Bangla Five, Cryptic Fate, and Kureghor, among others.

The concert aims to unite the youth for change through music. At a February 19 press



conference, organisers announced an expected attendance in the hundreds of thousands, with preparations underway for the open-to-all event.

THE ANTHEM OF DEFIANCE How ‘Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano’ came to be

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

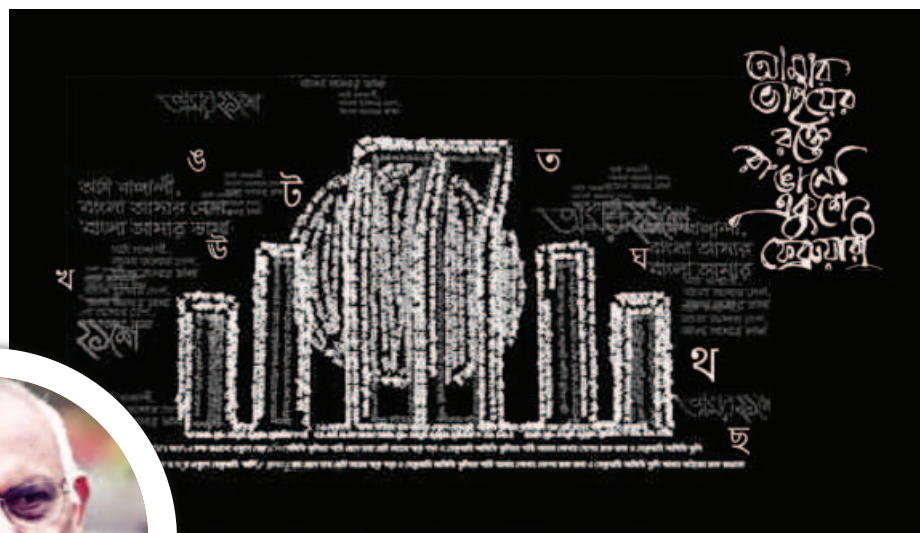
On this very day on February 21, 1952, the streets of Dhaka became a battlefield, soaked with the blood of young martyrs, who stood resolute in the face of oppressive authority, demanding the right to speak their mother tongue, Bangla. It was a day that would carve itself into the collective memory of the Bengali people—a day when the language movement claimed its sacred place in history, and shaped the identity of the country, as a nation.

It was in the shadow of that fateful day that legendary lyricist and poet Abdul Gaffar Choudhury, then a young student and translator, found himself in the hospital, stepping carefully over the bodies of the wounded, as the echo of gunfire was still ringing in his ears. The scene before him was unimaginable: in the sterile quiet of the Dhaka Medical College outpatient ward, the lifeless body of Rafiq Uddin Ahmed lay sprawled on the cold floor, a symbol of the unyielding spirit extinguished in the struggle for something as simple and as profound as words of a certain language.

In that haunting moment, Abdul Gaffar Choudhury was struck by a sorrow so deep it seemed to bleed from his very bones. Looking at the martyr, he felt an inexplicable connection—Rafiq, though a stranger, was his brother, his kin, someone whose sacrifice transcended the individual and became the essence of a cause. It was in this gut-wrenching grief that the first two lines of what would become an anthem of the movement rose within him, words as raw as the blood that soaked the ground outside:

“Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushey February, ami ki bhumite pari?”

The weight of the tragedy settled in



PHOTOS: COLLECTED | VISUAL: DOWEL BISWAS

Choudhury’s heart, but so did a fire—an urgency to immortalise the day, to give voice to the bloodshed, the tears, the unwavering demand for justice. Yet, as he shared these lines with his friend Syed Ahmad Hossain, the poet was reluctant to let the words escape too quickly. It was not the kind of poem that could be written casually, standing on a crowded street corner. But Hossain’s persistence was relentless, urging him to capture the poem before it slipped away like so many fleeting thoughts.

Choudhury, in the chaotic aftermath of the protests and amid the uncertainty of curfews and shutdowns, found himself on a journey through the alleys of Dhaka, desperately clutching his words. In the solitude of his temporary residence, the poem began to take shape. The verses seeped out, a testament to the violence and beauty of a people united by language, a people whose loss would never be forgotten.

Though the poem was still not finished, it was shared, quietly at first, with a handful

of students, distributed in leaflets that captured the anger and sorrow of a nation in mourning. The words spread like wildfire through the city, rising against the heavy hand of oppression.

As the song found its voice, it was embraced by the people as something more than just a memorial—it became the pulse of a revolution. The iconic tune composed by Altaf Mahmud, and later immortalised in films and performances, carried the weight of those who had given everything.

In 2006, BBC Bangla ranked it as the third greatest Bengali song of all time, a recognition of its earnest impact on the Bengali identity.

Through the years, the poem’s legacy has only deepened, transcending generations and borders, carried in translations, and echoed in the hearts of those who hear it, no matter where they are in the world.

In this simple yet profound song, the words of Abdul Gaffar Choudhury continue to remind us: Can we ever forget?

This article is based on a piece originally written by Ahmad Istiak and published in The Daily Star on February 21, 2023.

‘Peyarar Subash’ wins Hiralal Sen Award 1431



Nurul Alam Atique’s film **Peyarar Subash** has been honoured with the prestigious Hiralal Sen Award 1431 at the Amar Bhashar Chalachitra Utsab, organised by the Dhaka University Film Society (DUPS). Shamol Shishir received the award on behalf of the director from Habiba Rahman, assistant professor at

Dhaka University.

The festival nominated four films for the award, including **Kajol Rekha**, **Nakshi Kanthar Jamin**, and **Priyo Maloti**. **Peyarar Subash** received the Best Editing Award, while **Kajol Rekha** won Best Screenplay, **Priyo Maloti** earned Best Sound Design, and **Nakshi Kanthar Jamin** was honoured with Best Cinematography.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘Sheeter Adda’: Krishnokoli o Gaaner Dol live

Dhaka Sessions, in collaboration with Jatra Biroti, presents **Sheeter Adda** featuring Krishnokoli o Gaaner Dol.

Tomorrow, the celebrated artiste Krishnokoli will perform her popular tracks, including **Nai Hoya Jai**, **Ichchhe Moton**, and **Bondhu Tomar**, among others. The event has been designed to immerse the audience in an evening of soulful music.

Date: Saturday | February 22

Time: 7:15pm-9pm

Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani



NEWS

SC restores appointment

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by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, delivered the verdict after hearing arguments on the appeals.

With this verdict, the 1,137 cadres can join service with seniority in 90 days, appellants’ lawyers Md Salahuddin Dolon and Mohammad Shishir Manir told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Public Service Commission’s (PSC) lawyer Muhammad Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan said his client may take necessary steps after receiving the full text of the verdict.

Barrister Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal also appeared for the candidates while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state during the hearing of the appeals.

On September 1, 2007, during the tenure of the caretaker government, the PSC, cancelled the first viva voce results of 27th BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examinations on charges of gross irregularities, including question leaks and corruption. A total of 3,567

candidates passed that oral examination.

Challenging this decision, several candidates filed a writ petition with the HC.

Following the petition, an HC bench led by Justice Abdur Rashid on July 3, 2008, declared the PSC’s decision to cancel the first oral examination legal.

After the HC verdict, the oral test was held for the second time.

Candidates who failed the second test filed another writ petition with the HC in 2008 challenging the legality of the second viva voce.

Following this petition, an HC bench headed by Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury on November 11, 2009, declared the second oral examination illegal and ordered the government to appoint those candidates who passed the first oral exam.

The verdict also said the people who joined the service on the basis of the second oral exam would remain in service, and the seniority of the writ petitioners would be determined

according to law.

However, after hearing three appeals filed by the government, the Appellate Division, headed by the then Chief Justice Mohammad Fazul Karim (now deceased), on July 11, 2010, upheld the HC verdict that cancelled the first oral examination of the 27th BCS.

At the same time, the apex court also scrapped the HC verdict delivered on November 11, 2009.

Three separate review petitions were then filed with the Appellate Division challenging the verdict delivered by this court on July 11, 2010.

After holding a hearing of the review petitions, the Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on November 7 last year allowed the petitioners to move appeals before this court against its July 11, 2010 judgement.

In continuation of the legal proceedings, the Appellate Division concluded the hearing on the appeals on February 19 and delivered the judgement yesterday.

Jubo League man

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rivalry. We also found evidence that he had an enmity with some people,” he said.

Hasan’s grieving wife Jhinu Akter said, “My husband left home around 10:00pm after some people called from outside. More than an hour later, we started searching for him and found him unconscious in a parked three-wheeler at Chowdhury Haat Bazar,” she said.

The family then took him to Chatto gram Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, she added.

“There were severe injury marks on his head and body,” Jhinu said.

She said Hasan used to be a Jubo League activist, but he had not been active in the last few years.

Trump orders halt to federal funding for undocumented migrants

AFP, WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at identifying and eliminating federal funds being used for undocumented migrants, the White House said.

The order “directs Federal departments and agencies to identify all federally funded programs currently providing financial benefits to illegal aliens and take corrective action,” according to a White House fact sheet issued on Wednesday.

Ex-Rab official

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and raped her multiple times. The victim, a public university student, later became mentally ill after the ordeal.”

Alep, who was arrested on November 14 last year, is being investigated for his alleged involvement in enforced disappearances, torture, and rape.

Tajul appealed for a three-month extension on the investigation report and also prayed that the prosecution be allowed to interrogate Alep for a day.

After the hearing, the three-member ICT tribunal, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder,

granted the prosecution permission to interrogate Alep on February 26 from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

The tribunal also extended the deadline for submission of the probe report against Alep to May 28.

Besides, the tribunal extended the date for submission of a probe report in a case filed against former Rab company commander Mohiuddin Faruqui on charges of enforced disappearance and torture to May 28 after the prosecution filed an application seeking the extension.

Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday granted the ICT’s investigation agency to interrogate former Inspector

General of Police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah-Al Mamun about the role of law enforcement agencies in the July atrocities.

The prosecution was given permission to quiz him on February 23 after it filed an application in this regard.

Mamun, who was the police chief during the July uprising, is accused in a case filed over crimes against humanity.

Some 23 former police and army officers, including ex-army officer Ziaul Ahsan, are accused in the case.

The court also extended the deadline for submission of the probe report in the case to April 28.

‘Red card’ to politics on campus

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vice-chancellor, and the director of student welfare, accusing them of failing to ensure campus safety.

They further demanded the expulsion of those responsible for the recent clashes.

Additionally, the students urged the introduction of an ordinance to prevent the reinstatement of any form of politics on campus, replacing the existing campus politics ban, which can be lifted at any time.

Following the demonstration, they marched across the campus before returning to Durbar Bangla Chattar.

Amid dissatisfaction over the administration’s response to Tuesday’s clashes, the students submitted a six-

point demand and announced plans to submit a memorandum to the chief adviser, urging appointment of a new vice-chancellor.

At 3:00pm, students injured in the clashes, along with others, gathered at the Student Welfare Centre to review the footage of Tuesday’s incident.

Rahatul Islam, a student of the university’s civil engineering department, said, “Our demands remain unmet. The ban on student politics must be reinforced... The allegation that we are Chhatra Shibir is baseless. We call on the chief adviser to appoint a new vice-chancellor immediately so that academic activities can resume.”

At an emergency meeting on

Wednesday, the Kuet authorities suspended all academic activities until February 28 and formed a committee to probe Tuesday’s incident.

The university’s Security Inspector Moniruzzaman Liton filed a case on Wednesday night against 400-500 unnamed individuals with Khan Jahan Ali Police Station, said Kabir Hossain, the station’s officer-in-charge.

According to the First Information Report, a group of people entered the university with sticks and sharp weapons, assaulted students, and caused significant property damage.

The vice-chancellor assured the protesting students that their demands would be addressed promptly.

Sylhet MC College student beaten up by ‘Shibir activists’

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Islamia, a student organisation.

Mizanur is also an activist of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Talking to reporters, Juned Ahmed, a master’s student of the college’s Bangla department, who was present during the attack, said two days ago, Riyad commented on a post regarding a recent incident at Kuet, stating that those who engaged in disorderly conduct in the past and those doing it now are the same.

“Around midnight, a total of 12 to 13 Chhatra Shibir activists entered our room and started questioning Riyad about his comment,” said Juned, also assistant organising secretary of the college unit of Talamiz.

During the altercation over the issue, the Shibir men began beating Riyad with iron rods, he said.

Juned said the college unit secretary of Chhatra Shibir arrived at the scene during the attack.

“Under his directive, the attackers took away our mobile phones and money,” said Juned. “Riyad is now receiving treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital,” Juned said.

Denying the allegation, Jawhar

Lokman Musanna, general secretary of the college unit of Chhatra Shibir, said, “I was in my room at the hostel till morning. I was informed about the incident in the morning.”

“This was an internal matter of the residents of the hostel and Chhatra Shibir has nothing to do with it and the college authority may form a probe body to investigate the matter and take action,” he said.

MC College Principal Prof Abul Anam Md Riaz said, “Neither the dormitory superintendent nor was I aware of the attack at night. I visited the injured student at the hospital after learning about it this morning.”

A probe committee will be formed to investigate the matter and take necessary actions, he added. Mohammad Saiful Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said a dispute arose among dormitory students over a Facebook post, leading to a scuffle. However, since the original Facebook post has been deleted, verifying the details is difficult.

“No formal complaint has been filed yet, but we are looking into the matter,” added the police official.

90s economic problems still persist

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politicians of an idea, it gets stalled at the doors of the bureaucracy, which is responsible for implementation.

“The history of our failure to implement our most critical issues – women, children, students, the economy and society – have been buried in bureaucratic inertia.”

Only projects involving massive financial allocations move forward, he said.

“Now, we hear about ‘mega projects’, which essentially mean mega money, mega corruption and mega personal interests.”

He urged everyone to read this book as it is deeply connected to everyone’s life.

The books are highly readable

and can be finished in an hour, with commendable writing that simplifies the complexities of the economy, said Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

“Other economists should follow his approach,” she said, adding that the books discussed development comprehensively, consistently integrating ethics and values.

The writer highlights the quality of life beyond life expectancy and examines women’s issues in relation to poverty and climate in the book.

The book aims to provide the general public with an understanding of the economy, spark their interest in economic matters and raise awareness about its significance, Jahan said.

“Because, the economy is a subject

that influences every stage of our lives.”

Since July last year, the country has been going through a critical period.

The book attempts to explore the future economic outlook, the possibility of a long term crisis, the prospects for a positive turnaround and the trajectory of the nation’s economic journey, he added.

“A crucial question has now emerged: whether we truly understand the development narrative of the past five decades,” said Selim Raihan, a professor at the University of Dhaka’s economics department.

There are two key issues: one related to perspective and the other related to data, he said.

“We should assess whether other countries, starting from similar conditions, have fared better than us.”