

Nazrul Utsav  
opens today at  
Chhayanaut

The Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha has organised a two-day Nazrul Utsav. The inauguration event will take place today from 4:30pm to 9:30pm at the Chhayanaut Auditorium.



On the first day of the festival, 125 recorded songs featuring original compositions and lyrics will be made accessible to the public via the official website of the Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha. These recordings include performances by both established and emerging artistes from Bangladesh and India.

Notable Indian artistes participating in this event include Shreeradha Bandyopadhyay, Manomay Bhattacharya, Pandit Tushar Dutta, Brajeswar Mukherjee, and Payel Kar. Among the distinguished Bangladeshi artistes lending their voices to this initiative are Yakub Ali Khan, Khairul Anam Shakil, Ferdous Ara, Nashid Kamal, and Yasmin Mushtari.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## Open mic: 'Midweek Comedy Show'

Enjoy a night of pure laughter with Dhaka's most promising stand-up comedians. This is the perfect chance to experience fresh talent and hilarious performances, with no entry fee for all. Comedians interested in putting on a show must arrive by 7pm to secure a spot, as slots are limited.

Attendees can indulge in a selection of delectable food and soft beverages as they enjoy an evening of laughter.

Date: Tuesday | February 25

Time: 7:30pm-9pm

Venue: Naveed's Comedy Club



## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

BUBLY  
launches her  
production  
house

After nearly a decade in the industry, Dhallywood actress Shobnom Bubly is set to embrace a new role as a producer. Recently, she has announced the launch of her own production company, Big Production.

The company will strive to produce films, dramas, short films, and music videos. Its journey will begin with a drama scheduled for release during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha, while a film project is in the works for next year. Bubly announced the updates in a video message.

Besides her new role as a producer, Bubly is continuing to act actively. Several of her films are scheduled for release this Eid ul-Fitr. Among them, *Pinik* and *Jongli* have already been officially announced.

Bangladeshi artistes shine  
at UNESCO for Int'l Mother  
Language Day celebrations

Bangladeshi musicians captivated the audience at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, marking the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day on February 21.

A special performance was held, featuring Bangladesh's diverse cultural expressions. Professor Muhammad Yunus, chief adviser of the interim government, addressed the audience virtually, while cultural adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki attended in person on February 21. Farooki praised the performances, which included Shunno's *Shono Mohajon*, renditions of *Jaat Gelo*, and *Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano* sung in four languages.

He thanked the artistes for



representing Bangladesh in a unique light. The event began with a video interview of the late communist leader Badruddin Umar, adding historical significance.

Farooki also expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and the Bangladesh Embassy in Paris.

Matrihashar  
Chalachitra Utsav  
to showcase films in  
indigenous languages

The two day *Matrihashar Chalachitra Utsav* began yesterday in Dhaka to commemorate International Mother Language Day and honour language martyrs.

Organised by the Zahir Raihan Film Institute, the festival will showcase 15 films in languages including Bengali, Chakma, Santal, and Khyang.

The inauguration took place at the Vintage Convention Hall, Dhanmondi yesterday with Supradip Chakma, Chittagong Hill Tracts adviser in attendance. Today the event will run from 10am to 9pm.

Films to be screened include *Raktokarobir Khoje Nandini*, *Klobong Mla*, *Bondhon*, *Preyoshi*, *Girikonna*, *Ghore Phera*, *Colors of Hope*, and *Poitrik Bhita*, among others.

Shahiduzzaman Selim  
elected president of  
Director's Guild

Shahiduzzaman Selim has officially been elected president of the Directors' Guild for the 2025-27 term, securing 271 votes, while Faridul Hasan claimed the general secretary position with 222 votes. The newly elected leaders will oversee the organisation for the next two years.

The voting took place at the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy on Saturday. This year a total of 501 voters were eligible to participate in the election, with 446 exercising their right to vote.

Rasheda Akter Lajuk, Firoz Khan, and Shakal Ahmed were elected as vice presidents. Tuhi Hossain and Din Mohammad Montu were elected as joint general secretaries.

The executive committee positions saw Sagar Jahan elected with 284 votes, followed by Chayanika Chowdhury with 269, Mahmud Niaz Chandropur with 264, Gitali Hasan with 239, while Litu Korim and Shihab Shaheen each secured 228 votes, and Hasan Rezaul received 223 votes.

## NEWS

## EC preparing to announce

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is progressing fast, he said.

The EC is also working on drawing the boundaries of constituencies and registration of political parties.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin while exchanging views with administration officials in Cox's Bazar yesterday said the EC wanted to hold a free and fair election.

When he was asked whether the local government polls or the national election would be held first, he said the political parties were arguing over the matter, and "the Election Commission does not want to get into that".

The EC's first goal is to prepare an accurate voter list. "There are 16 lakh dead voters on the list. The names should be dropped," he said.

**DISAGREEMENT OVER POLLS DATE** Some political parties, including the BNP, Jamaat and the Left Democratic Alliance met the EC separately over the last two weeks. The BNP and the LDA demanded a national election within

Four DIGs sent on forced  
retirement

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2014 and 2018 elections under the Awami League regime.

On Wednesday, the public administration ministry placed 33 officials on special duty. Previously, it did the same to 12 other former DCs.

Special duty in this context is considered a disciplinary measure. The ministry is currently reviewing the records of the officials on the list, and most of them are likely to face punishment, according to officials with knowledge of the development.

The last general election, held on January 7, 2024, was boycotted by the BNP and several other parties. In many places, AL leaders ran as independents to make the polls appear participatory.

In 2018, opposition parties alleged that ballot stuffing took place the night before the election.

Transparency International Bangladesh said ballot stuffing took place in more than one centre in 33 of the 50 constituencies it had surveyed.

In the 2014 election, also boycotted by the BNP, 153 out of 300 lawmakers got "elected" without any vote as they were the only ones running for office in their constituencies.

He made these remarks in a Facebook post on Friday.

Earlier on Thursday, the government sent 22 more officials into retirement, raising the number of disciplined bureaucrats to 67 for their questionable role as deputy commissioners in the

## \$29m spent

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rich. They'll be on the cover of a top business magazine -- for being great scammers," quipped the US president.

Trump's ire extended to India, too. At CPAC, he questioned an \$18 million USAID grant for elections there, asking, "Why the hell? Why don't we use paper ballots and let them help us with our elections?

Voter ID—that'd be nice. We're giving money to India for elections. They don't need it. They slap 200% tariffs on us, and we're handing them cash!"

On February 16, Elon Musk-led US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) announced that it has taken new measures to save US taxpayers money by cutting funding to 17 projects across the globe, including one in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) programme -- backed by USAID and UK's DFID, and run by Democracy International from 2017 to 2024 -- aimed to boost political party capacity, strengthen party-constituent ties, and reduce violence.

Sudan's RSF, allies sign charter for rival govt

AFP, Nairobi

Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and its allies have agreed to form a parallel government, they said yesterday, despite warnings such a move could further fragment the war-ravaged country.

"The charter has been signed," Naim al-Din Drisa, spokesman of the United Civil Forces, one of the signatories, told AFP.

The parties to the agreement, inked behind closed doors in Nairobi, said the charter establishes a "government of peace and unity" in rebel-controlled areas of the northeast African country.

The move comes nearly two years into a devastating war with the regular army that has uprooted more than 12 million people and caused what the United Nations calls the world's largest hunger and displacement crises.

## Noab urges govt to cut tax, VAT

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industry has recently been going through a difficult time," said AK Azad, president of Noab, in a pre-budget meeting with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at its office in the capital.

The NBR organised the discussion as part of its consultations with various trade bodies and other stakeholders before preparing tax proposals.

"The rapid expansion of digital platforms and the growing influence of other media have put the newspaper industry under significant strain. At the same time, high tariffs, VAT, and corporate taxes continue to hinder its growth," he said.

Adding to these woes, the rising exchange rate of the US dollar and the ongoing global economic downturn have exacerbated financial constraints, making survival increasingly difficult

for many print media outlets, he added.

Although the import duty is 5 percent, the landed cost reaches 30 percent when adding 15 percent VAT, advance income tax, transportation insurance, and other expenses, said Noab.

Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, said that the newspaper industry is going through a severe crisis.

"The number of readers is declining, and the circulation of printed newspapers is decreasing. It is now essential to survive through digital platforms, which requires investment," he said.

He further stated that advertisements come from both private and government sectors for newspapers, but private sector investment is sluggish.

For the last 16 years, newspapers

## Hasina told Nitor docs

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did not even make post mortem reports. The lack of such reports itself is evidence of a crime against humanity, he said.

Prosecutors went to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor) and interviewed doctors, he said.

The doctors told prosecutors that Sheikh Hasina went there in July and ordered them not to treat the protesters, Tajul said at the court.

People injured during the uprising also said this, he added. "We have evidence of this information," he said.

The tribunal asked prosecutors to submit the probe report on April 22 in a case filed over crimes against humanity

in the capital's Chankharpul during the student-led July-August mass uprising.

In another case, the court ordered authorities to interrogate constables Arshad Hossain on March 2 and Imaj Hossain the next day.

The tribunal also placed Chanchal Kumar Sarkar, a sacked assistant sub-inspector of police, on a one-day interrogation. He will be quizzed on February 27.

Footage of Arshad gagging a protester near the Supreme Court and Chanchal shooting a student hanging from a building's ledge in Rampura sparked outrage across the country.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder passed the orders.

holding them back," he said.

He alleged that Law Adviser Asif Nazrul used to talk a lot at the university, but not much since he became an adviser.

Nasir said that the first task of the interim government is to try the Awami League.

"If the trial process of the Awami League does not begin, there will be no election. First, the Awami League must be tried, and only then can elections be held," he said.

He said that efforts have been made to curb instances of mob justice across the country.

"While some incidents persist, effective measures are being taken regularly to ensure that no one in Bangladesh falls victim to a culture of impunity through mob trials ...," he added.

Nahian Sajjad Khan, a researcher at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, and Lailul Farid, a professor of international relations at Dhaka University, are also part of the delegation.

Three members from the Jatiya Nagorik Committee—Ali Ahsan Zonaed, Rafiq Salman Rifat, and Md Reaz Hossain—and a coordinator of Students Against Discrimination, Mitu Akter, are also in the delegation.

Two journalists are also going on this trip: Arifuzzaman, diplomatic correspondent of Dainik Amader Somoy, and Abdur Rahman Jahangir, special correspondent of UNB.

Earlier, on November 7, a four-member BNP delegation had visited China at the invitation of the Communist Party of China.

## Country risks civil war

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"When they are asked something, the action becomes visible six months later. To those with rhinoceros-like skin, we say: please make your skin a little thinner. If you remain silent on the issue of holding the Awami League accountable [for July atrocities], the people will be forced to take to the streets again," said the Nagorik Committee leader.

Nasir said that the people of Bangladesh have placed them in the government with great hopes and aspirations.

"But you are wrong if you think the Secretariat or your offices are like luxury suites or hotel rooms. The people are still on the streets. They are still active in various places. They are in touch with us. In many cases, we are