

Nazrul Utsav 2025 concludes with messages of unity and resilience

DOWEL BISWAS

The much anticipated annual Nazrul Utsav 2025 kicked off last Monday and concluded yesterday, celebrating the philosophies of our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose works embody powerful messages of secularism, humanity, and unity. The two-day festival, organised by the Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Songstha (BNSS) at the Chhayanaut premises, featured performances by over 100 artistes from Bangladesh.

Khairul Anam Shakil, a celebrated Nazrul Sangeet exponent and the general secretary of BNSS, commenced the inaugural ceremony on Monday and spoke about the festival. "Kazi Nazrul Islam's vision of a non-communal, secular society remains relevant today. This festival is not just a celebration, it's a reminder of the humane, inclusive values Nazrul stood for – and they remain essential for the future of this country."

Yakub Ali Khan, another leading Nazrul Sangeet teacher and president of



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

the organisation, voiced concerns about the cultural environment in Bangladesh, noting that political stability is essential to safeguard cultural practices.

Mofidul Haque, laureate, researcher, and adviser of the Nazrul Sangeet Songstha, reflected, "Nazrul lived in a turbulent time, and his commitment to humanity and resisting oppression speaks to the challenges we face today. His works remind us of the strength in unity."

Nazrul often hailed as the "Rebel Poet",

opposed colonial rule, religious bigotry, and social injustice. His vision of a united Bengali identity transcended communal divisions, and his work remains a cornerstone of Bangladesh's cultural and intellectual heritage.

In addition to this year's festival, Nazrul Sangeet Songstha launched its official website, offering 125 original compositions by renowned and emerging artistes. These recordings are now freely available to the public, reaffirming

Nazrul's lasting influence on South Asia's cultural tapestry.

However, concerns over the event's arrangement surfaced, with Kolpona Anam, coordinator of the Nazrul Utsav Committee, voicing her reservations.

"Nazrul's free spirit deserves to be celebrated under an open sky, with a large stage and Nazrul enthusiasts gathered around to fully experience the magic of his work," she remarked. "But, given the current political and law-and-order situation, we had to move indoors this year. Even as the event unfolds, there is a lingering fear that extremists could disrupt our cultural practices. It's a frightening reality, but we will continue to resist the only way we know how – through our songs, poetry, and unwavering commitment to cultural expression."

Today, as artistes perform Nazrul's verses like *Dao Shorjo Dao Dhorjo* and *Joy Hok*, along with Warda Rihab and her team performing the nritylekhkha *Jago Jatirmoy*, the message is clear: Bangladesh's cultural strength lies in its diversity and inclusivity.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Brave Daughters of July'

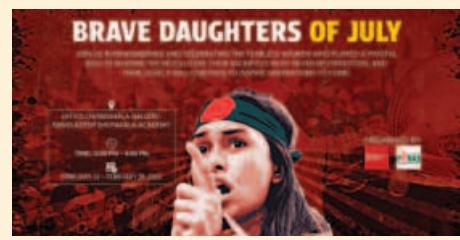
A dedicated exhibition celebrating the brave women of the July Revolution and highlighting their significant contributions to protests, resistance, and leadership is underway at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA).

The *Brave Daughters of July* exhibition holds recorded photos, artworks, documentaries, and personal accounts to illustrate their struggles and contributions, offering an immersive experience and valuable documentation for the future.

Date: Wednesday-Friday | February 26-28

Time: 6pm-7pm

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Oscars 2025 announces star-studded lineup of performers



The 2025 Oscars will feature an impressive lineup of performers, including Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo, Blackpink's Lisa, Doja Cat, and Raye.

Grande and Erivo, co-stars of *Wicked*, are confirmed to perform together, though it remains unclear if they will sing a number from the musical.

Lisa, Doja Cat, and Raye will perform separately, with the Academy

promising something legendary.

Queen Latifah will also take the stage, albeit her performance details are yet to be revealed.

This year, the Academy has opted for personal reflections from Best Original Song nominees instead of traditional live performances.

Films like *Gladiator 2*, *Wicked*, and *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* are in the running for Best Original Score.

'Ki Jeno Bhulte Cheye Chilam' drama brings poet Helal Hafiz's journey to life

Ki Jeno Bhulte Cheye Chilam, a drama directed by Rubel Anush, and inspired by the life of poet Helal Hafiz, stars Jonaid Bukhdadi as Helal Hafiz and Tonni Mahmud Trina as Helen, his beloved.

The story portrays Helal's unfulfilled love for Helen, his neighbour from Netrokona whose father disapproved of their relationship and arranged her marriage to a man in Dhaka.

Helal eventually moved to Dhaka to study, publishing his only poetry book, *Je Jole Agun Jole!*

Helen, upon reading the poems one day, realised they were expressions of



Helal's longing, leading to her eventual emotional collapse.

The drama captures the tragic depth of their love, exploring themes of heartbreak and loss. It is available on Global Television's YouTube channel.

Director Zahidur Rahim Anjan passes away

National Film Award-winning director Zahidur Rahim Anjan, best known for his film *Meghmallar*, passed away last Monday night in Bengaluru, India.

His friend, filmmaker Amitabh Reza Chowdhury confirmed his passing to The Daily Star.

Anjan was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Bengaluru for several months due to liver complications. Last week, a liver transplant was performed, but his condition worsened and he was put on life support before passing away.

He debuted with *Meghmallar* in 2014, which won him the National Film Award for Best Director and Best Dialogue Writer. His latest govt-funded film, *Chander Amabasya*, is awaiting release.



COUNTRYWIDE

Govt beefs up security

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while the Bangladesh Coast Guard will boost its presence in designated zones.

Senior officials, including heads of police units, deputy police commissioners, and brigadier commanders from the Bangladesh Army, will regularly brief the media on security operations and developments.

To enhance mobility and rapid response, personnel from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), BGB, Ansar, and the Coast Guard will be provided with motorcycles.

Additionally, security operations will be expanded beyond Dhaka, with heightened patrols in Tongi, Borsila, Keraniganj, and Munshiganj. To reinforce security efforts, 500 members of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) will be deployed to work alongside the DMP.

Police stations will compile and regularly update lists of known criminals, allowing for swift legal action against offenders. Moreover, steps will be taken to counter misinformation, rumours, and propaganda through the proactive dissemination of accurate information.

According to separate notifications from the BGB, DMP, and Rab, special measures have already been implemented, including setting up patrol teams and checkpoints for public safety.

During a visit to the capital's Gabtoli, Mirpur-I, and Mirpur-10 areas between 12:10am and 1:30am yesterday, this newspaper saw police setting up three checkpoints. The police teams were seen stopping CNG-run autorickshaws and private cars if they noticed any suspicious activity.

Speaking to this correspondent, Abdur Rahim, a ride-sharing driver, said he mainly works at night. "We are very happy to see police patrolling and checkpoints. If this continues, I believe the law and order situation will improve."

In a notification, the BGB headquarters announced that the paramilitary force has launched night-time special patrols in Dhaka and across the country.

According to the DMP's Crime Command and Control Center, from 12:00am to 11:59pm on Monday, a total of 500 patrol teams were deployed

Mobs beat

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suspecting him to be a mugger started beating him. Later, he was rushed to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries," said the OC.

The body has been kept at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master General Hospital.

Faridul said, "After preparing the inquest report, the body will be sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy."

Legal proceedings are underway, he added.

In Dhaka's Uttara, two youths were hung upside down on a footbridge near BNS Centre in the capital's Uttara and beaten up by a mob last night.

The incident occurred near Rajuk Uttara Model College around 9:30pm.

Hafizur Rahman, officer in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, said the two youths were aged around 20-25.

A video of the incident has since gone viral on social media.

Witnesses said the mob hung the two suspected muggers upside down on the footbridge, beat them up and then handed them over to the police.

The OC said the injured youths were admitted to Kuwait Maitri Hospital.

Police are investigating to determine whether the two were actually involved in mugging.

Nahid resigns

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force or party that is being formed. I have resigned from the government to mingle with the people once again, unite them and work on the ground to implement the promises of the mass uprising."

When asked if he is becoming the convener of the new party, Nahid said: "The announcement of the party will be on February 28. We will have to wait until then. We will know on that day."

Asked whether Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan and Mahfuj Alam, the other two student-turned advisers, would be following his lead, he said: "There are still two people in the government who think they will serve the people from their positions. If they feel the need to engage in politics, they might resign from the government as well."

The people may see the results of his work in the future, although six months is a very short time and there were bureaucratic complexities, said Nahid, who also resigned from the Thaj Shaheed Smriti Foundation.

Asked who will take over the vacant ministry positions, he said that the advisory council will take a call on that.

Abdullah Al Noman dies

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leaders and activists attended the prayers. His second namaz-e-janaza will be held at Jamiatul Falah Mosque ground in Chattogram on February 28. He will be buried at his family graveyard in Raozan after a third namaz-e-janaza there, said Idris Ali, former city BNP office secretary.

Born in 1942 of Raozan's Gohira, Noman was a key figure in Bangladesh's labour movement and played a vital role in shaping the labour policies. He held several ministerial positions throughout his political career.

After being elected lawmaker from Chattogram-9 (Kotwali) in 1991 for the first time, Noman served as the fisheries and livestock minister. He became the food minister following his victory in the 2001 election from the same

constituency.

Noman began his political journey in the early 1960s as a member of Chhatra Union while protesting against the Hamidur Rahman Education Commission. He served as the general secretary of Chattogram city unit of Chhatra Union, president of Greater Chattogram of Chhatra Union, and central organising secretary of Chhatra Union.

After his student life, he joined labour politics under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani. He was the vice-president of the East Bengal Workers' Federation and was also secretly involved in the politics of the Bhashani-led NAP. In 1970, he was made the central organising secretary of Noman.

In 1971, Noman took part in the Liberation War and fought against the

Pakistan occupation forces. Following the war, he was active in NAP politics.

After president Ziaur Rahman formed the BNP, Noman joined the party in 1981.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other leaders expressed profound shock over the demise of Noman.

In his condolence message, the chief adviser said Noman was a talented leader in Bangladesh politics and was a valiant freedom fighter, reports BSS.

He added that Noman remained active in politics from the early sixties and till his last breath.

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US president's claim

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officials and their respective funding allocations. None of these officials are Bangladeshis.

The project was co-funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly DFID) that pledged £10 million for the project in Bangladesh, of which £7.2 million was transferred to USAID. A portion of that money was then allocated to Democracy International's SPL project.

A 2020 review report by The Hunger Project stated that under SPL, 236 training of trainers workshops were conducted, engaging 5,410 Bangladesh political leaders and activists.

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However, yesterday morning, the mercury dropped to 16 degrees celsius with drizzle and dark clouds hovering over the city, which eventually led to the abandonment of the Australia South Africa match.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team had no practice scheduled for Monday and the team spent time at the team hotel under tight security.

Pakistan cricket team reached the city on Sunday after losing their second match to India in Dubai.

Aus-SA match

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two games.

According to the local met office, the city of Rawalpindi will witness rainy weather through the week, with forecast of rain on Thursday.

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