

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Play: 'Rashomon'

Open Space Theatre presents a stage adaptation of Ryunosuke Akutagawa's stories and Akira Kurosawa's renowned film **Rashomon**. Directed by M Arifur Rahman, known for popular adaptations of **12 Angry Men** and **Arsenic And Old Lace**, the production brings Japanese folklore to Dhaka audiences in a captivating performance.

DATE: TODAY | MARCH 14

TIME: 3:30 5PM AND 7:30 9PM

VENUE: EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE HALL, BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMY

## Pakistani model Zara Ahmed to star in Bangladeshi film 'Force'

Pakistani model and actress Zara Ahmed is making her Bangladeshi film debut in the Asif Iqbal directorial **Force**. She will portray a police officer in a revenge-driven narrative. Impressed by her performances in Pakistani dramas, Asif shared a teaser of the film, which prompted her to sign on after finding the script and production plan compelling.

Filming is set to begin on April 10 at BFDC, with additional shoots in Keraniganj and Gazipur. Zara will stay in Bangladesh for two weeks, with the film slated for an Eid-ul-Azha release.

Known for **Hum Kahan Ke Sachay Thay** and **Khudsar**, she will star alongside Bangladeshi actor Mak Didar. Meanwhile, she has also signed the Pakistani pr oject **Chu Lay Aasman**.



## Jaya Ahsan continues to make an impact

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

For the first time in her career, Jaya is set to appear in a Bangladeshi web-series, which will premiere on Hoichoi on March 28. Titled **Jimmi**, the series is helmed by acclaimed director Ashfaq Nipun.

**Jimmi** marks several firsts in Jaya Ahsan's career—it is her first web-series in Bangladesh and also her first collaboration with Ashfaq Nipun.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Jaya Ahsan shared, "**Jimmi** is my first web-series in my country, which I am feeling great about. It is also my first time working with Ashfaq Nipun. I wanted to start my journey in a Bangladeshi web-series on a strong note, and this project gave me that opportunity. **Jimmi** involves a lot of firsts for me, and I feel a deep sense of love and excitement for it."

When asked about her experience working on **Jimmi**, Jaya shared, "This project is very close to my heart. Just as the director has crafted it with great care, we also poured our love into the filming process."

She further added, "Audiences have always seen me in diverse roles and narratives, and **Jimmi** will be no different. It's a unique project, and I'm happy to have been part of it. The character I portray truly captivated me."

When asked about her expectations from the audience, she stated, "Viewers always appreciate good work. I would urge them to watch **Jimmi** and stay connected with it. I'm confident they will enjoy it."

Meanwhile, her musical film **Bagan Bilash**, directed by Sadia Islam, was recently released and has received widespread appreciation.

Earlier Jaya's performance in the **Beshura** episode of



PHOTO: COURTESY OF HOICHOI

the anthology series, **Dui Shaw** by Nuhash Humayun, garnered praise.

More recently, Jaya visited the Netherlands, where her Kolkata-based Bangla film **Putul Nacher Etikotha** was screened at an international film festival.

Additionally, the **Debi** star has once again secured a nomination at India's Joy Filmfare Awards Bangla 2025. Reacting to the news, she shared, "I'm delighted. It's truly a joyful moment for me."

## Has our humanity disappeared?: Shahiduzzaman Selim

Shahiduzzaman Selim, National Film Award-winning actor and newly elected president of the Directors' Guild, expressed deep concern over the growing violence against women and children in Bangladesh. Leading a protest in Dhaka, Selim condemned the alarming rise in gender-based violence, stating, "We are witnessing horrific incidents of rape and abuse. Has our humanity disappeared?"



Selim also discussed his upcoming Eid film **Daagi**, in which he plays a negative character, and urged audiences to support local cinema during this challenging time. As Guild president, he aims to improve the industry and criticised the previous administration for its inefficiency. Selim hopes for better days ahead, for the country and its film industry.

## 'Stranger Things' star Sadie Sink joins 'Spider-Man 4'

Sadie Sink is gearing up to debut in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). The **Stranger Things** star has officially joined the **Spider-Man 4** cast, where she will appear alongside Tom Holland.

According to Deadline, which first broke the news, speculation abounds that she could portray Jean Grey—one of the most iconic members of the **X-Men**. Famke Janssen and Sophie Turner previously portrayed the character on screen.

Destin Daniel Cretton, known for **Shang-Chi**, will direct the fourth instalment, replacing Jon Watts, who led the successful trilogy.

**Spider-Man 4** is set to hit theatres on July 31, 2026, continuing Peter Parker's journey after erasing himself from the memories of his loved ones in the previous film instalment, **No Way Home** (2021).



## NEWS

### Yunus-Xi talks on March 28

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spokesman, told reporters at the weekly briefing at the foreign ministry.

On March 27, he will deliver a speech at the opening plenary of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference. He will meet with the Executive Vice President of China's State Council later that afternoon.

On March 29, he is scheduled to attend an event at Peking University in the morning before returning home that night.

The ministries concerned are working on the bilateral agendas and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to be signed during the high level visit.

Earlier this week, an inter-ministerial meeting was held at the foreign ministry to discuss Bangladesh's agenda in the upcoming talks with the Chinese president.

The government is working on about one dozen MoUs. The Daily Star has learnt from foreign ministry officials informed with the proceedings.

Dhaka wants to increase exports to China and foreign direct investment from China. At present, Bangladesh's exports to China amount to less than \$1 billion, while its imports stand at about \$24 billion.

During the visit of Foreign Adviser Tuhid Hossain to China in January, Beijing agreed in principle to extend the repayment period for Chinese loans and assured Dhaka it would look into the request to lower the interest rate to ease Bangladesh's foreign debt repayment pressure.

Also at yesterday's briefing, Dhaka termed recent remarks on Bangladesh by New Delhi as "unwarranted" and amounting to "interference" in another

country's domestic affairs.

"Bangladesh took note of India's External Affairs Ministry spokesperson's March 7 comments concerning Bangladesh's elections, law and order situation and matters related to minorities," Alam said.

On March 7, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesman for India's External Affairs Ministry, said New Delhi supports "a stable, peaceful, inclusive and progressive Bangladesh in which all issues are resolved through democratic means and by holding inclusive and participatory elections."

"We remain concerned about the deteriorating law and order situation as you mentioned which has been further exacerbated by the release of violent extremists who were sentenced for serious crimes," he said.

In response, Alam said: "Bangladesh firmly believes these issues are entirely its internal affairs, and such remarks are unwarranted and tantamount to interference in another country's domestic matters."

New Delhi's comments were misleading as well as it did not "reflect the reality on the ground".

Bangladesh upholds the principles of respecting every nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs while remaining committed to fostering friendly and constructive relations with India based on mutual respect, trust and understanding, he said.

"From this perspective, Bangladesh hopes that the relevant authorities of the Indian government will take necessary measures to refrain from making such remarks."

India is yet to respond to Bangladesh's

extradition request for former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to face trial in connection with the killings during the July uprising last year, he said.

Asked how the foreign ministry is working to counter the propaganda by Indian media, Alam said the negative campaign against Bangladesh is mostly being carried out by various media houses at the private level in their own ways.

"It is not easy to deal with such propaganda properly. But this matter is under consideration by the ministry of foreign affairs. We are regularly discussing how to best respond," he added.

However, the chief adviser's press wing yesterday sent out a rejoinder on the matter, urging the Indian media outlets to retract the stories and issue clarifications.

The reports in certain Indian media outlets including The Economic Times and India Today alleging coups or instability within the Bangladesh Army are "not only baseless but also deeply irresponsible", the statement said.

Bangladesh is a stable, democratic nation with strong institutions, including its armed forces, who have consistently demonstrated professionalism and commitment to protecting national interests, safeguarding the people and the constitution, the statement said.

Such disinformation campaigns undermine the principles of non-interference and harm the spirit of regional cooperation and mutual respect.

"The people of both India and Bangladesh deserve better than to be subjected to fear-mongering and divisive propaganda," it added.

### EC employees demonstrate nationwide

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The letter mentioned that according to article 119 of the constitution, the supervision, direction, and control of preparing the voter list for the election of president and parliament are vested in the EC. Besides, as per section 11 of the Voter List Act 2009, the EC is responsible for updating it.

"If the database of National Identity card, which includes the voter list, is transferred elsewhere, it would not only conflict with the constitution but also diminish the constitutional authority of the Election Commission."

Mohammad Monir Hossain, convener of Bangladesh Election Commission Officers' Association and EC deputy secretary, yesterday said, "The Election Commission is the guardian of all voters' personal information. The NID will remain with the Election Commission."

On March 4, the interim government proposed transferring NID services to a separate commission -- Civil Registration Commission.

From that day, EC officials and employees are holding different programmes to press home their

demand for keeping the NID services under the EC.

On March 12, Fayez Ahmed Tayyab, chief adviser's special assistant for posts and ICT ministry, said that although NID services will remain under the EC for now, they will have to be placed under an independent agency in future.

Along with the EC Secretariat, there are 10 regional offices, 64 district offices, and over 500 upazila election offices across the country where more than 5,000 officials work, according to EC officials.

### 'Let us do our job; please do not attack us'

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Addressing the police's role in the July uprising, the police chief stated, "Before August 5, some of our senior officers—mostly senior ones—were overly enthusiastic."

"I do not differentiate between Awami League and BNP, but due to their political loyalties, the entire police force has been disgraced. The world now questions how Bangladesh Police became so ruthless. I am also part of the police, and this burden of accountability

falls on me as well. Even in retirement, I bear this responsibility."

"My relatives asked, 'What are you doing? What has your force become?' We did not fulfil our responsibilities; instead, we acted against the people. This happened because of the excessive ambition of some individuals and their blind and unjust loyalty," said the IGP.

IGP Baharul further added, "Police officers are being attacked while enforcing the law, and criminals are being freed from custody. When traffic

police instruct someone not to drive in the wrong direction and to obey the law, they are also being assaulted."

"Why has this tendency to disregard the law emerged? Some believe that since police actions were once seen as anti-people, they can now act as they please. This perception is completely wrong. No civilised country can function without law enforcement. The people must understand that without crime prevention and law enforcement, no citizen can live in peace," he added.

### Arefin Siddique passes away

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10:45pm at the Neuro Intensive Care Unit of Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital, said his son-in-law Nafiz Imtiaz.

On March 6, he suddenly collapsed at Dhaka Club and was hospitalised. After initial treatment, he was moved to the ICU and placed on life support.

Despite doctors' best efforts, his condition remained critically unstable, with no brainstem reflex detected and his pupils unresponsive.

He left behind his wife, daughter, and a host of friends, colleagues, and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He will be buried at Azimpur graveyard after his namaz-e-janaza at Dhanmondi Eidgah Mosque after Jum'a prayers.

Born in Dhaka on October 26, 1953, he had an illustrious career marked by contributions to academia, public service, and media.

Prof Siddique, who was the 27th DU VC from 2009 to 2017, completed his early education at Dhaka College, graduating in science in 1973.

His academic journey continued at DU, where he earned his master's in mass communications and journalism, graduating at the top of his class.

In 1985, he earned a PhD in televised

teaching from the University of Mysore in India, supported by an Indian government scholarship.

He further honed his skills through various training programmes at prestigious institutions such as the University of Manila, the University of Minnesota, and Cornell University.

In 1980, Prof Siddique began his teaching career at DU, where he devoted nearly four decades to educating and inspiring countless students.

He was elected Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) president twice. He also served twice as the general secretary of DUTA.

Beyond his work at Dhaka University, he contributed to the higher education sector at the national level.

During his tenure as VC, the DU campus remained largely peaceful, with few instances of unrest or closures due to clashes between student bodies. Additionally, session jam eased.

He was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) in 2020.

He was also at the helm of the board of trustees at the Bangladesh National Museum, where he worked to preserve and promote the country's rich cultural

heritage.

Prof Siddique was a member of the advisory board for the Bangladesh Journalists' Welfare Trust. He also served as the president of Bangabandhu Parishad from 2016 to 2023.

As the news of his demise spread, there was an outpouring of grief among his students and colleagues. Many took to social media to share their fond memories about Arefin Siddique.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mir Masrur Zaman, general secretary of DU Mass Communications and Journalism (MCJ) Alumni Association, said, "One of his lasting legacies would be how he was so loved by his students irrespective of political stripes. He always stood by his students in times of need."

Azad Majumder, deputy press secretary to the chief adviser, wrote on Facebook, "Arefin Siddique sir was my direct teacher for four years. I got the opportunity to watch him closely in tutorial classes for two of those four years. Even though I disagree with his political views, I have always found his teaching methods fascinating and am forever grateful to him for what he taught me and my countless MCJ fellows. May Allah grant him Jannat."

### Israel attack on Gaza IVF clinic

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It said this amounted to "two categories of genocidal acts" during Israel's offensive in Gaza, launched after the attacks by Hamas militants on Israel on October 7, 2023.

The United Nations' genocide convention defines that crime as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

Of its five categories, the inquiry said the two implicating Israel were "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction" and "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group".

The three-person Independent

International Commission of Inquiry was established by the UN Human Rights Council in May 2021 to investigate alleged international law violations in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Commission member Chris Sidoti explained that the crime of genocide concerned action and intention -- both general and then specific -- and the report had so far only looked at action.

"We have not made any finding of genocide. We have identified a number of acts that constitute the categories of genocidal act under the law. We have not yet examined the question of genocidal purpose," he told a press conference.

"We'll be soon in a position to deal

comprehensively with the question of genocide," he added, potentially later this year.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem told AFP the report "confirms what has happened on the ground: genocide and violations of all humanitarian and legal standards".

He said it underscored "the urgent need to expedite the prosecution of its (Israel's) leaders for these crimes and ensure their swift trial at the International Criminal Court".

Netanyahu branded the Human Rights Council an "anti-Israeli circus".

He said the UN "once again chooses to attack the state of Israel with false accusations, including absurd claims".