

# Xefer is Allen Swapan’s new ‘Boyam Pakhi’

After teasing audiences for weeks about Allen Swapan’s new *Boiyam Pakhi*, Chorki has finally unveiled its latest rendition, *Boiyam Pakhi 2.0*, from *Myself Allen Swapan 2*, featuring Xefer Rahman as the newest addition to the series.

Not only has she lent her voice to the track, but she performs in it. Xefer, previously seen in the Chorki Original film *Monogamy*, will also star in a Chorki Original series for the first time.

Xefer was already familiar with the *Allen Swapan* series and character. When director Shihab Shaheen offered her a role, she didn’t have to think twice about it.

According to Xefer, “If the character is interesting, I am definitely willing to act.” However, since music is her primary passion, she couldn’t leave it behind and she lent her voice.



WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘Late Night Comedy Show’

Naveed’s Comedy Club (NCC) announces *The Late Night Comedy Show 1* to celebrate its 15th anniversary. Comedians Shayor, Toru, Sami Doha, Rizvi, Ashir, Ayon, Forhad, and Rafsan will perform. Registration requires a Tk 350 fee. The event aligns with Ramadan’s late-night Sehri hours, offering an engaging experience for guests. **Date:** Friday | March 21, 2025 **Time:** 11:59pm **Venue:** Naveed’s Comedy Club, Gulshan-2

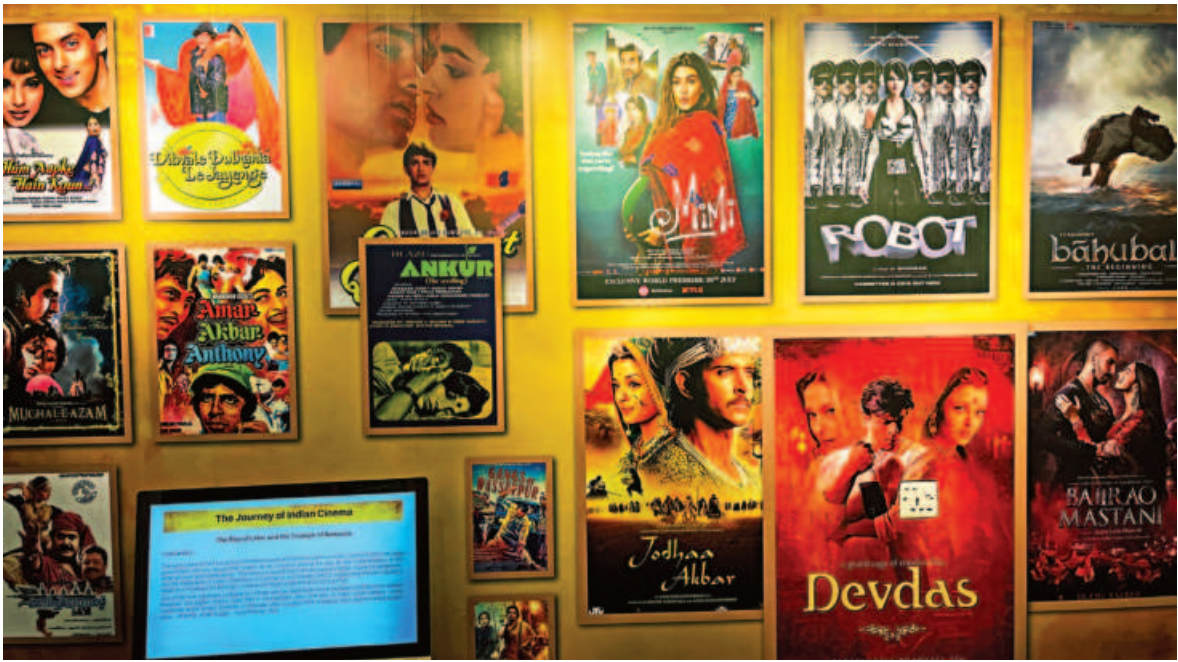


PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

# ‘WAVES’ announced at IGCC, initiative plans to nurture global talents

SHARMIN JOYA

The World Audio-Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) is a global initiative designed to bring together creative minds from across the Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry under one platform. Hosted by India, the summit will take place from May 1 to 4 at Mumbai’s Jio World Convention Centre and Jio World Garden.

WAVES aims to foster collaboration, showcase talent, and facilitate networking opportunities for professionals in television, radio, news media, music, advertising, animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, social media, online content creation, artificial intelligence, film, OTT platforms, and exhibition sectors.

The summit was officially announced in Bangladesh at a launch event held at the Indian Cultural Centre in Dhaka, yesterday, alongside a discussion

celebrating 111 years of Indian cinema. The event, organised by the High Commission of India in Dhaka, highlighted the objectives and potential global impact of WAVES. Ann Mary George, First Secretary (Culture) at the High Commission of India, shared the vision for WAVES, stating, “We aim to make this an annual event, much like the World Economic Summit in Davos or the Raisina Dialogue for foreign policy. This will be a landmark platform for media and entertainment.”

The four-day programme will feature high-profile events, including the Global Media Dialogue, where ministers and policymakers will engage in discussions, and the M&E CEO Roundtable, bringing together industry leaders to strategise on the future of media and entertainment. The WAVES Awards will celebrate excellence in various fields, recognising outstanding

contributions with accolades.

Referring to this as the beginning of a revolutionary idea, Ann Mary George mentioned that competitions have been open to participants from across the globe. There are 22 challenges for international participants, including the radio content challenge, Ustad for classical music, Battle of Bands, Medium for electronic music, an animation contest, the Young Filmmaker Challenge, and the Film Poster Designer Challenge. Some of these competitions have already concluded, while others are ongoing. Details can be found on their website.

A total of 31 awards will be announced on the concluding day of the festival.

This initiative brings together arts, music, culture, media, and entertainment from around the world, fostering global exchange and embracing diversity.

# David Steven Cohen, ‘Courage the Cowardly Dog’ writer, dies at 58

David Steven Cohen, known for his work as the head writer of *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, has passed away at 58, as reported by animation historian Jerry Beck. He revealed on Facebook that Cohen succumbed to cancer.

Cohen was instrumental in shaping the eerie and surreal narrative style that defined *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, a Cartoon Network series known for its unsettling yet captivating



storytelling.

Although the show was created by John R Dilworth, Cohen joined as a writer in the first season and later became head writer.

He helped create many of the show’s most memorable episodes in seasons two to four, with his final contribution being the second-to-last episode before the series ended in 2002.

# Deepto TV unveils special Eid lineup



Deepto TV has announced a week-long special programme to commemorate Eid-ul-Fitr, featuring a lineup of Bengali films, including three world premieres.

The Fuad Chowdhury directorial *Meghna Konnya* will premiere on Eid day at 9am. *Toofan*, directed by Raihan Rafi, will air on the second day of Eid at 1pm, while *Omar*, directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, will be broadcast at 9am on the same day.

Other film highlights throughout the Eid holidays include *Shikari*, *Nolok*, *Antarjal*, *Nawab*, *Prohelika*, *Bir*, *Mukhosh*, *Mon Jekhane Hridoy Sekhane*, and *Poison*.

The channel will feature *Bhalobaslei Ghor Bandha Jay Na* at 1pm on the final day.

The film lineup promises a mix of thrillers, action, and drama, catering to a wide range of audiences.

# NEWS

## 1 killed in Jubo Dal factional clash

FROM PAGE 16

said Babu.

The injured, Rasel, 30, and Bashar, 32, both residents of Chonpara, were receiving treatment at DMCH, said Md Faruk, in charge of the hospital’s police outpost.

Mehedi Islam, senior assistant superintendent of police in Narayanganj, confirmed that the clash broke out over establishing supremacy in the area infamous for its drug trade.

The police and the Rapid Action Battalion conducted a joint operation yesterday morning, but could not make any arrests in connection with the clash.

Additional law enforcement personnel were deployed to maintain law and order in the area, Mehedi said.

No case was filed in this connection, said Salah Uddin Kader, inspector (investigation) of Rugganj Police Station.

According to police and local eyewitnesses, the conflict began

around 10:30pm on Tuesday night after Taraweesh prayers when a group of followers of Monir Dewan, president of Jubo Dal’s Chonpara unit, detained a known drug dealer named Robin and took him to the local Jubo Dal office.

A scuffle broke out when Abdul Karim, organising secretary of Jubo Dal’s Chonpara unit and Golam Rabbani, president of Jubo Dal’s Chonpara ward-2 unit, arrived at the office to secure Robin’s release.

After the scuffle, members of both factions, armed with firearms, harpoons, iron rods, and sharp weapons, clashed intermittently until dawn, leaving multiple individuals injured from both sides, said locals.

Contacted, Jubo Dal leader Monir denied any involvement in controlling the drug trade.

He claimed that Rabbani, Karim and their supporters attacked Monir’s men in an attempt to release a drug trader detained by Monir’s followers.

“We only acted for self-defence, but we did not use any firearms,” Monir claimed.

He alleged that his opponents collaborated with an “armed terrorist group” affiliated with the Awami League to attack them.

Efforts to contact Karim and Rabbani for their statements were unsuccessful, as they had reportedly fled the area following the incident. Their mobile phones were also found switched off.

A BNP leader from Chonpara, who wished to be anonymous, said supporters of former AL MP Golam Dastagir Gazi controlled the drug trade of before year’s mass uprising.

“During the Awami League’s tenure, Chonpara became a safe haven for drugs and crime. However, following the government’s fall in August last year, some BNP leaders have been sheltering drug traders and asserting dominance in the area, leading to internal conflicts within BNP ranks.”

## NBR suspects foul play

FROM PAGE 16

as more information is being gathered from banks. We are actively investigating the matter,” said a tax official on condition of anonymity.

On Monday, NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan said at an event that a person brought Tk 730 crore in the guise of remittances and the matter was under investigation.

Tax officials believe the money was laundered abroad and later brought back as remittances to take advantage of the NBR’s tax break.

The government provides a 2.5 percent incentive for remittances sent through formal channels.

Officials said the 67-year-old SM Faruqi Hasan holds the post of director at several businesses, including Hotel Lake Castle, Protik Developers, Protik Ceramics Ltd., and Protik Food & Allied Ltd.

They added that due to his close ties with high-ranking officials of the previous Awami League government, Hasan used his influence to secure illegal tax benefits with the assistance of some tax officials.

Meanwhile, Hasan, the founding president of the Awami League’s Ontario unit, dismissed the allegation, saying that his income was transferred to Bangladesh in full compliance of the law.

“The money was legally earned abroad, and taxes were already deducted there. Bangladesh and China have a Double Taxation Agreement (DTA), which prevents a person from being taxed in both countries,” he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

“The money was transferred through a legal banking channel,” added Hasan, who is currently in Germany.

When asked about the type of consultancy he provided to Chinese companies, Hasan said he offered full logistical support.

“Since I own a hotel, I arrange their accommodation, manage their travel, and organise their meetings at various locations. I also handle their official correspondence – receiving and delivering letters for meetings. I did it both from Bangladesh and China,” he claimed.

“Because of my services, they paid me a consultancy fee.”

However, a top official of the Income Tax Intelligence Unit, said, “We have got some vital clues regarding Hasan’s income, which he did not mention on his tax file.

“Besides, we are investigating the NBR officials who were involved in the process.”

## Next budget

FROM PAGE 16

inflation could be brought down to 8 percent by June this year.

During the meeting, editors suggested several measures, including steps to control inflation, expanding the social safety net programmes, raising the tax-free income limit to at least Tk 5 lakh, and increasing allocations for health and education sectors.

The editors and senior journalists also mentioned various challenges faced by the media, including high taxes levied on the newspaper industry.

In response, the finance adviser assured them that challenges faced by newspapers, television, and online platforms would be taken into consideration in the budget.

The finance adviser emphasised that allowances under social safety net programmes would be increased, but the extent would depend on the availability of resources.

Financial Express Editor Shamsul Haque Zahid suggested that the interim government, which will present the budget in June, should formulate a budget that the next government can implement, especially considering the possibility of elections later this year.

He also recommended a realistic approach to budgeting given low

revenue earnings.

Abdul Hai Shikdar, editor of Daily Jugantor, proposed increasing the tax-free income threshold above Tk 4 lakh.

Zakir Hossain, associate editor of Daily Samakal, said that the newspaper industry faces a total import tax of 31 percent on newsprint, and despite repeated requests over the years, no steps have been taken to reduce it.

He further said allowances in the government’s social security programmes are very low, suggesting increasing the allowances to at least Tk 3,000 per month.

Shawkat Hossain, online editor at the daily Prothom Alo, emphasised that job creation should be a major focus of this budget.

He also suggested shortening the budget speech.

In response, the finance adviser agreed to reduce its length to 50-60 pages.

Mizanur Rahman, head of operations at The Daily Star, stressed the need to incorporate automation into the operations of the National Board of Revenue in the next budget to enhance its efficiency.

Mostafa Kamal, editor of Daily Khaborer Kagoi, and Syed Shahnewaz Karim, acting editor of Daily Shomoyer Alo, also spoke at the meeting.

## Start taking steps now for holding peaceful polls

FROM PAGE 16

The others are procuring 364 new pickups, 140 prison vans for police, releasing funds for ongoing construction projects for police that are less than 70 percent complete, allocating funds for acquiring land for 65 police stations currently operating in rented buildings, and considering interest-free loans for purchasing motorcycles for sub-inspectors and assistant sub-inspectors.

On March 17, Prof Yunus held a meeting with field-level police officials. Officers shared their challenges.

To address the issues, a follow-up meeting was held yesterday, the CA’s press wing statement mentioned.

During the meeting on March 17, senior officials raised several demands, including the formation of an independent commission and reforms in the force.

Officials who attended the meeting later shared the updates with this newspaper.

The officials also demanded a rise in the travel and daily allowances, higher allowances for investigating general diaries, daycare centres, and washroom and water facilities for traffic police.

FROM PAGE 16

began protesting, claiming the post hurt their religious sentiments and demanded punishment of both students.

Following demonstrations, PUST authorities suspended the duo on March 16.

The Daily Star has seen copies of their suspension orders.

Speaking to this correspondent, Pronoy claimed his post contained nothing that would hurt religious sentiments.

“Nevertheless, I removed my post a day later [March 14]...The university authorities issued me a show-cause notice. I explained everything in my response, but they still suspended me and my friend.”

Meanwhile, some students discussed the issue in a closed Facebook Messenger group, “Sonatoni Chhatra Shangha.” The contents of the group were later leaked.

On March 16, protesters then demanded punishment of seven students of the university’s pharmacy department who were members of the messenger group.

The university’s proctorial body, led by student adviser Rashedul Haque, held discussions with the demonstrators regarding the issue that day.

Speaking to The Daily Star,

Rashedul said, “The students [demonstrators] got angry and attacked us. The university’s assistant proctor and I were physically assaulted.”

That same day, the university authorities issued show-cause notices to the seven pharmacy students.

One of the students, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, “We are now living in fear. We left campus on March 14, fearing that protesters would attack us if we returned.”

Meanwhile, another group of students yesterday protested the attack on university officials, demanding punishment of the attackers.

A civil engineering student, also preferring anonymity, said, “Some people are trying to create communal unrest on campus. We shouldn’t allow this. We want those who attacked our teachers to be punished.”

PUST authorities have formed two probe committees – one to investigate the allegations against the seven pharmacy students and another to look into the attack on proctorial body members.

PUST Proctor Md Kamruzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday, “The probe bodies are working separately. We are trying to restore calm on campus.”

On the fears of the seven students, he said, “No student is safe here.”

## Astronauts return

FROM PAGE 16

charred from withstanding scorching temperatures of 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit (2,000 degrees Celsius) during re-entry, bobbed steadily on the waves beneath a clear, sunny sky.

“What a ride – I see a capsule full of grins,” said Hague.

As fast boats raced to the capsule for initial safety checks – an unlikely escort arrived in the form of a playful pod of dolphins.

Soon after, a larger recovery vessel hoisted Freedom aboard. Teams opened the hatch, and one by one, the astronauts were helped out onto mobility aids, waving and flashing thumbs-up signs.

Next, they will be flown by helicopter to Houston, where they will be able to meet their families in another day or two, and begin a physical rehabilitation program.

“PROMISE MADE, PROMISE KEPT,” the White House posted on X, repeating a contentious claim that President Donald Trump’s administration had accelerated the recovery timeline.

The quartet left the International Space Station early Sunday, beginning their 17-hour journey home after final farewells and hugs with the remaining crew.

Wilmore and Williams, both ex-Navy pilots and veterans of two prior space missions, flew to the orbital lab in June last year, on what was supposed to be a days-long roundtrip to test out Boeing’s Starliner on its first crewed flight.