

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Rishka Festival 2025'

Get ready to step into a world where tradition meets creativity. *Rishka Festival 2025* returns to celebrate Pohela Boishakh in full festive flair. After the roaring success of *Rishka Fest 2024*, this year promises an even more vibrant experience—packed with music, art, food, and the spirit of Noboborsho 1432.

DATE: FRIDAY-MONDAY | APRIL 11-14
TIME: 11AM-10PM DAILY
VENUE: ALOKI, DHAKA

'No Other Land' director freed following detention by Israeli settlers

Hamdan Ballal, a Palestinian co-director of the Oscar-winning documentary *No Other Land*, has been released after being and assaulted and arrested, as confirmed by the documentary's Israeli co-director, Yuval Abraham.

Ballal's release came after concerns grew over his well-being, following Abraham's report on Monday that he was attacked by Israeli settlers outside his West Bank home.

Ballal and two others were detained by Israeli soldiers in Susiya, after around two dozen armed, masked settlers attacked the village, according to witnesses including co-director Basel Adra.

No Other Land, a film documenting the destruction of Masafer Yatta by the Israeli military, has won multiple awards but faced backlash, including a brief proposal in Miami Beach to end the lease of a theatre screening it.



PHOTO: AP



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Not too long ago, Tama Mirza impressed critics with her performance in Raihan Rafi's web-series *Amalnama*, released on Chorki. Nowadays, the actress is busy promoting her upcoming Eid release *Daagi*, in which she stars alongside Afran Nisho in the lead role. This Shihab Shaheen directorial received its censor certificate last Monday.

Speaking to The Daily Star about the film, Tama Mirza expressed her excitement, saying, "Receiving the censor certificate means *Daagi* is definitely coming to the theatres this Eid. Films are made for the audience and ours will finally reach them during the upcoming festive season. We are ready and I'm very happy about receiving the censor approval."

When asked about her character Jarin in *Daagi*, she shared, "An artiste has to prepare to embrace a character then immerse themselves in it to ultimately face the camera. I did the same. This time around, viewers will see me in a different light and the role required extra effort."

"I gave my hundred percent to become Jarin and personifying her meant becoming a character very unlike me. I had ample opportunities to showcase my acting abilities as Jarin."

Discussing her preparation for the role, she shared, "Before beginning our shooting schedule, I rehearsed continuously for a month. Even before that, I would occasionally rehearse my parts whenever I had time. I thoroughly practiced for this role, carrying the character within me for a long time."

The song *Ektukhani Mon* from *Daagi* was recently

released and the actress spoke about its reception, affirming, "Since the song's release, I have been hearing a lot of praises. Even after the film teaser launch, the response has been fantastic. The audience can sense that a quality film is coming this Eid. *Daagi's* story is truly wonderful and it is meant to be enjoyed with family."

With five or more films set to release this Eid, how does *Daagi* stand out among them?

Tama said, "I wish the best to all the Eid releases. During the Eid holidays, I believe some people will watch *Daagi*, some will watch *Borbaad*, and others will watch *Jongli*. Many viewers will even watch multiple films. It is natural for several movies to be released during a big festival. The more films that come out during Eid, the better it is for our industry."

When inquired about her experience working with Afran Nisho for the second time after *Surongo*, Tama shared, "It was a wonderful experience. Nisho *bhai* addresses me informally, like a close friend. He was incredibly supportive throughout the filming of the movie. He is a complete artiste with a massive fan following. Besides, now that we have completed filming, it feels like we are a part of one big film family."

"I am presently having to provide time to promote *Daagi* officially across various mediums. I urge the audience to go to the theatres this Eid and watch it so that they can stay with our cinema."

In conclusion, Tama highlighted the director's vision. She lauded, "Shihab Shaheen is a highly talented filmmaker. His work speaks for itself and proves how unique he is. He has constructed *Daagi* with great care and dedication."

'BORBAAD'

receives censor certificate

After much speculation, the upcoming Eid release *Borbaad*, starring superstar Shakib Khan, has received its clearance from the Bangladesh Film Certification Board (BFCB).

On Monday (March 24), the film was submitted to the board for approval. Following the board's observations and notes, *Borbaad* was edited and resubmitted for clearance yesterday.

Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed, a member of the board, told The Daily Star that they reviewed the revised version of the film after which it was granted approval. "The film will do well commercially," she added.

Borbaad, directed by Mehedi Hassan Hridoy and produced by Shahreen Akter, features Misha Sawdagor, Jishu, and Idhika Paul, among others in significant roles.

Yesterday, fans of Shakib Khan, known as Shakibians, formed a human chain in front of the Bangladesh Film Certification Board, demanding the uncut release of *Borbaad*. The protest followed initial objections over the film's "excessively violent" scenes.

NEWS

Yunus leaves for China today

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a speech at the opening plenary session of the Boao Forum for Asia Conference, popularly dubbed the Asian Davos, and hold separate meetings with China's Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang and some business leaders.

Yunus, who last attended the conference in China's Hainan Province in 2007, will present his famous theory of Three Zeros and sustainable solutions to global problems.

On March 28, he will meet President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

He is likely to visit a high-tech enterprise under Huawei and give an interview with a leading Chinese media outlet. On March 29, he will be conferred with an honorary doctorate by Peking University, where he will also deliver a speech.

The two countries are likely to sign

a few agreements and memoranda of understanding on economic and technical assistance, support for human resources development, cooperation in disaster mitigation, the establishment of a Chinese book centre, translation and publication of Chinese classical literature, collaboration in the sports sector and cooperation between the state news agencies of the two countries.

Teesta river water management, the Rohingya crisis, development assistance, cooperation in the health sector and Bangladesh's position on various global issues will come up during Yunus's meeting with Xi.

Asked if the Teesta river water management project will be discussed, Jashim said the meeting with the Chinese president is not agenda driven; rather the two sides will choose issues of their choice for discussion.

"However, there is interest from both sides to discuss the water management issue. Under that, there is a scope to discuss the Teesta issue as well," he said.

Asked if defence cooperation will take place, Jashim said this issue may come up during the discussions given the history of defence cooperation with China.

On the Rohingya issue, he said that Bangladesh has been trying for Rohingya repatriation for the last several years and China is also involved in an initiative.

"What we are expecting from this meeting is the Chinese views on the situation in Myanmar and share our views. Based on that, we can discuss the future course of action," he said.

There might be announcements on financial assistance, concessions in loans and a specialised hospital by China in Bangladesh.

Travel ban

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If they can pay the salary and bonus to the workers within March 27, the ban will be lifted, he said at a press conference on the current labour situation and payment to the workers.

The decision to impose a travel ban on 12 garment factory owners has been taken jointly by the home affairs ministry and the labour and employment ministry.

AHM Shafiquzzaman, secretary to the labour and employment ministry, however, declined to share the names of the factory owners with a travel ban on them.

"The workers of these 12 garment factories are demonstrating for their

salaries and bonuses over the last few days."

Of the 12 factories, seven were supposed to pay the salary and bonus from the amount received from the Bangladesh Bank's cash incentive fund.

The remaining five factory owners will also disburse the salary and bonus to their workers as the banks have been asked to facilitate loans for them to pay their workers, Shafiquzzaman told The Daily Star over the phone.

The BB has already disbursed Tk 2,250 crore from the cash incentive in favour of garment exporters to facilitate the payment of salaries and bonuses ahead of the Eid, said Md.

Anwar Hossain, administrator of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

So far, more than 99 percent of the factories have paid February's salary and more than 95 percent of the factories paid bonuses to their workers.

By March 27, almost all the factories will clear their February salary, half of March's salary of March and Eid bonus, he said.

Only three to four factories may face trouble in paying their March salary, he said.

"99.99 percent of the factories have paid February's salary by the 20th of Ramadan," said the labour and employment adviser Hossain.

Oikya Parishad report

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to communal violence.

Preliminary investigations by the police indicate that the deaths occurred at the hands of troublemakers, driven by a variety of factors such as prior enmity, theft, domestic disputes, and reckless behaviour.

The press wing statement detailed several incidents to illustrate the nature of the deaths.

In Gaibandha, Diplu Sarker was killed over a dispute over stolen money, and in Netrakona, Dilip Kumar Shaha Roy was murdered by unknown assailants while his family was away. Rajib Talukder died due to a personal feud, and Gita Rani Das in Sunamganj tragically died after being struck by an unidentified motorcycle while crossing the road, said the statement.

The statement added that Umepuru Marma in Bandarban was shot

following a dispute over a goat, and Sree Palash, an auto-rickshaw driver in Chapainawabganj, was murdered by criminals attempting to steal his rickshaw. Sree Dipen Munda in Moulvibazar was killed as part of a long-standing dispute, while Kanai Shabdakar died after a family quarrel. Kanai Pashi was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a tea garden, and Arnab Kumar Sarker, a Khulna University student, was shot by unknown assailants over a previous conflict. Lastly, Upal Roy in Narayanganj was killed during a robbery at his home.

These examples illustrate that the deaths were largely the result of personal disputes, criminal acts, or accidents, not communal violence as claimed by the council, the press wing statement read.

The statement claimed that unfortunately, this is not the

first time the Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council has misreported such stories.

Time and again, the council has made controversial claims about the abuse of minorities in Bangladesh. Yet, when confronted with the facts, they persist in refusing to correct their misleading publications, the statement added.

The council acting general secretary, Monindra Kumar Nath, told The Daily Star, "The information we provided on March 12 is based on incidents reported in various national newspapers. At the same time, we have verified these facts on the ground. Therefore, all the information we have provided is entirely true."

He said, "Unfortunately, the government has opposed our findings. We expect the government to investigate our information, arrest those involved, and ensure justice."

Unite for a prosperous Bangladesh

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The event was organised by the Bangladesh Army.

Financial assistance was provided to each of the families as a gesture of support.

Waker reaffirmed the army's commitment to the nation, emphasising the motto: "In war, we are with you; in peace, we are with you; everywhere, we are for the nation."

The event saw the participation of 72 injured and the families of martyrs from the July uprising.

The army chief described the July uprising as a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's history, highlighting that the young generation not only participated in the movement but also demonstrated how to pursue rightful claims with truth and justice.

In another development, a delegation led by Lt Gen Joel B Vowell,

deputy commander of the United States Army Pacific Command, paid a courtesy call on General Waker at Army Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment.

During the meeting, both sides discussed various matters of mutual interest, including the enhancement of military capabilities and the advancement of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the US.

Kyiv, Moscow agree sea, energy truce: US

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towards Russia, with Trump envoy Steve Witkoff saying he did not "regard Putin as a bad guy", alarming European officials who consider the Russian leader a dangerous enemy.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov said Kyiv would regard any movement of Russian military vessels outside the eastern part of the Black Sea as a violation and a threat, in which case Ukraine would have the full right to self-defence.

Russia has attacked Ukraine's power grid with missiles and drones throughout the war, arguing that civil energy infrastructure is a legitimate target because it helps Ukraine's warfighting capability.

More recently, Ukraine has been launching long-range strikes on Russian oil and gas targets, which it says provide fuel for Russian troops and income to fund its war effort.

The Kremlin said the pause in

attacks on energy would last for 30 days from March 18, when Putin first discussed it with Trump. Ukraine had said last week that it would accept such a pause only after a formal agreement.

The agreement on a truce at sea addresses an issue that was critical early in the war, when Russia imposed a de facto naval blockade on Ukraine, one of the world's biggest grain exporters, worsening a global food crisis.

More recently, maritime battles have been only a comparatively small part of the war since Russia withdrew its naval forces from the eastern Black Sea after a number of successful Ukrainian attacks.

Kyiv has been able to reopen its ports and resume exports at around pre-war levels, despite the collapse of a previous UN-brokered Black Sea shipping agreement, but its ports have come under regular air attack. Zelenskiy said the agreement would

bar such strikes.

Moscow said the agreement would require sanctions relief including restoring links between Russia's agricultural export bank and the SWIFT international payments system. That and other steps could require agreement from European countries.

Trump has been pressing Moscow and Kyiv to bring a rapid end to the war, a goal he promised to achieve when he ran for president last year. At the same time he is pursuing a rapid rapprochement with Russia that Washington and Moscow say could lead to lucrative business opportunities.

Ukraine and its European allies fear Trump could strike a hasty deal with Putin that undermines their security and caves in to Russian demands, including for Kyiv to abandon its NATO ambitions and give up land claimed by Moscow.

18-yr-old abducted, raped for a week

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on her way to and from school.

The girl's family complained about the issue to Hridoy's two elder brothers, but to no avail.

On March 13, around 8:30pm, when the victim went out of the house to use the washroom, Hridoy, drugged and abducted her. Later, when she regained consciousness, she found

herself in a room in an unknown location.

There, he held a knife to the victim's throat, raped her, and recorded it. He threatened to kill her and post the videos on social media if she tried to escape or tell anyone about the rape.

The victim was raped multiple times after being held captive for about a week.