

‘Mastul’ nominated for Humanitarian Film at Imagine India Film Fest

Mastul has earned a nomination for Best Humanitarian Film at the upcoming Imagine India International Film Festival, scheduled to take place in Madrid, Spain this September.

The 24th edition of the festival will run from September 1 to 16, where the Mohammad Nuruzzaman film will compete in the ‘Life Award’ category.

The announcement has also been confirmed through a news release on the official Imagine India website.

Following its premiere in Moscow, the film has attracted considerable attention from various quarters. Riding that wave of interest, *Mastul* is now preparing for its screening at Imagine India 2025.

The director has received an official invitation to attend the festival and expressed his hope to travel to Spain in September, pending final arrangements.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF AFD

A DELIGHTFUL CHILDREN’S EXHIBITION in the heart of Dhaka

MAISHA TASNIM SRESHTHA

The exhibition *Ikrimikri: A World of Picture Books* opened on May 2 at La Galerie of Alliance Française de Dhaka, inviting visitors into a whimsical realm where children’s book illustrations come to life. Organised by the children’s publishing collective *Ikrimikri*, the show runs until May 7 and celebrates the power of visual storytelling rooted in Bangladeshi culture.

The gallery has been transformed into an immersive space, with speech bubbles, storybook trails, and artworks displayed at child-friendly heights. The exhibition features original illustrations from popular *Ikrimikri* titles such as *Ranabi Kak O Kaththokra*, *Zirodhoni*, and *Sada Boker Tinti Chhana*. A standout feature is a section showcasing artwork by children themselves, affirming the idea that young readers can also be storytellers and artists.

Founded in 2016 by Mahbulul Haque, *Ikrimikri* focuses on culturally resonant picture books in Bangla, often inspired by indigenous myths and local traditions. “We want children to grow up seeing their own world reflected in stories,” said Haque.

The exhibition also includes puppet shows, theatrical adaptations, storytelling sessions, and hands-on workshops in illustration, bookmaking, and calligraphy.

At its core, the event promotes the joy of reading and the importance of accessible, relatable children’s literature in



Bangladesh. The week-long exhibition not only brings picture books to life but also invites children and families to actively engage with stories through a variety of interactive sessions.

The schedule also features workshops such as *From Words to Images* by Sabyasachi Mistry, a typography session led by Dewan Atikur Rahman, and a book-making workshop for Grades 5–10, facilitated by Shamim Ahmed.

Young writers will present their own stories in a special reading session on May 4, while the exhibition will conclude on May 7 with a theatrical performance of *Fangsang* by child actors from Bot’ola.

Aamir Khan in talks for Indo-China film



Actor filmmaker Aamir Khan, arguably the most popular Indian star in China, has seen massive success there with *Dangal* and *Secret Superstar*, both of which broke box office records for Indian films.

Speaking at the WAVES Summit last Friday, he discussed the potential for a joint Indo-Chinese film production as the next step in cultural collaboration.

Aamir revealed that he has been in talks with his Chinese counterparts for years about such a project, calling it a “win-win” creatively, emotionally, and commercially.

“With stars from both countries, an Indo-Chinese film could appeal to nearly half the world’s population,” he remarked.

Showbiz stars gear up for ‘Celebrity Champions Trophy’

After a two-year break, Bangladesh’s showbiz stars are returning to the field with the **Celebrity Champions Trophy** (CCT), a rebranded version of the former **Celebrity Cricket League** (CCL).

Kicking off on May 5, this year’s tournament features a new T20 format and open-air venues, replacing the previous indoor 6-over matches. Four teams—Gladiators, Kings, Warriors, and Spartans—will compete in seven matches, including the final, broadcast live on T Sports.

The lineup includes actors Siam Ahmed, Sariful Razz, Irfan Sajjad, Tawfif Mahbub, Ziaul Roshan, Joy Chowdhury, Sanju John; actresses Mehazabien Chowdhury, Deepa Khandakar, Tasnia Farin, Keya Payel, Sallha Khanam Nadia, Sayra Akter, Bonni Hasan; and singers Arfin Rumey and Zakiya Sultana Kornia, among others.

The trophy was officially unveiled on May 1, marking the tournament’s much-anticipated return.



NEWS

Inconclusive DNA test

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were murdered between 3:00am and 5:00am on February 11, 2012, while sleeping in their bedroom with their 5-year-old son. Sagar was attacked first, followed by Runi. Despite sustaining fatal injuries, both remained alive for some time after the assault.

Investigators recovered a kitchen knife and a cleaver from the crime scene, believed to have been used in the attack. The report noted there were no signs of forced entry and no one else was present in the home before the murders.

Md Mostafa Kamal, additional inspector general of police and head of the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), who leads the task force, yesterday told The Daily Star they submitted the report as the HC asked for an update on the investigation.

“We informed the court and sought more time. The report we submitted

was not a final or conclusive one. Nothing can be said with certainty until the investigation is complete,” he added.

On September 30 last year, the HC directed the home ministry to form a task force of senior law enforcement officials and transfer the probe from Rab to this team. The initial six-month deadline expired on March 31.

So far, 12 people, including seven journalists, have been questioned in connection with the case. The next hearing is set for October 22.

Reacting to the update, Runi’s brother, Nowsher Alam Roman, said, “The task force still has no concrete evidence. We are still in the dark.”

Sagar was the news editor at Maasranga TV, and Runi was a senior reporter at ATN Bangla. The murders occurred in their rented apartment in West Rajabazar. Roman filed the case the next day at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, naming no suspects.

Riding anti-Trump wave

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projected Labor would win 80 of 150 seats in the House of Representatives, increasing its majority, with 90% of polling places counted.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) projected 85 seats for Labor, 41 for the Liberal and National coalition, with nine for independents and another 15 too close to call.

Dutton – whose Liberals had been leading in opinion polls as recently as February until he became dogged with comparisons to Trump – said he had phoned Albanese to congratulate him.

Israel to expand

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Yunis refugee camp killed at least 11 people including three babies up to a year old.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal reported 11 killed “after the bombardment of the Al-Bayram family home in the Khan Yunis camp” in southern Gaza at around 3:00am (0000 GMT).

On Friday, the civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 42 people across the war-ravaged territory, which has been under a total Israeli blockade since March 2.

This man’s blood

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antibodies that can neutralise the poison. If it’s a small amount of venom, the body can react before it’s overwhelmed. And if the body can recognise the venom, it can react more quickly and handle larger exposures.

It’s very early research – the antivenom was only tested in mice, and researchers are still years away from human trials. And while their experimental treatment shows promise against the group of snakes that include mambas and cobras, it’s not effective against vipers, which include snakes like rattlers.

“Despite the promise, there is much work to do,” said Nicholas Casewell, a snakebite researcher at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, in an email.

Friede is now employed by Centivax, which is trying to develop the treatment, and he’s excited that his 18-year odyssey could one day save lives from snakebite. But his message to those inspired to follow in his footsteps is quite simple: “Don’t do it,” he said.

BNP plans a grand welcome on Tuesday

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has been in London since 2008, when she travelled there with her husband, Tarique, and their daughter, Zaima Rahman.

Khaleda will also be accompanied by her personal physician Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, Adviser Enamul Haque Chowdhury, and Assistant Private Secretary Masudur Rahman.

Meanwhile, two key members of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia’s medical board—Prof Shahabuddin Talukder, a cardiologist, and ICU consultant Dr Zafar—reached London yesterday to accompany her back to Bangladesh.

Speaking at a press conference at the BNP’s Gulshan office yesterday, Fakhrul said Khaleda’s health condition has improved significantly during her time abroad.

“Being in a familial environment and under advanced medical care, she is doing much better by the grace of Allah. That’s why she has decided to return to the country.”

“The fascist Hasina regime falsely imprisoned her under fabricated charges and caused her serious physical

harm. But now, the entire nation is emotionally charged and ready to welcome her home. Patriotic citizens from across the country are preparing for her return.”

Fakhrul said the BNP has made necessary preparations to ensure order and discipline on her way to her residence from the airport.

Fakhrul urged party members to receive her in a peaceful and disciplined manner to avoid causing traffic congestion.

He also called upon the general public to use the elevated expressway on the day of her return to avoid traffic.

At a joint meeting held last night, BNP leaders issued strict instructions to maintain order. Activists have been told not to block roads or cause any disruption along the route from the airport to Gulshan.

During her last departure on January 7, crowding had delayed her arrival at the airport by an hour and 47 minutes.

As Tuesday is a working day, traffic is already expected to be heavy. Any large

gathering may lead to major gridlocks, and the party has therefore urged activists to strictly follow instructions.

According to BNP sources, law enforcers have been requested to ensure security at both Khaleda’s Gulshan residence and Zubaida Rahman’s ancestral home, Mahbub Bhaban, in Dhanmondi.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police will provide security detail and escort for Khaleda from the airport to her residence.

Retired Major General Fazle Elahi Akbar and Brig Gen (ret’d) AKM Shamsul Islam Shams are coordinating with law enforcement to ensure both security and a smooth reception for the former prime minister.

On January 8, Khaleda was flown to London on a special air ambulance sent by the Emir of Qatar for advanced treatment.

The 79-year-old former prime minister was admitted to the London Clinic, where she underwent 17 days of treatment.

Since January 25, she has been under continued care at Tarique’s residence.

Polls should be in Feb

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“For the sake of fairness and objectivity, certain reforms must be made.”

Jamaat is submitting a set of recommendations on this to the relevant commissions.

“We urge all parties that politics is not for personal gain. Politics is for the country and the people. The more we cooperate, the more the nation will benefit and the more free and beautiful the upcoming election will be.”

Criminals must be brought to visible justice, he said.

“We have already said that -- this is what the nation wants to see. We understand that it is not possible to bring everyone to justice within this short time.”

However, some trials must be conducted so that public confidence is built.

“Those who are the main culprits must be brought to justice and visible trials must be presented to the nation. We observe a weakness in the government -- we want to see more speed in delivering justice. We want to see the government more active in this matter.”

If they are brought to justice, then in the upcoming election “black money and muscle power” will not be able to exert influence.

“And no one will dare to show such audacity again.”

But if there is no justice, the fear will remain.

“To make this election meaningful and ensure 100 percent reflection of public opinion, we want to see a quality parliament in our country. For that, the election must be free from the influence of muscle power and black money.”

The election must be held based on proportional representation, he said, adding that 62 countries around the world follow this system.

Most of them are known as developed countries and have benefited from it, he said, adding that the system was not abandoned by the countries that adopted it.

“We have seen the traditional electoral system. Under it, those nominated as lawmakers in parliament include people who cannot even read what is written -- how will they draft laws for the people of Bangladesh? What qualifications do they have to carry out legal reforms? That is why we have said that the system should be proportional.”

The percentage of votes received will determine the number of seats.

“In this way, no one will dare to label a party as big or small.”

Govt has no tools to stop cases

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several hundred people. There is no remedy in the entire judicial system or the police system that can be used to stop that case.

“The criminal justice system is completely broken and we’re not an ideal country. Our legal system is very weak. Those with money get precedence in the courts. All 4,000 public prosecutors are appointed by political parties. We’ve not been able to create an independent prosecution.”

Alam mentioned a case where a rights activist was charged with murder by members of a certain party. “These people are trying to cash in on the situation and get the interim government into trouble.”

He added that the most the government can do is ensure that no journalist is harassed or arrested.

The press secretary further said that when mobs threaten media organisations, the government can only protect those threatened but cannot intervene.

“Do mobs not have the right to protest?” said Alam.

“What can we do if people go to

media organisations with lists of names of journalists who had acted as aides to fascist forces? Can we ask them not to name names? If any journalist had called July protesters ‘criminals’, then the public have the right to name them.”

He added that the interim government protected major media organisations when protesters turned unruly while demonstrating in front of their buildings.

“Give a list of all those who were victims of mob attacks and we will act on it,” Alam demanded.

“Within the government, we have a principal agreement that we will not influence anyone’s hiring or firing [in the media]. A lot of BNP journalists came and asked me to recommend them for jobs. I never did. We did not have a hand in any of the job losses that have taken place in the media sector so far.”

About whatever is happening in the industry right now, the press secretary said this was the result of the media not upholding its duty during the Awami League regime.

“All of this is happening because of the failure of journalism. We made

mistakes. How will you ignore the journalism that happened during the Hasina regime?... We are thinking of going to the UN to review the failures of the media.”

He also said it is not fair to compare the media repression under the previous regime with the challenges journalists are facing now.

“People are conflating the repression of the media in the Hasina regime with what is happening now. It can’t be compared. Why are we ignoring the previous malpractices in journalism and focusing on the new issues?”

The consensus commission will discuss the necessary media reforms with the political parties, Alam said.

“I think it was a mistake to revoke the accreditation cards of journalists,” he said, adding that to rectify the matter, they have formed a committee that has made a guideline on eligibility for press accreditation.

The press secretary also said the new cyber protection ordinance will be placed before the cabinet within a week or two. “We’ve addressed the criticisms in the draft ordinance and prepared a new one.”