

Celebrating the Rebel Bard: A NATIONWIDE TRIBUTE TO KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM

Today marks the 126th birth anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh. A powerful force in Bengali literature and culture, Nazrul's fiery words, revolutionary spirit, and undying call for equality continue to resonate in the hearts of millions. In honour of his life and legacy, a vibrant array of nationwide events and television programmes has been organised, celebrating Nazrul's timeless contribution.



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy and local authorities, is hosting a three-day cultural event in Cumilla from May 25 to 27. This year's theme, *Chobbisher Gonobhyutthan: Kazi Nazrul Utterodhikar* (The People's Uprising of '24: Nazrul's Legacy), emphasises the poet's enduring impact on Bangladesh's spirit of resistance and cultural awakening.

The opening ceremony at the Cumilla District Shilpkala Academy will be graced by prominent personalities including Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, adviser to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and Md Mofidur Rahman, secretary to the Ministry. Special addresses will be delivered by Latiful Islam Shibli, executive director of the Kazi Nazrul Islam

Institute, and Khilkhil Kazi, chairperson of the Institute's Trustee Board. The highlight of the event includes the presentation of the Nazrul Award for 2023 and 2024, honouring individuals who have significantly contributed to the promotion and preservation of Nazrul's work and philosophy.

The stage will come alive with powerful renditions of Nazrul Sangeet, dramatic recitations, and dance performances by renowned artists such as Ferdous Ara, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Shahinur Abedin, and Salauddin Ahmed, accompanied by the dynamic choreography of the Bangladesh Academy of Fine Arts and Shilpkala's own dance troupes.

Genesis Theatre will present the thought-provoking play *Damal Chele Nazrul* in Teota, Manikganj, the birthplace of Nazrul's wife, Promila Devi. This play portrays inspirational episodes from the poet's early

life and his struggle for justice.

Simultaneously, at the Bangla Academy, Genesis Theatre's children and youth troupe will stage the musical drama *Dekhbo Ebar Jagottake*. Created to bring Nazrul's messages of free thought and universal humanism to the next generation, the performance forms a key part of the daylong celebrations.

Additionally, *Damal Chele Nazrul* will be staged again on June 1 at the Nazrul Institute (Kobi Bhaban) in Dhaka.

A special musical programme titled *Thumrir Jalsa* was held yesterday at 6:30pm at the Chhayanaut Cultural Centre Auditorium, organised by the Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) has curated an expansive day of special programming to honour Nazrul's legacy: 9am – *Duronto*

A panel delving into Nazrul's life, ideology, and enduring relevance. At 8:50pm – *Ganer Mala*: A star-studded musical showcase hosted by Ferdous Ara, featuring Fatema Tuz Zohra, Yakub Ali Khan, Salauddin Ahmed, Yasmin Mushtari, and others. At 10:00pm – *Sabyasachi Nazrul*: A rich multimedia performance hosted by Priyanka Gope, weaving together Nazrul's music, poetry, and dance.

Duronto TV joins the national celebration with two special presentations at 9:30am *Unnata Mama Shir*: A dance programme choreographed by Amit Chowdhury, performed by Sadhona's dancers, including Rudmila Priyonti Chowdhury, Arisha Chowdhury, Noholi Islam Riya, Labannya Das Gupta, and others. This performance unites the themes of rebellion, love, and equality, drawing from Nazrul's iconic



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Nazrul: A children's special featuring young performers from the Shishu Academy with songs, dances, poetry, and a play titled *Kanamuchi*. At 4:05pm – Documentary: A visual exploration of places associated with Nazrul's life and legacy. 5:00pm onwards – Music and Dance Special: A performance session inspired by Nazrul's poems and songs. At 6:00pm – Discussion Segment:

works such as *Bidrohi*, *Nari*, *Mora Jhonor Moto Uddam*, and *Runjhun Rumjhun*. At 11:00am and 7:30pm – *Golper Jhuri*: A television play based on Nazrul's short stories *Shikari* and *Planchet*, directed by Nahid Ahmed Pial. The cast includes talented child actors Apurba, Jahan, Ratul, Protusha, and senior performers Shahiduzzaman Selim and Rahmat Ali.



Anwarul Haque, Shabnam Mushtari honoured with Nazrul Award

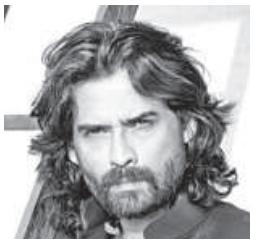
Researcher Anwarul Haque and Nazrul Sangeet artiste Shabnam Mushtari are set to receive the Bangla Academy's Nazrul Award today in recognition of their contributions to the legacy of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

The awards will be presented at the Nazrul Jayanti celebration at the Bangla Academy premises and include a crest, an uttorio, and a cash prize of Tk 1 lakh each.

Professor Haque, a retired academic from Cumilla Victoria Government College, has authored several works on Nazrul's life and literary contributions.

Shabnam Mushtari, who began performing in the 1960s, gained prominence through her albums and television performances. She hails from a literary family, with her parents and siblings also active in the cultural sphere.

Actor Mukul Dev no more



Indian actor Mukul Dev, known for his performances across South Indian cinema, and television, passed away on Friday night, aged 54.

Rahul Dev, Mukul's oldest brother, shared the news on social media yesterday, writing, "Our brother Mukul Dev passed away peacefully in New Delhi last night. He is survived by his daughter Sia Dev. Missed by siblings Rashmi Kaushal, Rahul Dev, and nephew Sidhant Dev."

The cause of his demise remains undisclosed.

Mukul Dev stepped into the spotlight in 1996 with his TV debut in *Mumkin* and his film debut in *Dastak*.

Known for his roles in *Yamla Pagla Deewana*, *Son of Sardaar*, and *Jai Ho*, among others in recent years, he brought charisma to a wide range of characters.

MERIL PROTHOM-ALO AWARDS 2024

Biggest winners in the marquee event



Best Actress (web series): Zinnat Ara (Simpaat) **Limited-length Fiction:** **Best Director:** Jahid Preetom (Buk Pocket-er Golpo) **Best Screenplay:** Subrata Sanjib (Rod Brishtir Golpo) **Best Actress:** Tasnia Farin (Poroshpor) **Best Actor:** Khairul Basar (Rod Brishtir Golpo) **Best Feature Film:** Priyo Maloti **Best Director (Feature Film):** Shangkha Dasgupta (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actress (Feature Film):** Mehazabien Chowdhury (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actor (Feature Film):** Mamnun Hasan Emon (Maya)

A special honour was bestowed upon Shakib Khan in recognition of his outstanding contributions in the past 25 years to the film industry.

Popular Choice Awards: **Best Debut:** Farrukh Ahmed Rehan (Jugol) **Best Singer (Female):** Dilshad Nahar Kona (Dushti Kokil, Toofan) **Best Singer (Male):** Pritom Hasan (Laage Ura Dhura, Toofan) **Best Actress (Drama):** Tanjim Saiyara Totini (Love Sab) **Best Actor (Drama):** Tawsif Mahbub (Love Sab) **Best Actress (Film):** Mehazabien Chowdhury (Priyo Maloti) **Best Actor (Film):** Shakib Khan (Toofan)

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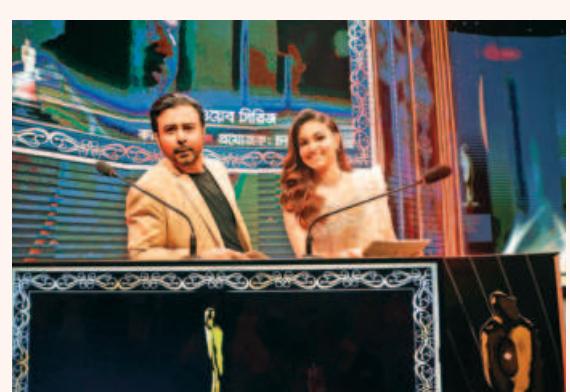
Rife with glamour and applause, the 26th Meril Prothom Alo Awards were held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Agargaon. Celebrating the year's finest in film, television, and OTT, the event brought together a dazzling array of stars and honoured the artistic achievements that aided in defining the spirit of Bangladeshi culture this past year.

Afran Nisho and Tasnia Farin made their debut as hosts for the event, and they helmed the ceremony with charm and poise.

A highlight of the night was the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to veteran actor Abul Hayat. A moving documentary paid tribute to his decades-spanning career. Actress Dilara Zaman presented the award, while Anjan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Toiletries Ltd, honoured him with an embroidered shawl. In a heartfelt moment, Hayat dedicated the award to his wife, Shirin Hayat, and expressed gratitude to his family and colleagues, underscoring the collective nature of his success.

Here is the full list of the awards:

Critics' Choice Awards: **Best Web Series:** Rongila Kitab **Best Screenwriter:** Salzar Rahman (Kalpurush) **Best Director (web series):** Nuhash Humayun (Dui Shaw) **Best Actor (web series):** Mosharraf Karim (Adhunik Bangla Hotel)



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF PROTHOM ALO

The 2025 Cannes Film Festival concluded yesterday, with Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi's *It Was Just an Accident* and Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa's *Two Prosecutors* emerging as frontrunners for the coveted Palme d'Or top prize.

French actor Juliette Binoche and her jury will select the winner from 22 entries.

Acclaimed contenders also include *Young Mothers* by

Belgium's Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, German generational tale *Sound of Falling*, and Brazil's *The Secret Agent*, among others.

Politics loomed large this year: over 900 film professionals signed a letter condemning the Gaza conflict, with signatories including Binoche, Ralph Fiennes, and Julian Assange.

Assange's biopic *The Six Billion Dollar Man* won a special jury prize, while *The Mysterious Gaze*

of the Flamingo by Chilean Diego Cespedes claimed Un Certain Regard's top honour.

Other winners included Hafsia Herzi's *The Last One* (the festival's Queer Palm Award) and Thai film *Useful Ghost* (Critics' Week section).

On a lighter note, a sheepdog from the Icelandic drama *The Love That Remains*, by Hlynur Pálmarson, won the Palm Dog prize.

