

# The pride of Noakhali

# AL AMIN'S

# METEORIC

# RISE TO CANNES

SHARMIN JOYA

Who could have ever imagined a boy making it to Cannes from the narrow, winding lanes in the outskirts of Noakhali? Certainly not Al Amin, not even in his wildest dreams. Nonetheless, that dream has become a reality. *Ali*, the short film directed by Adnan Al Rajeev, has received a Special Mention at the prestigious 78th Cannes Film Festival.

Since Saturday, *Ali* has been on everyone's radar—celebrated for making history in the Bangladeshi film industry. With his deeply moving portrayal of the titular character, Al Amin is still trying to take it all in.

"I never even thought I'd act," he confessed, "And now this opportunity of attending Cannes still feels like a dream."

The journey, he says, came out of nowhere — completely unplanned. Hailing from Bashirhat in Companiganj, Noakhali, Al Amin is a third-year BSS student at Govt Mujib College.

While returning to Paris by train from Cannes, Al Amin reflected on the extraordinary path that took him from the quiet corners of rural Bangladesh to the glitz and grandeur of one of the world's most revered film festivals.

For the role of Ali, director Adnan Al Rajeev had been searching for a certain kind of presence — an innocent face, someone with long hair and eyes expressive enough to speak volumes without uttering a single word. "They auditioned around 40 people for the part," Al Amin shared. "But they weren't looking for someone to perform. They wanted someone who could simply be Ali. And they saw that in me."

So, how did they even find him — a complete

newcomer with no media background?

"Well, I had auditioned for a few music reality shows," he explained. "I got some attention for singing in dual voices. I made it through the initial rounds but was eventually dropped because the others were far more polished. *Ali's* team then somehow found me."

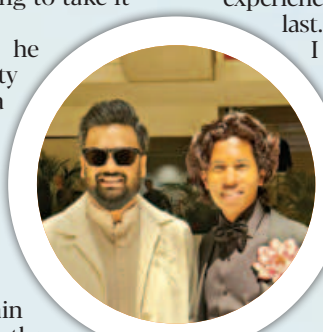
*Ali* is set in a coastal town, where singing is considered forbidden. A teenage boy, driven by his dreams, secretly enters a singing competition and longs to leave for the city. But beneath the surface lies a haunting mystery.

Although *Ali* marked his very first acting experience, Al Amin believes it won't be his last. "This film gave me a kind of courage I didn't know I had. I now truly believe I can build something with this."

He was initially nervous about not speaking English fluently. "But I soon realised that language isn't a barrier," he smiled. "At the screening, people from France, Germany, and Japan came up to me and said, 'Your story moved us.' That's one of the greatest rewards I'll ever receive."

When he returns home, Al Amin plans to begin work on a full-length feature film. "It'll be in our language, about our land and our people. I want the boys and girls from our villages to see themselves on screen — to hear their own stories."

At the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, the Short Film Palme d'Or was awarded to *I'm Glad You're Dead Now* by Tawfeek Barhom — who personally praised Al Amin for his performance. "I was overwhelmed when he came up to me and said he loved my work," he recalled while signing off. "It felt surreal."



PHOTOS: COURTESY

## Jafar Panahi's revenge thriller clinches Cannes' top prize

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Dissident Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi made history on Saturday as his revenge thriller *It Was Just An Accident* claimed the

Palme d'Or at the 78th Cannes Film Festival. He is now one of the few directors to have secured top awards at all three major European film festivals, having previously won the Golden Bear at Berlin for *Taxi* (2015) and the Golden Lion at Venice for *The Circle* (2000).

Panahi, 64, who faced a 15-year filmmaking ban in Iran and has endured multiple imprisonments, dedicated the award to the people of Iran and their fight for freedom.

*It Was Just An Accident* follows a garage owner who kidnaps a man resembling his past torturer, exploring revenge and trauma. It's only the second Iranian film to win the Palme d'Or after *Taste of Cherry* (1997).

Jury President Juliette Binoche praised the film's emotional depth and artistic courage, stating, "Art transforms darkness into forgiveness, hope, and new life."

Other major wins include Joachim Trier receiving the Grand Prix for *Sentimental Value*, while the Jury Prize was jointly awarded to Mascha Schilinski's *Sound of Falling* and Oliver Laxe's *Sirat*.

Kleber Mendonça Filho won Best Director for the Brazilian film *The Secret Agent*, which also earned Wagner Moura the Best Actor award. *Young Mothers* by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne took home Best Screenplay, while Nadia Melliti won Best Actress for *The Little Sister*. Bi Gan's *Resurrection* received the Special Prize.

The Camera d'Or for Best First Film went to *The President's Cake* by Hassan Hadi, and Tawfeek Barhom's *I'm Glad You're Dead Now* won the Palme d'Or for Best Short Film, with Special Mention for Bangladeshi director Adnan Al Rajeev's *Ali*.

In *Un Certain Regard*, Diego Céspedes's *The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo* won the top prize, with several other honours recognising bold storytelling across the board.



Yesterday, Bangla Academy celebrated Kazi Nazrul Islam's 126th birth anniversary with tributes, a seminar, and cultural performances. Nazrul Awards were conferred to researcher Anwarul Haque and singer Shabnam Mushtari for their contributions on the works of our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. However, Shabnam Mushtari couldn't attend the ceremony due to poor health, so her daughter received the award on her behalf. Each received Tk 1 lakh, a crest, and an *uttorio* at the event titled *Chobbisher Gonobhyuthan*.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BANGLA ACADEMY

## A unique celebration of Nazrul's 'Thumris' at Chhayanaut



Marking the 126th birth anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bangladesh Nazrul Sangheet Sangstha hosted a special concert, *Thumri'r Jalsa*, at Chhayanaut

Auditorium last Saturday evening.

Departing from conventional patriotic or devotional renditions, the programme spotlighted Nazrul's lesser-known contributions to the *thumri* genre, presenting his compositions alongside classical thumris rooted in foundational ragas.

Featuring both seasoned vocalists and emerging talents, the performance showcased Nazrul's artistic versatility and deep engagement with classical forms.

Organisers aimed to reaffirm the national poet's musical legacy — not only as a voice of resistance, but as a sophisticated composer.

## NEWS

### Internal democracy lies at the heart of NCP charter

FROM PAGE 1  
The NCP is likely to publish the charter today, several leaders said.

The charter states that the people had to give their blood time and again to establish democracy because the core principles of the Liberation War — democracy, equality, human dignity, and social justice — remained unfulfilled.

People laid down their lives in the 2024 mass uprising not just to oust a government, but to dismantle a "fascist system" built on corruption, enforced disappearances, and suppression of dissent.

#### NCP'S GOALS, VISIONS

At the heart of the vision for "New Bangladesh" is a strong, participatory, and accountability-driven democracy where freedom of speech, voting rights, and the "freedom of organisation" are guaranteed for all, says the draft.

The party pledges to build a society eliminating all forms of economic and social discrimination and ensuring fundamental rights such as

access to education, healthcare, and employment for every citizen.

The NCP envisions an efficient, transparent, and citizen-oriented administrative system which is not corrupt and wasteful.

Another core goal is the establishment of the rule of law, justice, and human rights across the country. The state will rely on science, technology, and innovation.

The NCP stresses on equal opportunities for all, regardless of religion, colour, gender, or political belief.

The party will always be vocal on issues related to the nation's independence and sovereignty.

The NCP will eliminate economic and social discrimination by ensuring access to healthcare, education, and employment for all. Special attention will be given to farmers, workers, and marginalised communities, with initiatives aimed at safeguarding their rights and improving their socio-economic conditions.

The party will press for a complete

overhaul of the education sector to make the system innovation-driven and employment-oriented.

The NCP envisions a sustainable, export-oriented future economy powered by technology and agriculture.

**LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**  
The NCP charter refers to the individual occupying the topmost position of the party as the leader or chief. The second-highest position is the deputy leader or deputy chief, followed by the organisation.

Should the NCP win national elections and form a government, the party's leader must resign as the party chief to ensure a clear separation between governance and party operations.

If 10 percent of the national council members submit a formal request for a probe against the party chief, the political council, the highest policy-making body of the party, would form an investigation committee.

The political council must deliver a decision within 15 working days.

The other senior officeholders will

be subject to the same level of scrutiny.

The political council will consist of 13 elected members, including the chief and deputy and six nominees from the top two leaders.

If the NCP forms the government, the prime minister will be added as an additional member of the political council.

To run for the political council, a candidate must be a general member of the party for at least five years and must secure backing from at least two percent of the national council delegates.

Aspirants for the positions of leader and deputy leader must be running mates and must be endorsed by at least five percent of national council members. If no panel secures 51 percent of the votes, a run-off will be held between the top two contenders.

All elected leadership positions will carry a three-year term, and a leader may not serve more than three terms.

The NCP will have a multi-layered structure.

The executive body, just below the

political council, will handle the party's day-to-day affairs: formulating press strategies, campaign planning, and implementing political programmes.

The national council — also referred to as the party's general assembly — will comprise members from all levels of the organisation, from grassroots to the central leadership.

Five delegates from each upazila unit and 10 from each district unit will be elected to the council.

All key decisions of the party, such as budget approvals, audit report analyses, leadership elections and no confidence motions, will be undertaken by the national council.

A simple majority is required for most decisions, but amendments to the party charter will require a two-thirds majority.

The council will convene at least once a year, with provisions for emergency meetings to be called by the leader or deputy leader.

The party also plans to establish several secretariats dedicated to key policy areas and specific demographics

— such as a women's secretariat, legal secretariat, and labour secretariat — ensuring diverse representation and targeted mobilisation.

A three-tier regional structure will be maintained.

Although the members of the grassroots committees are being selected by the party founders now, there will be an election for top positions in the next council.

The NCP will also form an advisory panel, a parliamentary chamber, and a "shadow parliament", a concept relatively new in Bangladesh but common in Westminster-style democracies.

The shadow parliament will consist of 15 to 25 members who will mirror government ministries, scrutinise policies, and present alternative governance proposals in preparation for future elections.

At least three NCP leaders have said that no party council would be held before the next national election.

The party has yet to design its logo and flag.