

## Apurba–Farin pair up for new Eid drama

‘PRIYO PROJAPOTI’



Popular actors Apurba and Tasnia Farin will share the screen this Eid in Jakaria Showkhin's new romantic-comedy drama *Priyo Projapoti*. Inspired by Sadat Hossain's short story *Billboard*, the drama centres on playful office banter and a budding romance between two colleagues.

Director Showkhin describes the project as a feel-good, modern romantic-comedy, expressing confidence in the duo's on-screen chemistry. The drama also features an original song written by lyricist Someshwar Oli, composed and performed by Jahid Nirob, with vocals by Atiya Anisha.

*Priyo Projapoti* is scheduled to premiere on the Capital Drama YouTube channel during Eid, promising a lighthearted watch for the festive season.



## Theatre Artists Association voices concern over FY26 cultural budget

The Theatre Artists Association of Dhaka (TAD) has expressed disappointment over the proposed national budget for the cultural sector in the 2025–26 fiscal year.

While acknowledging a slight increase from last year, TAD president and veteran actor Azad Abul Kalam called the overall allocation “disappointing” last Monday via an official statement. He emphasised that culture is essential for shaping national identity, history, and future, but continues to be neglected.

TAD had previously urged that at least one percent of the total budget be dedicated to culture. The organisation highlighted the

ongoing challenges faced by theatre artists, musicians, visual artistes, and other cultural workers, who operate with limited resources and infrastructure.

They stressed the need for sustainable financial support, improved infrastructure, and research-based cultural practices. Signed by Azad Abul Kalam and Secretary General Saif Suman, the press release urged the government to recognise culture as a foundational element of national development, not a luxury.

TAD called for a proper and effective budget allocation to support the cultural sector's growth and prevent further setbacks.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

**‘Fête de la Musique 2025’**  
Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD) presents **Fête de la Musique 2025**, inviting music lovers to celebrate World Music Day on June 20 at their Dhanmondi venue. The event is set up to be an evening of vibrant performances and cultural exchange. Musicians interested in performing can apply by sending their portfolio or YouTube link to AFD.  
Open to all, this celebration aims to unite the community through music and rhythm.  
**DATE:** FRIDAY | JUNE 20  
**TIME:** 3PM ONWARDS  
**VENUE:** ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA

## Taylor Swift's old albums stream double on Spotify after catalogue deal

Taylor Swift's original albums saw a sharp rise in Spotify streams following her announcement of reclaiming ownership of her first six studio albums. On May 30, streams of her *Big Machine*-era records more than doubled, with *Speak Now* surging 430 percent, *Taylor Swift* 220 percent, and *Reputation* 175 percent.

Other albums like *Fearless*, *Red*, and *1989* also saw significant increases. The spike follows years of dispute with Scooter Braun, who acquired Swift's masters in 2019. Swift later bought them back from Shamrock Capital.

In a statement, she celebrated regaining her catalogue, saying, “All of the music I've ever made... now belongs... to me.” Fans now await potential re-recordings of *Reputation* and *Taylor Swift*, both yet to be re-released.



## JAMES CAMERON to co-write fantasy epic ‘The Devils’

Acclaimed filmmaker James Cameron is set to co-write the movie adaptation of Joe Abercrombie's best-selling novel *The Devils*. Announcing the news on Facebook, Cameron expressed long-standing admiration for Abercrombie's work, particularly the *First Law* series and *The Age of Madness* trilogy.

The collaboration will begin after Cameron completes *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, the third instalment of the *Avatar* franchise, scheduled for release on December 19.

Set in an alternate medieval Europe threatened by a flesh-eating elvish invasion, *The Devils* will be adapted with a focus on its cinematic storytelling.

Abercrombie praised Cameron as the ideal creative partner, lauding his ability to blend action, spectacle, and emotional depth on screen over four decades of filmmaking.



## Top bands unite for BTVM's Eid-ul-Azha special programme

Bangladesh Television (BTV) has organised a special four-part musical series for Eid-ul-Azha, featuring performances by 13 bands, both established and emerging.

On the third day of Eid, popular band Chirkutt will perform at 7pm, directed by Nasir Uddin and hosted by Kazi Momrez Mahmud.

The fourth day will feature performances by emerging bands, including F Minor, Mechanic, Natai, and Torun at 4pm, followed by sets from veteran bands Ark, Symphony, Orbit, and others at 7pm.

Audiences can expect classics like *Sweetie Tumi Ar Kedona* and *Ekhono Prithibita Ki Darun Sejechhe*. The final day will feature Bijoy, Bengal Symphony, Shubhojatra, and Avash.

# NEWS

## Israeli fire kills 27 near Gaza aid point

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killed in fighting in the northern Gaza Strip, as its forces pushed ahead with a months-long offensive against Hamas that has laid waste to much of the enclave.

A spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross told Reuters that its field hospital in Rafah received 184 casualties, adding that 19 of those were declared dead upon arrival, and eight died of their wounds shortly after.

More than 35 patients required immediate intervention, the spokesperson added.

The head of the UN agency, Volker Turk, urged a prompt and impartial investigation into the killings. “Attacks directed against civilians constitute a

grave breach of international law, and a war crime,” he said in a statement.

The US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation said it distributed 21 truckloads of food early yesterday and that the aid operation was “conducted safely and without incident within the site”.

However, there have been reports of repeated killings near Rafah as crowds gather to get desperately needed supplies.

On Sunday, Palestinian and international officials reported that at least 31 people were killed and dozens more injured. On Monday, three more Palestinians were reportedly killed by Israeli fire.

The Israeli military has denied targeting civilians gathering for aid and called reports of deaths during

Sunday's distribution “fabrications” by Hamas.

It issued new evacuation orders to residents of several districts in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip late on Monday, warning that the army would act forcefully against Hamas members operating in those areas.

The military told residents to head west towards the Mawasi humanitarian area. Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the enclave, and that most of its 2.3 million population has become internally displaced.

The territory's health ministry said yesterday that the new evacuation orders could halt work at the Nasser Hospital, the largest, still-functioning medical facility in the south, endangering the lives of those being treated there.

## Schooling of 2.5 lakh Rohingya

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of their jobs. Protesters said only host community teachers were terminated, while Rohingya teachers continue in their roles. They warned that the move would disproportionately affect the already vulnerable host communities.

They have been demonstrating after the UNICEF on May 27 issued a notice saying that immediately all host community volunteer teachers working in Kindergarten Grade-1 and Grade-2 are to have their volunteer contracts ended.

The notice added that there will be further reductions in the number of host community teaching volunteers

for grades 3-5.

RRRC Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday that the blockade by the host community teachers cut off the road communications with the Rohingya camps.

Yesterday, the RRRC and the education sector representatives held a meeting. Later, the joint letter was issued by UNICEF and Save the Children to the RRRC, announcing the closure of learning centres in the camps.

There are around 4,000 learning centres in the camps where around 1.2 million Rohingyas have been sheltered, most of them since 2017 when they fled a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

An estimated 1,50,000 new Rohingyas have arrived in Bangladesh in the recent months and 50,000 more are expected to join them by this year end, putting further strains on Bangladesh.

The Rohingyas continue to flee the Rakhine state of Myanmar due to escalating violence, said the UN World Food Programme in its country brief published on May 19.

In contrast, the funding for the refugees witnesses a decline.

The total humanitarian needs of the Rohingyas in 2025 have been estimated at \$934 million, but so far only 20 percent or \$180 million have been met.

## Salahuddin sues Hasina

FROM PAGE 16  
Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan; the then DMP commissioner, Asaduzzaman Mia; and former head of DMP's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTC) unit, Monirul Islam.

“I wanted to lodge the complaint earlier. But, due to my busy schedule, it took some time to gather all the evidence. I've accused seven individuals, but more names may surface if further investigations are conducted,” Salahuddin told journalists after submitting the complaint.

He also said, “I urge all victims of enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, deaths in custody, and police torture under the fascist regime of Sheikh Hasina to file complaints with the tribunal.”

He further urged the government to provide logistical support to the tribunal and to expand the prosecution and investigation teams to accelerate the court proceedings.

When asked whether the BNP would continue the trial process if it came to power, he responded in the affirmative, saying, “Of course. This is not only a promise of the BNP but also what the nation expects. A fair trial will be ensured.”

Meanwhile, after receiving the complaint, ICT Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam said it would be immediately forwarded to the investigation agency for further action.

After being missing for 62 days, former state minister Salahuddin was found in Shillong, the capital

of the northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya, on May 11, 2015.

He was arrested for entering India without valid documents and charged under the Foreigners Act. Later, Shillong police pressed charges against him in the case.

The BNP alleged that Salahuddin was abducted from his home in Uttara, Dhaka, on March 10, 2015, by people posing as police detectives.

On October 26, 2018, a Shillong court acquitted him of the charges related to illegal entry.

A higher court upheld the verdict on February 28, 2023, and directed the Indian government to arrange for his return to Bangladesh.

After the fall of Sheikh Hasina, on August 11, he returned to Bangladesh.

## BNP to avoid showdown

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briefed the meeting about his experience at the gathering of the National Consensus Committee earlier in the day.

The party said they still do not understand why the interim government plans to hold the next national election between December this year and June 2026 despite the party's repeated demand for holding polls in December.

The party also discussed Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's recent claim that only the BNP is demanding elections in December while other political parties are not, said a standing committee member on the condition of anonymity.

“That is a blatant lie. We fail to understand why he would make such a false statement,” the leader said,

adding that the government's true intentions remain unclear and are causing concern within the party.

On May 29, Yunus told the 30th Nikkei Forum in Tokyo that only one party wants the national election to be held by December.

During the meeting, party leaders also discussed BNP leader Ishraque Ahmed's oath-taking issues and the ongoing protest by government employees at the secretariat.

Regarding Ishraque's issue, the party is awaiting the Election Commission's response.

“We understand the government's motive, but we are now waiting to see how the Election Commission responds, especially since there is a court order directing it to act,” said another senior leader.

Regardless of the outcome, the

## Not possible to stop it physically

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long back,” he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday afternoon, adding that many on the list were already taken back into Bangladesh after verification.

Last month, India asked Bangladesh to expedite the process of verifying the “illegal” Bangladeshis living in India so that they can be sent back home at the earliest. According to India's External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, there is a list of 2,369 Bangladeshi nationals illegally living in India. In many cases, the people have completed their jail sentence and are waiting to be deported.

“There's a mechanism for such consular issues, and we're trying to bring this matter under a certain regulation. We'll send a fresh letter to India today or tomorrow [yesterday or today] ... We want the process to be regulated.”

Regarding updates on the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, he said no response had come from India yet. “We've not yet sent another letter ... If needed, we'll write to them again.”

On border killings, he said that Bangladesh continues to lodge strong protests through diplomatic channels. “Of course, we'll protest in the strongest language. We can never accept the shooting and killing of people at the border ... It does not happen anywhere else in the world.”

Meanwhile, Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday detained at least 59 people who were allegedly pushed into the country by India's Border Security Force through border points in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Mymensingh, and Chapainawabganj.

According to a BGB headquarters statement, at least 1,278 people have been pushed into Bangladesh from India since May 7, through border areas in 19 districts and the Mandarbaria region of the Sundarbans. BGB officials confirmed that all those detained yesterday are Bangladeshi nationals.

In Panchagarh, 26 people were detained early yesterday -- 17 near the Shingroad border and nine near Joydharbhanga in Sadar upazila -- said Lt Col Sheikh Mohammad Bodruddoza, commanding officer of BGB 56 Battalion in Nilphamari.

They had been detained by Indian police from various parts of Delhi and later handed over to BSF, who pushed them into Bangladesh. Among them are seven men, nine women, and 10 children.

In Thakurgaon, 13 more individuals were held around 2:00am near border pillar no-341/3-Sat Fakirganj in Pirganj upazila, said Lt Col Abdullah Al Moien Hasan, commanding officer of BGB-42 Battalion in Dinajpur. The group includes three men, three women, and seven children, all originally from Kurigram. They reportedly entered

India illegally at different times, were detained in Delhi, and later pushed back by BSF.

In Mymensingh, 22 people, including eight men, 12 women, and two children, were pushed in through Munshipara in Dhobaura upazila and the Suryapur border in Haluaghat upazila early yesterday, said Lt Col ASM Kamruzzaman, commanding officer of BGB-31 Battalion in Netrakona. Twelve of them hail from Khulna, Narail, Jashore, and Magura.

Those detained in Haluaghat were handed over to Haluaghat Police Station in the afternoon, said Md Hafizul Islam Harun, officer-in-charge of the police station.

In Chapainawabganj, eight individuals -- four men and four women -- were detained near the Chandshikari border in Bholahat upazila early yesterday, said Lt Col Golam Kibria, commanding officer of BGB-59 Battalion.

Meanwhile in Netrokona, BSF handed over three Bangladeshi nationals to BGB after detaining them for illegally entering India. The handover occurred during a flag meeting at the zero line near the Bijoypur border in Durgapur upazila, said Lt Col ASM Kamruzzaman.

[Our correspondents from Thakurgaon, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, and Netrokona contributed to this report.]