

'TAANDOB' gets censor board clearance

The Shakib Khan starrer *Taandob* has officially received clearance from the Bangladesh Film Certification Board, paving the way for its theatrical release and setting the stage for a potential box office storm.

Taandob, directed by Raihan Rafi and produced by Shahriar Shakil, is a joint venture between SVF and Alpha i, and is scheduled to hit cinemas on the day of Eid-ul-Azha.

Producer Shahriar Shakil shared the confirmation on Facebook yesterday, writing, "Congratulations to our audiences. *Taandob* arrives in cinemas on Eid Day."

The film features Shakib Khan in the lead role, alongside Jaya Ahsan and Sabila Nur in pivotal roles.



'Shopno Jabe Bari' reconnects the emotion with a new rendition

SHARMIN JOYA

There's a deep emotional connection to the song *Shopno Jabe Bari*, especially for those who, after waiting an entire year, finally prepare to return home during Eid. The longing, the struggle, and the overwhelming desire to reunite with family make this song even more poignant.

Originally composed by Habib Wahid, *Shopno Jabe Bari* had previously been released in two editions, sung by Milon Mahmud and Mithun Chakra, respectively. This Eid-ul-Azha, the song is returning in a new rendition — and for the first time, it will be voiced by a female artiste. This version centres around the story of a daughter making her journey home, adding a fresh emotional layer to its narrative.

The music for the new edition has been arranged by Emon Chowdhury, with vocals by Aditi Rahman Dola. Directed by Piplu R Khan, the music video was released yesterday.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Emon Chowdhury shared, "Habib bhai is beloved by all of us, and having had the opportunity to work on one of his creations feels like a blessing. We approached this version from a feminine perspective, which led us to rearrange the composition into a softer, more melodic and emotional tone." Widely regarded as one of the leading composers of contemporary times, Emon also expressed his gratitude to Grameenphone,



Grey, and Piplu R Khan for including him in the project.

Dola, who captured hearts last Eid with *Chand Mama*, returns this time with a gentle, heartfelt rendition. "It feels truly special to be part of such a timeless song," she said. "*Shopno Jabe Bari* resonates deeply with so many people because it reminds them of going home to their loved ones. Until now, we've always seen and heard it from a male perspective. This time, it's told from a woman's point of view, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have been chosen to lend my voice to something so emotionally powerful."

The song is now officially available on YouTube.

Bangladeshi 'Sand City' secures worldwide sales deal ahead of festival premiere

Bangladeshi director Mahde Hasan's debut feature film *Sand City* has been acquired by Bangkok-based sales company Diversion for worldwide sales (excluding Bangladesh and Switzerland).

The film will have its world premiere in the Proxima Competition at the 2025 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

Sand City, produced by Rubaiyat Hossain and Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed (Khona Talks



and Cinema Cocoon), won the CNC Development Award at Locarno Open Doors and was showcased at La Fabrique Cinéma, Produire au Sud, and Film Bazaar. It also received Visions Sud Est support.

The film follows two characters tied to sand—Emma (Victoria Chakma), who finds a severed finger, and Hasan (Mostafa Monwar), who steals sand to fuel a delusional dream of a glass empire.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

SNEAKER FEST 2025

Kangaroo Bangladesh presents *Sneaker Fest 2025*, Bangladesh's first-ever sneaker event. It will bring together fashion, music, and street culture in an exciting celebration.

Featuring live concerts, exclusive sneaker drops, food stalls, and a custom sneaker zone, the event will offer a unique, immersive experience for sneakerheads and fashion lovers, highlighting creativity, style, and cultural expression.

Date: Thursday | July 3

Time: 11am onwards

Venue: Tejaon-Gulshan Link Road



Jessie J reveals cancer diagnosis ahead of surgery



Jessie J has revealed she has been diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer and will undergo surgery after performing at the Summertime Ball 2025 on June 15 at Wembley Stadium.

In a heartfelt video, the singer stressed the importance of early detection and opened up about the emotional toll. She thanked fans for their support and plans to continue her *No Secrets* tour later this year.

Jessie, who has faced multiple health challenges over the years, said she has a new outlook on life. Despite the irony of her recent music titles, like *No Secrets* and *Living My Best Life*, she remains hopeful in sharing her journey with fans.

NEWS

BNP slams budget as 'unilateral'

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dialogue, the budget would not have been one-sided, lacking participation, or confined to conventional approaches. "It would have reflected new ideas," he said, adding that under the current exceptional circumstances, political engagement is more critical than ever.

He further noted that if dialogue had taken place, budget allocations could have been restructured based on consensus.

Reading out a statement, Khosru said, "According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, GDP growth in the 2024-25 fiscal year was 3.97 percent. Yet in the current budget, it is projected

at 5.6 percent, which, like previous governments, is unrealistic and merely growth on paper.

"Food security is under threat. The apparent increase in allocation by including pensions and agricultural subsidies under the inadequate, flawed, and corruption-prone social safety net is misleading. Despite this, allocations for social protection remain inadequate."

He also expressed concern over reduced allocations in key sectors such as education, healthcare, and agriculture.

Private universities, medical colleges, colleges, and schools could have been

granted full tax exemption, he said, adding that BNP will ensure this if it comes to power.

The press conference was also attended by BNP Standing Committee members Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Selima Rahman, and chairperson's Adviser Ismail Jabiullah.

As part of BNP's 180-day action plan, it will launch a review of all foreign loans taken during the autocratic regime and request the UN secretary general to form an independent commission, and a list will be prepared of those killed and injured during the July uprising and the 16-year anti-fascist movement to facilitate assistance for them.

Million gather

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Yesterday, pilgrims performed the tawaf — walking seven times around the Kaaba, which Muslims pray towards each day.

Pilgrims arriving on buses had begun already trickling into Mina on Tuesday afternoon, greeted by staff offering them coffee and dates.

"I am so happy, it's such an amazing feeling," said Reem al-Shogre, a 35-year-old Saudi performing the pilgrimage for the first time.

Following last year's lethal heatwave, authorities have mobilised more than 40 government agencies and 250,000 officials to improve protection.

Shaded areas have been enlarged by 50,000 square metres (12 acres), thousands of additional medics will be on standby and more than 400 cooling units will be deployed, Hajj Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah told AFP last week.

Artificial intelligence technology will help process the deluge of data, including video from a new fleet of drones, to better manage the massive crowds.

Aid sites in Gaza shut

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support civilian safety.

"Our top priority remains ensuring the safety and dignity of civilians receiving aid," said a GHF spokesperson. An Israeli military spokesperson warned civilians against moving in areas leading to GHF sites yesterday, deeming them "combat zones".

At least 26 Palestinians have been killed in intense overnight air attacks carried out by the Israeli army across Gaza, reports Al Jazeera online.

The UN Security Council was set to vote yesterday on a demand for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and humanitarian access across Gaza, where malnutrition is widespread and aid has only trickled in since Israel lifted an 11-week blockade in late May.

UN not involved in talks

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been reached yet, but added that they welcome any initiative to improve cross-border relation and to support people that are impacted by the conflict in Myanmar.

"But there is no humanitarian corridor in place as such and we haven't been involved in discussions to establish such a corridor. So, I just want to clarify that it really is between governments. It's something that we can support once it's established but there is quite a legal process behind something like a corridor."

She also said participation and inclusion of all political parties in the elections will help prevent political polarisation and potential unrest.

"An inclusive election means that every segment of society should be able to vote — women, people who are 18, ethnic minorities, different religious

communities. That's what we mean by inclusive," she said.

Asked if an inclusive election means inclusion of all political parties, she said, "No. It's not about any political party."

The issue was raised as the interim government has banned activities of Awami League, which fell following a mass uprising in July-August last year when around 1,400 people were killed.

She declined to comment on the ban of AL. While the UN fact-finding report last year recommended not banning any political party, Gwyn Lewis said it was not a question for her but for the government.

"We made our recommendations because the participation and inclusion of all political parties is something that prevents very polarised positions and potential unrest."

However, it depends on the government, she said.

Lewis said she was quite impressed by the consensus commission, which is holding dialogues with all parties, though it is a very complex process.

"I think the interim government is leading that process well and working towards credible and peaceful [elections]," she said.

She reiterated the UN's technical assistance to the Election Commission but said the organisation would not play any role in determining the election schedule.

Lewis also said the UN supports the Bangladesh government's ongoing reform initiatives, though the nature and extent of those reforms remain entirely within the government's jurisdiction.

She said the UN Human Rights Office will soon establish a small office in Bangladesh.

"We understand from the government that a MoU is finalised in this regard. We are waiting to sign it soon," she said.

Once a lifeline, Labondaho now a curse

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with the rapid rise of factories in Gazipur. And Labondaho isn't alone. The Tengra, Kata, Sera, Bairagirchala, Tarun, and Saldah canals have all suffered a similar fate.

Trucks routinely dump industrial waste beneath the bridge over the Labondaho river, near the Bagher Bazar-Safari Park route in Gazipur Sadar. The water has turned black, thick with stench. Residents say fish have vanished, and even livestock fall ill after contact.

Mohammad Asadullah of Chakpara village in Maona union said various indigenous fish species were once available in the river. "We used to cultivate our fields using its water," he said.

"We used to fish here and bathe in its water," said Ahmad Ali of Maona Uttar Para. "Now, using it causes diarrhoea and diseases even in animals."

Anwar Hossain of Beltali village said the land has become so polluted that even walking along the fields is difficult. "The soil is littered with polythene," he said. "Growing paddy is out of the question."

Mohammad Moazzem Hossain, a resident of Indrapur and an employee of a knit composite factory, lives beside the river. "The stench is unbearable," he said. "At day time, the stench is sickening. At night, the air turns toxic."

According to Industrial Police and factory sources, Gazipur houses 2,176 registered factories, 1,154 of them garments. In Sreepur alone, there are 674 factories, of which 657 have effluent treatment plants (ETPs).

But Deputy Director Arefin Badol of the Department of Environment (DoE) says some factories secretly

release untreated effluents through underground pipes.

"When we visit the factories along with our lab team, we often find that the ETPs are turned on only when we are seen standing at the gate," he said. "We will take action."

He added that the DoE has discussed advanced surveillance, including drones and high-tech monitoring, with the director general. Seventeen factories have had their service connections cut, though some have resumed operations via court orders. Legal action is ongoing against two others.

Environmentalists say enforcement has long lagged behind violations. Khorsheed Alam, chairman of River and Nature Foundation, said industrial waste has blocked the river's flow, worsening pollution. "Farmers can no longer step into their land, let alone farm it," he said. "Immediate excavation and cleanup are crucial to stop the farmers from facing losses."

Sharif Jamil, representative of Waterkeeper Bangladesh, echoed this warning: "Labondaho is just one of many. Untreated waste from textile and tannery industries, even by government bodies like city corporations and WASA, have made Dhaka's rivers toxic."

He said pollution upstream, from Gazipur's textile industries and even from the Khiru river at Bhaluka in Mymensingh, contributes to widespread contamination downstream in rivers like the Turag in Dhaka.

Mahmud Hasan Khan, president-elect of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), acknowledged the industry's role. "Pollution isn't

confined to Gazipur," he said.

"Installing CCTV in industrial zones to monitor ETPs could be a step forward. Vigilance must be increased," he said, adding that other bodies like Bangladesh Textile Mills Association and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association should also come forward to protect the environment.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said the government has taken protection of the Labondaho river as a new initiative being financed under the Climate Change Trust Fund.

"We will demarcate the river's boundary, remove encroachments, carry out dredging, and complete the excavation work," she said.

The ministry's secretary and the DoE chief met with industries responsible for the pollution and warned them to cease operations like occupying and polluting that harm the river.

"Dumping waste became habitual due to years of inaction despite continuous pollution. These industries have been initially served notices and were engaged in meetings. They are now being brought under strict monitoring and control. Simultaneously, we will also begin enforcement actions."

She noted the department has only six magistrates. Much of the winter was spent shutting down illegal brick kilns.

"Now, we are prioritising and focusing on industrial pollution. We hope to begin our operations to save the Turag river in Dhaka by November or December," she said.

"If we cannot free Loblong from pollution, it will be impossible to save the Turag."

Govt to roll out

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special circumstances and will remain in place next year as well.

However, he expressed hope that during his tenure he would be able to lay the foundation for a revised secondary education curriculum.

After assuming power, the interim government cancelled the implementation of the latest curriculum that was finalised by the previous Awami League government. Instead, it reinstated the 2012 curriculum.

CR Abrar said a vice-chancellor selection panel has been formed to fill high-level positions at two

universities. "The recruitment process will involve publishing advertisements in newspapers and accepting applications from interested candidates," he said.

A search committee has also been formed, comprising representatives from the ministry, the University Grants Commission, and distinguished professors.

He expressed optimism that, with everyone's cooperation, if the selection process is completed based on merit and competition, his vision of enabling the next generation to lead the world while staying in the country will move forward.

BB plans to merge

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will be removed, and a new board will be formed, drawing from existing board members and representatives from different sectors. The merged entity will operate under the central bank's direct supervision.

The move is part of the interim government's broader efforts to stabilise the banking sector under the newly enacted Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, which gives the central bank expanded powers to resolve distressed financial institutions.

Six banks are currently in the resolution pipeline, with five now in the final stage. ICB Islamic Bank has been excluded from the process due to its foreign ownership.

"The central bank is likely to merge these five banks by October this year under the ordinance," said Mohammed Nurul Amin, chairman of Global Islamic Bank. He said Governor Mansur discussed key aspects of the new ordinance during the meeting.

Those who can confidently prove

they can recover on their own may be considered for exemption. Otherwise, the resolution process under the ordinance will begin, according to Amin.

"Now, five banks have been identified. They could be consolidated into one larger Islamic bank. The meeting was held to initiate that process. A roadmap has been discussed," he said.

Mohammad Abdul Mannan, chairman of First Security Islamic Bank, described the meeting as a "preliminary step," adding that Bangladesh Bank informed them of the plan.

The merger effort gained momentum after Bangladesh Bank appointed two international firms in January to conduct asset quality reviews of the banks. The review, which is now nearing completion, aims to assess the actual financial condition of the institutions.

The central bank's plan is expected to restore depositor confidence and instil discipline in a sector long plagued by mismanagement, insider lending and capital shortfalls.