

‘Balur Nagarite’ secures place at prestigious Czech festival

Bangladeshi filmmaker Mahde Hasan's debut feature **Balur Nagarite** (Sand City) has been selected for the prestigious Proxima Competition at the 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic.

The film's actor Mostafa Monwar and sound designer Aranyak Prithivi were honoured by the Ministry of Culture on Wednesday, June 18, where Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki welcomed the duo and presented them with flowers.

Describing the selection as “a moment of pride for our young filmmaker,” the ministry pledged to finance air travel for a member of the film delegation to Karlovy Vary.

Cultural Adviser Farooki emphasised that the ministry will continue to encourage Bangladeshi talents in music, cinema, photography, theatre, and architecture who gain international recognition.

Ahead of its premiere, Bangkok-based international sales company Diversion acquired global marketing rights for the film—excluding Bangladesh and Switzerland. **Balur Nagarite** was produced by Rubaiyat Hossain and Aadan Ahmed under the Khona Talkies banner, with support from Cinema Cocoon.

This follows the ministry's previous support for filmmaker Adnan Al Rajevy of **Ali**, who received flights to Paris after his film was selected at the Cannes Film Festival.



I get teary-eyed when I receive love: Zahid Hasan

Veteran actor Zahid Hasan has made a powerful return to cinema with **Utshob**, a multi-starrer Eid release that has earned over Tk 1.14 crore in just 10 days.

Directed by Tanim Noor, the film co-stars Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Aupee Karim, and

Afsana Mimi. Hospitalised with pneumonia just before Eid, Zahid missed the promotional campaign but was deeply moved by audience response.

“Every time I receive love, it brings tears to my eyes,” he said. Zahid expressed gratitude to co-

stars, the press, and audiences for their support, adding that the film's success rekindled his commitment to meaningful cinema.

Utshob is now eyeing international release. He was last seen in Raihan Rafi's **Amalnama**.

‘Boistwami Rock Fest’ to make its return to Dhaka today



Boistwami Rock Fest 2025 returns today at Sundari Cafe and Art Space, Purbachal New Town, from 5pm to 10pm.

Organised by Boistwami in partnership with Ishtishon Communications, the event features performances by Symphony, Mechanix, all-female band F Minor, and KHN with his Rock Wing.

CEO Ayesha Arin noted last year's disruptions due to political unrest but expressed optimism for this year's continuity. Upcoming concerts include a July 12 show with Vikings and Artcell, and a larger event on July 26.

Tickets are priced from Tk 500 to Tk 2,500, available via Get Set Rock and on-site. Venue preparations are overseen by Sundari Cafe, the event's sponsor.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Kohey Facebook’

Aranyak Natyadal will stage their acclaimed production **Kohey Facebook** at the National Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy today evening. Written and directed by Mamunur Rashid, the play explores the emotional consequences of the digital age, highlighting how virtual life, particularly through Facebook, impacts human relationships and social structures.

Date: Today | **June 20, 2025**

Time: 7-9pm

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Jeremy White portrays Bruce Springsteen in ‘Deliver Me From Nowhere’ trailer



Jeremy Allen White stars as Bruce Springsteen in **Deliver Me From Nowhere**, a biopic directed by Scott Cooper and set for release on October 24. Based on Warren Zanes' 2023 book, the film explores the making of Springsteen's 1982 album **Nebraska**, regarded as one of his most personal works.

White, known for **The Bear**, performs his own vocals, while Jeremy Strong plays Jon Landau, Springsteen's longtime manager. The film also features Stephen Graham, Odessa Young, and Marc Maron. Springsteen and Landau are involved in the project, with Dave Cobb overseeing music.

First shown at CinemaCon, the trailer captures Springsteen's raw artistry. White called the project a “dream come true,” noting they had Springsteen's full support.

NEWS

Almost 32% had to bribe

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Over 47 percent received primary care at government healthcare facilities at least once in the 12 months preceding the day they were interviewed. Of them, 82.72 percent said the service was easily accessible and 89.34 percent said the services were affordable.

In the rural areas, 43.67 percent households have at least one child attending a public school and in the urban areas, 34.95 percent.

Regarding services such as identification or civil registration, 78.12 percent said these were accessible while 86.28 percent found these affordable.

In case of access to civil justice, 16.16 percent said they experienced at least one dispute in the last two years. Among them, 83.6 percent could access formal or informal dispute resolution mechanisms.

In the 12 months before the survey, 19.31 percent faced at least one form of discrimination or harassment. The breakdown is 19.62 percent for females and 18.97 percent for males.

Some 6.82 percent of the respondents said they faced discrimination for socio-economic status and 4.47 percent for gender.

Over 48 percent felt discriminated against in their own house, 31.3 percent in public transport or open

spaces, and 25.97 percent at work.

The country's local government system should be strengthened to empower the marginalised and low-income groups of people, Mahmud said.

Adviser Wahiduddin said it was “unacceptable in a civilised country” that all people do not feel safe at their own home after dark.

“If nearly 10 percent of people feel that they are not safe in their own homes, then it is very concerning,” he added.

The survey found that over 27 percent of the respondents believed they could freely express their views on what the government does.

ADB, WB approve over \$1.5b

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adaptation efforts in priority sectors and speed up actions to reduce climate impacts, he said.

Under CRDP, the Bangladesh Climate Development Partnership will be established to secure climate finance and help ministries develop, implement, monitor and evaluate climate projects more effectively.

As part of the CRDP, the government will also revise Dhaka's

Strategic Transport Masterplan (2025–2034) and monitor renewable energy targets set under the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan to promote greener urban transport and power generation.

Bangladesh is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations.

Recent studies show that if high greenhouse gas emissions continue, the country could lose up to one-third of its GDP by 2070.

Tropical cyclones already cause about \$1 billion, or 0.7 percent of GDP, in damage each year, and severe flooding could shrink the economy by as much as 9 percent compared to expected growth by 2050.

By then, Bangladesh could lose 17 percent of its land and 30 percent of its food production, pushing food and nutrition security to a critical point.

Army to carry out duties

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firearms and 286,754 rounds of ammunition.

In the same period, 996 individuals involved in various criminal activities – including gang members, listed criminals, and drug traffickers – were arrested.

Since August last year, the army has arrested 15,262 suspects.

The army conducted a two-week-long special operation before and after Eid-ul-Azha to ensure smooth traffic flow and safety during holiday travel. Troops were deployed at key highways, terminals, and transport hubs, where they monitored speeding, prevented overcharging, and tackled ticket black marketing.

The army arrested 452 drug dealers in the last three weeks, bringing the total to 5,476 since August last year.

Following heavy rainfall in Anwara upazila, Chattogram, which damaged a key embankment, the army

immediately mobilised to repair it alongside locals, preventing flooding. In flood-hit Habiganj, troops from the 17th Infantry Division distributed food to marooned residents on Eid day.

Acting on information from mobile courts, the army shut down a chocolate factory in Mirpur and imposed a Tk 7 lakh fine over food safety violations.

The army continued its duties to maintain law and order in the Chattogram Hill Tracts and Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. It also helped ensure security for foreign diplomats and missions, and during international events, such as the two recent football matches between Bangladesh and teams from Bhutan and Singapore held on June 4 and 10.

When asked about a recent incident in which a flag vendor was allegedly beaten by an army member during a football match, Col Shafiqul said, “It was an unfortunate and isolated

event. We have since apologised to the individual and provided him with Tk 1 lakh in support to continue his business.”

Regarding a report by the International Crisis Group that alleged Bangladesh security agencies were engaging with insurgent groups in the Rohingya camps, Col Shafiqul said, “We've seen the reports but do not have any further details to comment at this stage.”

Reaffirming the army's commitment to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and public safety, Col Shafiqul said troops are currently deployed in 62 districts, working in coordination with the interim government, local administration, and law enforcement agencies.

“Bangladesh Army will take firm action against any activities threatening public safety, including mob violence or attempts to destabilise peace,” he concluded.

Israeli gunfire, strikes kill 72 across Gaza

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“We couldn't help them or even escape ourselves,” he said.

At least 300 Palestinians have been killed in recent weeks while trying to reach aid distribution points in Gaza, which is suffering from famine-like conditions, the Hamas-run territory's health ministry has said.

Israeli restrictions on media in

the Gaza Strip and difficulties in accessing some areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by rescuers and authorities in the Palestinian territory.

In early March, Israel imposed an aid blockade on Gaza amid a deadlock in truce negotiations, only partially easing restrictions in late May.

After Israel loosened its blockade, the privately run Gaza Humanitarian Foundation began distributing aid, but its operations have been marred by chaotic scenes.

UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the foundation – which has the support of Israel and its ally the United States – over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives.

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Moyeenul noted that the senior leadership at the Rab, DGFI, and NSI always came from the armed forces – army, navy, and air force – and that these agencies were directly answerable to the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

“There is, however, no scope for the armed forces to say they were not aware of what was happening,” Nur Khan Liton, a member of the commission, said at the press conference.

The commission chairman went on to allege that those who were directly involved in enforced disappearances, along with their associates, are still at the centre of state power and threatening key witnesses.

“In addition to destroying evidence and being uncooperative on an institutional level, they have created an atmosphere of fear by threatening key witnesses and victims,” said

Moyeenul.

Member Dr Nabila Idris told the press that the commission has obtained phone recordings of perpetrators threatening witnesses.

The commission says it has complete evidence on the enforced disappearances of 253 survivors, starting from the moment of their abduction, their period of stay and the circumstances under which they reappeared.

In addition, it has solved the cases of 12 people who have been permanently disappeared, with those who were involved in those disappearances identified.

“One of four outcomes usually awaited the victims [of enforced disappearance]. They were either killed, or they were branded as terrorists and then shown arrested in relevant cases, or they were pushed into Indian territory to be arrested

by foreign law enforcers, or in rare cases, they were released without being accused in a legal case,” said the chairman.

He stressed the fact that counter-terrorism laws have been used to persecute victims of enforced disappearance and recommended that these cases be disposed of quickly to minimise their harassment.

“Victims have all narrated the same experiences across the board. It's not possible that these were coincidental events. In fact, these are not cases of one or two careless officers conducting human rights violations while trying to counter terrorism. Rather, it was a politically motivated programme that used counter-terrorism as a shield.”

Commission members Justice Farid Ahmed Shibli and Sazzad Hussain were also present at the press conference.