

A pillar of Bangladeshi PHOTOGRAPHY COLLAPSES



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"I live every moment", Chanchal Mahmood frequently said to his friends and colleagues. Even throughout his last days, when he faced considerable physical ailments, alongside the mental trauma of his wife, Raina Mahmood, battling cancer, he genuinely tried to stand by his life's philosophy of 'painting with light.' The Bangladeshi photographer, educator, and journalist breathed his last on Friday, June 20, at approximately 9:30pm, while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Dhaka. He was 68. The pioneer in Bangladeshi photography had been battling various health complications for an extended period, a battle he fought with characteristic resilience until the end. Chanchal Mahmood was not just a photographer; he was a visionary who profoundly shaped the landscape of visual arts in Bangladesh. Born on March 13, 1957, in Dhaka, with ancestral roots in Narsingdi, Mahmood initially harboured dreams of becoming a painter. However, it was the astute

guidance of his teacher, Rafiqun Nabi, who recognised his innate talent for composition and aesthetic sensibility, that steered him towards photography with the timeless advice to "paint with light." This pivotal moment set him on a path that he found profoundly fulfilling. His journey began in 1977, with his professional career taking off in 1978. Emerging in a nascent, post-war Bangladesh where unconventional careers faced skepticism and resources were scarce, Mahmood's dedication was a testament to his passion. He is widely credited as a pioneer in the professionalisation of model and fashion photography in Bangladesh, elevating the craft and setting new standards for an industry still in its infancy. His keen eye extended beyond



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

fashion, capturing the nuances of daily life, landscapes, and news, and showing a particular fondness for working with children. Beyond his lens, Chanchal Mahmood was a revered educator. He established Chanchal Mahmood Photography, through

which he mentored thousands of aspiring photographers, nurturing new talent and contributing immensely to the growth of the photographic community. He often expressed immense pride in the success of his students, finding deep accomplishment in their recognition of his guidance. His philosophy was deeply rooted in its power as a historical document. He believed in the medium's ability to preserve moments for future generations, often lamenting the lack of a dedicated institution to properly archive and honour the works of past Bangladeshi photographers. He viewed photography as a potent tool for social commentary and positive change, consistently advocating for its role in shaping public discourse. Throughout his illustrious career, Chanchal Mahmood received numerous accolades, including the Ekushey Padak. More recently, in 2022, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BABISAS Awards. He was also an active member of the Bangladesh Photographic Society, Proof News, and the Commonwealth Journalism Society. In his personal life, Chanchal Mahmood was the younger of two brothers, born to Mohammad Bashiruddin and Firoza Begum. He is survived by his wife Raina Mahmood; their son, Nabil; and their daughters, Raisa and Barsha. Chanchal Mahmood's passing leaves a void in the photographic landscape of Bangladesh. Yet, his immense legacy of ground-breaking imagery, dedicated mentorship, and an unwavering belief in the power of the camera lives on. Many stars of the 90s and 2000s were first photographed by him. Beyond that, his humility, persistence, and willingness to bring up others will remain his legacy.



BTS set for 2026 reunion as Suga completes military service

BTS rapper and producer Suga has officially completed his alternative military service, marking the discharge of all seven members of the K-pop group from South Korea's conscription system, according to an Associated Press report. Big Hit Entertainment, under Hybe, confirmed that Suga ended his service on June 18, with his official discharge date set for June 21. He served as a social service agent due to a past shoulder surgery, while the other members served in the military. With Suga's discharge, the group is set for a full-group return in 2026. RM, V, Jimin, and Jungkook were discharged earlier this month, followed by Jin in June 2024 and J-Hope in October 2024. BTS had announced in 2022 that all members would complete service without seeking exemption.

Jon Bernthal to appear in 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day'

Jon Bernthal is set to appear as Frank Castle, aka *The Punisher*, in the upcoming Marvel-Sony film *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, multiple sources confirmed. The film, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton of *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, begins production this summer in England and continues the storyline from *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. Tom Holland returns as Peter Parker, joined by Zendaya and Jacob Batalon, with *Stranger Things* star Sadie Sink also joining in an undisclosed role. Bernthal, who first played the Punisher in the Netflix series and recently appeared in *Daredevil: Born Again*, is also co-writing a Disney+ special centred on the character.



NEWS

Dhaka, Beijing and Islamabad talk

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh's acting foreign secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, and Pakistani Additional Secretary Imran Ahmed Siddiqui attended the meeting, while Pakistani Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch participated via a video link. The foreign ministry statement said the meeting identified several areas for deeper cooperation including infrastructure, connectivity, trade, investment, healthcare, agriculture, maritime affairs, ICT, disaster preparedness, and climate change. The three sides agreed to forge cooperation on the principles of openness, inclusivity, good neighbourliness and win-win situation, it added. Bangladesh acting foreign secretary mentioned that as partners of China's Belt and Road Initiative, the three nations could work together in aligning respective national visions with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It is important to forge a robust partnership among the three friendly nations to deliver real benefits to

their peoples and to improve their livelihoods, it said. China and Pakistan issued separate statements on the meeting. China's Sun Weidong in a statement said, "Bangladesh and Pakistan are both good neighbours, good friends, and good partners of China, and important partners in high quality belt and road cooperation." All three countries face the mission of national revitalisation and modernisation, and all require a peaceful and stable environment, he added. The cooperation among China, Pakistan and Bangladesh aligns with the common interests of the three peoples, and can contribute to regional peace, stability, development and prosperity, said the Chinese foreign ministry statement. The three sides, after exchanging views extensively, agreed to advance trilateral cooperation based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, equality and mutual trust, openness and inclusiveness, common development, and win-win cooperation, it added. They also agreed to explore and

implement cooperation projects in such areas as industry, trade, maritime affairs, water resources, climate change, agriculture, human resources, think tanks, health, education, and culture, it said. The three sides will establish a working group to follow up and implement the understandings reached during the meeting, it added. "The three sides emphasised that China-Bangladesh-Pakistan cooperation adheres to true multilateralism and open regionalism, not directed at any third party," the statement said. The statement released by Pakistan said Foreign Secretary Amna expressed her country's desire for a deeper engagement between China and South Asian countries. She conveyed Pakistan's readiness to work with China and Bangladesh to enhance ties in trade and investment, agriculture, digital economy, environment protection, marine sciences, green infrastructure, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges.

Home plans glass walls

FROM PAGE 12 "Reforms are needed to put in place a human resource management system that will ensure fair recruitment, postings and promotions based on honesty, qualification, skills, and seniority," the official said. REFORMS WITHIN SIX MONTHS New crowd control measures will be introduced to ensure that police personnel act with restraint, protect civilians, and maintain peace. They must adhere to strict rules of engagement based on a five-step use of force model followed by UN peacekeepers. The approach to crowd control starts with visible presence and verbal warnings, escalating to non-lethal methods and minimal force only when necessary. Lethal force may be used as a last resort. The ministry has informed the Cabinet Division that the advisory committee on law and order may review and decide in six months whether the Rapid Action Battalion remains necessary, given its controversial past and allegations of rights abuses. The reform initiatives also include setting up of glass-walled interrogation cells in every police station to prevent custodial torture and deaths.

There have been allegations that law enforcers subject detainees to physical and mental torture during remand to get confessional statements and force their relatives to pay bribes. Measures will be taken to ensure proper treatment of detainees and cleanliness in lockups at police stations and courts as well as in vehicles for prisoners. Female detainees must be interrogated respectfully in the presence of women officers. There will be a bar on parading suspects at press briefings before courts deliver verdicts, and special cells will be set up at the offices of the chiefs of police units, allowing people to report rights violations and misconduct by law enforcers. A guideline will be issued for police officers working in the hill areas to make sure that they respect local customs and social norms while enforcing law. Ministry officials said the number of female police personnel will be increased to 28,248 from 16,801. "We are committed to swiftly

carrying out reforms that are currently feasible. Some initiatives are already underway," said Abu Momtaz Saad Uddin Ahmed, additional secretary at the home ministry. MID-TERM PLAN Police officers will be equipped with GPS devices and bodycams while on field duty. An emergency hotline will be launched for citizens to lodge complaints against police officers for conducting unlawful searches or refusing to identify themselves or show warrants during operations. Offices of coroners will be established in all eight divisional cities and doctors from upazila health complexes will be appointed as coroners to expedite investigations of cases filed over suspicious deaths or murders. All officers managing traffic violations will be required to wear bodycams and police check posts will be brought under CCTV coverage. LONG-TERM PLAN The reform initiatives include establishment of an independent police commission; amendment to the colonial-era laws to make the force more accountable and people-friendly; enactment of laws to protect victims and witnesses; and setting up of forensic training institutes, digital forensic labs, and automated DNA laboratories in each division. WHAT EXPERTS SAY Omar Faruk, a professor of criminology and police science at Mawana Bhashani Science and Technology University, termed the ministry's move a positive step towards upholding human rights and curbing corruption. He also cautioned that if the relevant sections in the Police Acts, 1861, and the Police Regulations of Bengal, 1943, are not amended, there will be scope for future political governments to use the force to serve their interests. Welcoming the decision to revoke police verification for government jobs, he said such a practice often fosters political bias by excluding individuals based on affiliations or ideologies. Setting up of transparent interrogation cells at police stations will help curb custodial torture, while digital surveillance like bodycam for police officers will check harassment and corruption, he added.

Fair polls not possible without gov't support: CEC

FROM PAGE 12 interim government and the BNP, which suggested that the election could be held in the week before Ramadan in the first half of February 2026. "We are in touch with the government but not daily. The election schedule will be announced on time, and you will be informed once it's finalised." In response to a question on whether the EC would sit with the government to announce the national election date, he said: "A formal meeting isn't necessary for that. We are already in contact with the government through both formal and informal channels. When the time comes, everyone will know -- there's nothing we are hiding." Referring to the election plan, he said: "We don't call it a roadmap. Different people use different terms -- some say schedule, others say roadmap. But rather than calling it a roadmap, you can consider it an action plan. We have that in place, and we began working on it quite some time ago." Akhtar Ahmed, senior secretary of the Election Commission, and other officials were present at the event.

Galle Test ends

FROM PAGE 12 could have forced a result. Instead, Bangladesh batted on for 12 more overs and, with the innings break taken into account, more than an hour of potentially valuable time was lost on a wearing fifth-day pitch. The delay gave Sri Lanka some hope but their top order crumbled under pressure. Lahiru Udara was stumped off a cleverly flighted delivery by Taijul Islam, while Pathum Nissanka gifted his wicket to Nayeem Hasan by spooning one straight to short mid-wicket. Taijul struck two crucial blows, removing the experienced Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal in quick succession, but time ran out for Bangladesh. Mathews, playing his 119th and final Test, walked off to a standing ovation as the crowd rose for one of Sri Lanka's greats. The second Test will be played in Colombo next week.

Israeli fire kills

FROM PAGE 12 The Israeli blockade imposed in early March amid an impasse in truce negotiations had produced famine-like conditions across Gaza, according to rights groups. Bassal told AFP that three people were killed on Saturday in an Israeli air strike on Gaza City in the north, and one more in another strike on the southern city of Khan Yunis. Israeli forces also demolished more than 10 houses in Gaza City "by detonating them with explosives", he added. 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. Earlier this week, the UN's World Health Organization warned that Gaza's health system was at a "breaking point", pleading for fuel to be allowed into the territory to keep its remaining hospitals running. Since Israel launched its offensive in Gaza on October 7, 2023, at least 55,908 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in the tiny Palestinian territory.

BNP to sue former ECs

FROM PAGE 12 and credibility. The 2014 polls were boycotted by the BNP-led alliance, leaving 153 seats uncontested. Voter turnout was officially recorded at 51 percent, but violence and low participation raised questions about legitimacy. In 2018, BNP contested under the Jatiya Oikya Front, but the election was marred by allegations of ballot-stuffing, voter intimidation and suppression of the opposition.

352 dengue cases logged

FROM PAGE 12 reported from Barishal, a division already grappling with the huge number of dengue cases. In Barishal, Barguna district is seeing the most cases. Of the 3,447 cases reported from Barishal (out of city corporation) since January, 2,098 cases are from Barguna. Residents, entomologists, doctors and municipal authorities blame the outbreak on poor drainage, waterlogging, indiscriminate littering and ineffective mosquito control. As of June 21, 3,084 cases were reported in June, which is 42 percent of

the total cases reported this year. The second highest number of cases reported in a single month was in May: 1,773. Meanwhile, experts fear that the situation this year could spiral into a full-blown health crisis during the monsoon without immediate and coordinated action. Despite early signs, the authorities have failed to take adequate pre-monsoon measures, leaving both urban and rural areas vulnerable to fast-spreading transmission, they said. Last year, dengue claimed the lives of 575 people and infected 101,214 people, according to DGHS.