

## 'Banalata Sen' eyes September 2025 release

Filmmaker Masud Hasan Ujjal's second feature film, *Banalata Sen*, is set to be released this September. With production, dubbing, and editing complete, the film is ready for submission to the censor board.

This government-funded project stars Masuma Rahman Nabila, who was initially offered a different role but ultimately landed the titular part after three auditions.

Ujjal describes the film as a poetic tribute to Jibanananda Das on his 125th birth anniversary this year. "I refuse to make any compromises on it," said the director. "This film is a national tribute to a literary genius, and preparations are currently underway," he added.



Two Bangladeshi films have been nominated for the 21st Kazan International Film Festival in Russia, which kicks off on September 5. *The Pair of White Pigeons*, a short film by Shahriar Azad Shaumik, and *Mighty Afrin: In the Time of Floods*,

a documentary by Angelos Rallis, earned spots in the lineup. Inspired by Shaumik's rural childhood in Jhikargacha, Jessore, *The Pair of White Pigeons* stars SK Shahriar and Shaheen Hossain. Meanwhile, *Mighty Afrin* follows a

12-year-old girl's struggle as a climate refugee during devastating floods. Produced in collaboration with Greece, France, Germany, and Bangladesh, it features Afrin Khanam and others. The teams behind both productions are anticipated to be present at the event.



## 'Insaaf 2' set for release next year

Following the success of *Insaaf*, director Sanjoy Somadder has officially announced that work on *Insaaf 2* is underway, with a targeted release slated for next year's Eid-ul-Azha.

The sequel promises to be bigger in scale, continuing the story with the original cast, including Mosharraf Karim, Sariful Razz, Tasnia Farin, and Chanchal Chowdhury, whose character will now be significantly utilised.

Sanjoy revealed that scriptwriting is currently in progress, with Nazim Ud Daula, Swarup Dey, and himself once again collaborating on the screenplay.

While the core cast from the first film remains, an additional female lead is expected to join, though her identity is being kept under wraps for now.

## Mingal's new song melds tradition with hard rock

Manipuri band Mingal has unveiled their latest track, *Kotio Durei*, composed in the Bishnupriya Manipuri language.

Performed by Animesh Singha, the song is now available for streaming on Mingal's official Facebook page and the Music Addiction YouTube channel.

Combining melodic elements with touches of hard rock and metal, the song presents a distinctive musical texture. The lyrics and melody were penned by Shuvashis Sinha, with the arrangement managed by the band members themselves.

Founded nearly 10 years ago, Mingal—which means light in Manipuri—strives to reimagine traditional Manipuri music through a modern lens. Alongside their Manipuri repertoire, the band also delves into Bengali music, broadening their creative scope across cultures.



## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

### Jagannath University Film Festival 2025

The inaugural *Jagannath University Film Festival 2025* will run from June 23 to 25, organised by JnU Film Society with support from Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Taking place at Chitrashala Auditorium of BSA and Jagannath University, with a special screening at Green University, the festival's theme is "Higher Stories Taking Flight."

A total of 64 short films will be screened across competitive and non-competitive sections. Awards will be given for Best Short Film (two categories) and Best Director. The jury includes Bidhan Ribeiro, Syed Ahmed Shawki, and Sadia Khalid Reeti.

**Date:** Monday-Wednesday | June 23-25

**Time:** 9am onwards

**Venue:** Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and JnU



## Russell Crowe boards 'Highlander' reboot starring Henry Cavill

Russell Crowe will take on the role of Henry Cavill's immortal mentor in the upcoming *Highlander* reboot, reuniting the duo after their roles in Zack Snyder's DC Universe films. Crowe is playing the modern version of the role originally played by Sean Connery.

The film, set to be directed by *John Wick's* Chad Stahelski and written by Michael Finch, is backed by Amazon MGM Studios, and United Artists.



# NEWS

## Separate secretariat will ensure independence Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury BNP factional clash

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The chief adviser said the opportunity for reform after the July uprising presents the government with the opportunity to design such mechanisms and power structures that can foil these autocratic manoeuvres.

The governance of the state in the 21st century presents distinct challenges to securing politics founded on democratic ideals. These challenges range from countering rising populism to repelling authoritarianism, illiberalism, and similar threats.

Bangladesh has unfortunately experienced all these challenges at various stages and in varying degrees, Yunus said, adding that it is widely argued that there is one institution, namely the judiciary, that can play the most significant role in addressing these issues.

"Every nation awaits a moment of transformation, an opportunity to mark a new beginning. This is our moment. We want to redress the past anarchies, bad administration, despotism and authoritarianism, and to set the country on a path of good governance and rule of law," Yunus said.

Chief Justice Rezaat said that the judiciary today stands as the fully functioning constitutional organ of the state, unyielding in its duty, grounded in its independence, and staunch in its commitment to justice.

The reform initiatives cannot sustain without a full-fledged and

institutionalised reform of the judiciary itself.

"To that end, I reiterate with utmost urgency the need for establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary, which is essential not only for administrative autonomy but for securing the structural foundation upon which all other reforms must rest," Justice Rezaat said.

"Justice cannot be carried forward on borrowed infrastructure or delegated authority; it must stand on its own institutional legs," he added.

He said the student-led uprising dismantled a "compromised" judiciary and called for a new order grounded in truth and independence.

"I did not assume the office of the 25th chief justice by design, but was summoned by the people's will, entrusted with the solemn duty to restore faith in the rule of law and to rebuild the judiciary as a pillar of constitutional democracy," he said.

He also said that the Judicial Reform Roadmap taken by the Supreme Court is a declaration not of intent, but of institutional transformation grounded in independence, accountability, and service.

Central to this roadmap is the creation of a Supreme Court Secretariat to ensure administrative and financial autonomy, alongside a depoliticised guideline on postings and a proposal for separate civil and criminal trial courts to enhance adjudicatory clarity.

Institutional safeguards, such as enhanced allowances, car loans, and security measures for judges, were introduced not as privileges but as protections of judicial integrity, the chief justice said.

A judiciary cannot claim true independence unless the appointment and accountability of its highest members are structurally shielded from political influence, he said.

The proposal to form the Supreme Judicial Council, endorsed by the Judicial Reform Commission and swiftly operationalised through an ordinance approved by the interim government, has already borne fruit, he said.

The two judges most recently elevated to the Appellate Division were appointed under this process, setting a new standard of legitimacy, the chief justice said. A fresh round of appointments is now under consideration.

A Documentary on the "Roadmap for Judicial Reform in Bangladesh" was screened at the seminar. Appellate Division's Justice Ashfaqul Islam, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul and Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman, also spoke at the seminar. The other speakers included AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, president of Supreme Court Bar Association; Zainul Abedin, vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council; and Stefan Liller, UNDP resident representative in Bangladesh.

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scholars, writers, and activists.

Despite facing cases and mounting pressure for his activism, a committed Marxist, Choudhury has also been at the forefront of resistance against environmental and cultural exploitation. He has opposed land grabbing, river pollution, deforestation, and commercial encroachments on historical sites.

To mark the day, his admirers will hold a discussion on the "Liberation War of 1971 and the role of nationalism" and stage a play at Bangla Academy in the afternoon. Choudhury will present the keynote speech there.

Born on June 23, 1936, at Bikrampur, Choudhury is an alumnus of St Gregory's High School and College, Notre Dame College, and English department of Dhaka University.

He completed his postgraduate diploma at the University of Leeds and earned his doctorate from the University of Leicester.

Before the publication of his post-graduation degree examination results, he started teaching English at Haraganga College in Munshiganj. After a brief period of teaching at Jagannath College, he joined the English department at the University of Dhaka.

He served there from 1957 to 2001 as lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. From 2004 to 2008, he had been a UGC professor. He is now an emeritus professor at DU.

In 1971, Serajul Islam Choudhury was one of the six university teachers warned by the then Pakistani military rulers for their so-called "anti-state" activities. During the war, he was on the Al-Badr death squad's "wanted list" but narrowly escaped the targeted killings of intellectuals.

He was elected by the Dhaka University Senate to the three-member panel for the appointment of the vice-chancellor on three occasions. However, each time, the country's president, who also served as chancellor of the university, appointed someone else to the post.

Choudhury was one of the drafters of the Dhaka University Order of 1973. In 1988, he compiled the convocation speeches of Dhaka University in two volumes, which were published by the university.

A prolific writer, Choudhury has authored over 100 titles and countless columns. He continues to offer sharp critiques of the undemocratic dynamics of social, economic, and political order.

His contributions to education and literature have earned him numerous honours, including the Ekushey Padak,

the Bangla Academy Award, and The Daily Star Lifetime Achievement Award (2016). He was also the first recipient of the Nazrul Puroskar, launched by the Bangla Academy in 2022.

He secured a prominent place in Bengali literature through works often through a Marxist lens. His book *Jatiyatabad*, *Samprodayikta O Janagoner Mukti* (Nationalism, Communalism, and the Liberation of the People) was selected as the Prothom Alo Book of the Year in 2015.

Choudhury has been the editor of the quarterly magazine *Natun Diganta* since 2002. He also edited the Dhaka University journals of arts and letters — *Dhaka Bishwavidyalay Patrika* (in Bangla) for 15 years and *Dhaka University Studies* (in English) for nine years.

He founded the University Book Centre in 1978 and the Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities in 1986. He was a leading figure in the Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir, a literary and cultural organisation. He is also the founding president of *Samaj Rupantar Adhyan Kendra* and the convener of *Samajtantrik Buddhijibi Sangha*. In addition, he serves as the president of the *Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad*.

Choudhury has written under various pseudonyms. Notably, he authored the column *Shomoy Bohiya Jay* (Time Flows On) in the *Daily Sangbad* under the pseudonym "Gachhpathor" (Tree Stone) and *Dhakai Thaki* (Living in Dhaka) in the monthly *Pubali* under the pseudonym "Nagarik" (Citizen).

He actively led protests against the felling of trees at *Osmani Udyan* in 1998, the construction of a commercial building in the courtyard of the *Lalon Shah shrine* in 2000, and the proposed airport in *Arial Beel*, *Munshiganj*, which threatened agricultural land in 2011. A case, filed against Choudhury and others over the *Arial Beel* protests, is still pending with a court.

In October 2022, a complaint was lodged with a Chattogram court accusing Choudhury and two others of defaming *Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman* in an article titled "Sheikh Mujibur Gopon Shatru" (the Hidden Enemy of Sheikh Mujib) in a book published by *Chattogram Academy* the previous year. However, the case was later withdrawn following widespread criticism.

Since the passing of his wife, Prof Najma Jesmin Choudhury, in 1989, Serajul Islam Choudhury has led his life in the loving company of his two daughters, grandson, and granddaughters.

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Friday over the same issue, he added. On Saturday afternoon, both groups, armed with sharp weapons, staged shows of force in the *Shahi Masjid*, *Bandar rail line*, and *Hafajibagh* areas.

Around 10:30pm, Kuddus was allegedly stabbed multiple times when he was near the *Bandar rail line*. His younger brother said, "He had no political affiliation. He was targeted because his son Parvez was part of the *Roni Jafar* faction. They couldn't find Parvez, so they stabbed my brother to death."

Later, Mehedi was beaten to death by the rival group. His brother-in-law *Mahfuzul Haque Sourav*, said, "They found Mehedi on the road, picked him up, and took him to *Sirajuddoula Club*. They beat him in the chest, head, and face. We later found his body in the hospital."

*Abul Kawser Asha* told *The Daily Star*, "Roni and Mehedi were once like brothers... but over the last few months, they've had disputes over local dominance."

*Hannan Sarkar* could not be reached for comments despite several attempts.

Police and Rab detained three suspects during overnight raids, SP *Pratyush* said, adding that two separate murder cases will be filed. Patrols continued in the area till yesterday noon.

## 5 die from Covid

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Amid rising numbers of infections, the DGHS urged people to wear masks.

The first Covid-19 cases were reported in the country on March 8, 2020, and the first death 10 days later.

The coronavirus has caused 29,515 deaths in Bangladesh so far.

## Suicide blast

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"We demand that the Syrian transitional authorities take immediate action to hold those involved accountable and implement measures to guarantee the safety of Christian communities and all religious groups, allowing them to live without fear."

Islamic State had previously targeted religious minorities, including a major attack on Shiite pilgrims in *Sayed Zainab* in 2016 — one of the most notorious bombings during Assad's rule.

The latest assault underscores the group's continued ability to exploit security gaps despite the collapse of its territorial control and years of counterterrorism efforts.

## NCP applies for EC registration

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He added that the party submitted all required documents, including 200 supporter signatures per upazila, lease agreements for party offices, and the party constitution, which was approved a day earlier at its general assembly.

On forming an alliance ahead of the next election, he said, "The National Consensus Commission's reform process is ongoing. Dr Muhammad Yunus has committed to announcing the 'July Charter' based on that consensus. Our decision on participating in polls will depend on the outcome of this reform."

Regarding their symbol request, he added, "We reviewed EC laws and found no restrictions on using the *Water Lily*."

NCP Member Secretary *Akhtar Hossain* said the party submitted three symbol options, with the *Water Lily* as its top choice. "We expect the EC to allocate the *Water Lily* as our symbol."

Chief Coordinator *Nasiruddin Patwari* said the other options were "pen" and "mobile phone", "The NCP

will be registered, and we will achieve a sweeping victory with the *Water Lily* as our symbol... We will win 300 [of the 400 proposed] seats to form the next government."

The EC began accepting applications on March 10. Initially, 65 parties submitted applications by the April 20 deadline. Following requests from 46 parties, the deadline was extended, and so far, 147 parties have applied for registration.

Currently, 50 parties are officially registered with the EC.

Registration with the commission allows parties to contest elections with their own electoral symbols under Article 90A of the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

Meanwhile, the registration of the previous ruling party *Awami League* remains suspended, while *Jamaat-e-Islami* is expected to regain its registration following a court order.

Parties that submitted applications yesterday include *Janatar Party Bangladesh* (JPB), *Ganadal*, *Bangladesh*

*Janajote Party*, *Bangladesh Republican Party* (BRP), *Bangladesh Samata Party*, *Janatar Dal*, and more.

**JPB SEEKS 'ELEPHANT', JANATAR DAL WANTS 'KEY'**  
JPB has requested the "elephant" as its electoral symbol.

The party's Secretary General *Shawkat Mahmud* said, "The current registration rules are difficult to comply with. Though the Election Reform Commission proposed changes, those haven't been implemented. Still, we've applied under the existing rules and expect to be registered."

He said JPB supports reforms and would cooperate with the EC if changes in regulations are implemented.

Meanwhile, *Janatar Dal* requested the "key" as its electoral symbol in its application, which was submitted by the party Convener *Brig Gen (Retd) Shamim Kamal* and Member Secretary *Azam Khan*.

"We've met all conditions and formed the required committees. The rest is up to the commission," said *Shamim*.