

# 'THE CAGE'

## refreshes music scene as RockSalt crowned inaugural winners



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NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

As the stage lights blazed and distortion pedals roared, the grand finale of *The Cage* unfolded in Dhaka last Friday night, drawing the curtain on Bangladesh's boldest rock music reality show yet. With The Daily Star as co-sponsor, the event brought together raw talent and a passionate audience from across the city, all eager to witness the conclusion of a show that has helped revive interest in the country's emerging rock scene.

The day's afternoon kicked off with high energy, and the crowd maintained that momentum throughout the night. The audience was a diverse mix — university students, long-time fans of the judges and the show, young professionals, and even older rock legends — showcasing the genre's wide appeal and cultural reach in Bangladesh.

The atmosphere was nothing short of electric. Each band left their soul on stage, chasing not just the title, but a lasting place in the hearts of the country's rock faithful.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The show opened with Nine and Eden's Garden, who set the tone with lively performances featuring both originals and covers. Karnation was one of the standout acts of the night. Their performance of *Ditio Shotta* and *Joyer Nishan* (Original tracks) received a strong response, with the audience lighting up their flashlights and joining in.

Dopamine brought a different flavour, opening with humour and turning past criticisms into part of their act. Their song *Jodi Harai* was already popular, but it was the English track *Good Job* that made a bigger impact since it was a direct response to the online bullying they had faced. The song earned a standing

ovation from the crowd. Dusk N Dawn had gone through a lineup change before the finale, with two new members joining, including one from Serious Joker. Despite the departure of Anamika, they

delivered a solid set featuring *Neel Manush*, *Mukti Khoja* (a new original), and a cover of *Watch Over You*. They maintained the introspective, emotional tone that had defined their performances throughout the season.

RockSalt, however, had momentum even before stepping on stage. The crowd was chanting their name, and when they launched into *Nishpotti* — one of their original tracks — the venue erupted. Their tight coordination and natural ability to engage the crowd made them stand out. For a moment, it felt like vocalist Nahian was controlling the audience like a pied piper.

The judging panel featured four icons of the Bangladeshi music industry: Palash Noor (Warfaze), Tasfia Fatima Tashfee (Bangu Bibi), Asif Asgar Ranjan (Arbovirus), and Raef Al Hasan Rafa (AvoidRafa). Throughout the season, they guided and mentored the bands with insight and encouragement.

Aside from the finalists, the evening featured special performances that thrilled the crowd, including a tribute to Chester Bennington by AK Rahul, solo sets by AvoidRafa, and impromptu jam sessions by Rafa and Ranjan. There was also a powerful performance by Warfaze, reminding everyone of the legacy that current bands are building upon.

When it was finally time to announce the winner, anticipation filled the air. And then came the verdict: RockSalt emerged victorious, securing the title and proving themselves as the ultimate breakout act of the season.

With this win, RockSalt carries the torch forward, and *The Cage* has once again shown that Bangladesh's rock music future is loud, passionate, and uncompromising.

## 'Fantastic Four' actor Julian McMahon passes away at 56



Australian actor Julian McMahon, best known for his portrayal of Dr Doom in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* franchise, has passed away at 56 after battling cancer. His wife, Kelly McMahon, confirmed the news, stating he died peacefully and always sought to bring joy to others.

Son of former Australian Prime Minister Billy McMahon, Julian began his career as a model before moving into acting with the 1989 soap *The Power, the Passion*. He gained fame through roles in *Profiler*, *Charmed*, and *Nip/Tuck*, and appeared in films including *Premeditation*, *RED*, and *You're Not You*.

His final role was in *The Surfer*, which premiered at Cannes 2024. McMahon was last seen in Netflix's *The Residence*, portraying the Australian Prime Minister.

## July uprising documentary 'Shrabon Bidroho' to premiere tomorrow



The documentary *Shrabon Bidroho*, based on the July-August mass uprising, is scheduled to premiere tomorrow (July 7) at 6:30pm at the Bangladesh National

Museum's main auditorium in Shahbagh. Hosted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the screening is open to the public, according to a press release signed by the ministry's public relations officer, Md Mamun-or-Rashid.

Md Mahfuj Alam, adviser to the ministry, will deliver the welcome speech. Distinguished guests include Asif Nazrul, Adilur Rahman Khan, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan, and Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo.

# NEWS

## Over 45 lakh cases pending

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trader in the capital's Mirpur, was tortured to death in law enforcers' custody.

A team of two dozen police personnel, led by the then sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station Zahidur Rahman, raided a Pallabi house during a wedding ceremony and picked up Jonny and his brother Imtiaz Hossain Rocky on February 8, 2014.

Police informants Sumon and Russell called the law enforcers after Jonny slapped Sumon for stalking and harassing women at the function. Police tortured the two brothers at the station, according to the case statement.

Jonny was admitted to a local clinic the following day. As his condition worsened, he was transferred to Suhrawardy Hospital where he died.

On September 9, 2020, a Dhaka court sentenced Zahidur and ex-assistant SIs Qamruzzaman Mintu and Rashedul Islam to life imprisonment, and Sumon and Russell to seven years in jail.

Contacted, Jonny's brother Imtiaz said the case has been pending with an HC bench, which is yet to hold a hearing.

"Zahid and Rashidul are in jail, while Mintu is absconding," he said. "Both Sumon and Russel remain at large. I fear that they could harm me or my family."

### EFFORTS TO EXPEDITE DISPOSAL OF CASES

The government has been implementing the e-judiciary project over the last few years to improve case management by bringing the lower courts under a digital network. Under the initiative, courts, police stations, and jails as well as investigators, witnesses, lawyers and defendants will be connected to the network.

The Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2024, was issued recently to ease pressure on courts and ensure faster delivery of justice.

Under the new ordinance, two HC judges were elevated to Appellate Division judges on March 24, raising the number of SC judges to seven.

More HC judges are likely to be appointed soon, say SC sources.

The number of HC judges now stands at 95, down from 100 in June 2012, said the sources.

Moreover, five judges have been excluded from judicial duties since October 20, 2024, following protests demanding their removal over alleged links with Awami League.

Talking to this newspaper, SC lawyer Barrister Saqeb Mahbub said, "Judges should be given more administrative support and resources. Lower courts are given very little technological support and judges don't have sufficient resources at their disposal."

They need to adopt effective case management practices penalising those who abuse the process by filing false cases or seeking adjournments frequently, he noted.

"Both our civil and criminal procedure codes need an overhaul. These colonial era procedural laws don't adequately facilitate alternative dispute resolutions, such as arbitration and mediation," he added.



Nahid addressing a rally in Joypurhat.

PHOTO: STAR

## Texas floods kill at least 27

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The National Weather Service warned of more extremely heavy rain and "locally catastrophic" flash flooding to come in the region, located northwest of San Antonio.

A massive rescue operation began Friday, with around 500 personnel and 14 helicopters helping in the search for survivors.

Yesterday, city official Rice said 27 children from the Camp Mystic Christian summer camp in the flooded Kerr County were still missing.

US media reported that two of the missing girls were dead, citing their families.

The missing were among the roughly 750 children at Camp Mystic, a girls' summer camp along the banks of the Guadalupe River.

The Heart O' The Hills summer camp, located about a mile away from Camp Mystic, confirmed on Saturday that its director, Jane Ragsdale, was among the dead.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has signed a disaster declaration to boost resources for counties in the region, and President Donald Trump has promised federal support.

Trump said his Homeland Security secretary, Kristi Noem, would visit the affected area on Saturday.

Rice said that rescuers were facing

"very difficult" conditions.

Videos on social media showed houses and trees swept away by the flash flood caused by heavy overnight rain of up to 12 inches — one-third of Kerr County's average annual rainfall.

Governor Abbott shared a video on X of a victim being plucked from the top of a tree by a rescuer dangling from a helicopter, as floodwaters raged below.

With rescuers fanning out across the region, Joe Herring, the Kerrville mayor, asked for the community to come together.

"People need to know today will be a hard day. It will be a hard day," he said, his voice breaking.

## Survivor 'facing death threats'

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"Even after the last hearing on June 24, Munshi told me he has money, so the court verdict will go in his favour. We are living in constant fear. Last week, we sold our house and our 20 decimal land. We are moving elsewhere, or they will kill us," she added.

So far, four witnesses have testified

in court. "The accused and their relatives are also threatening the witnesses," she claimed.

Her lawyer, Habibur Rasul Mamun, confirmed that the accused have been trying to intimidate the family.

On February 6 last year, the survivor and her 12-year-old daughter were gang-raped at their home. She filed a case with Char Jabbar Police

Station the same day, and three days later, Munshi and two others — Md Harun and Mehraj Uddin — were arrested.

Prime accused Munshi was released on bail on November 6, while the two others remain in jail.

Despite repeated attempts, Munshi could not be reached for comments.

## 'Same old mafia system still exists'

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throughout the month. Rallies were also held in Bogura and Naogaon yesterday.

In Bogura, Nahid met with the families of the district's July martyrs at the Bogura Parjatan Corporation in the morning.

Addressing the rally at the Satmatha Mukto Moncho in the town, the NCP leader said the next national election should take place after ensuring justice for the atrocities during the mass uprising and implementing reforms, reported our correspondent in Bogura.

"Justice must be visible. It must begin now. Those who fired the bullets and committed mass killings must be held accountable. Justice must be ensured on the soil of Bangla, for Sheikh Hasina and the police officers who opened fire," he said.

He also said the NCP will unveil a July manifesto on August 3 at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.

"We are gathering at the Shaheed Minar on August 3 with the July manifesto, a declaration for the people, land, and map of Bangladesh ... Just as we declared the fall of the fascist system with a one-point demand last year, we will declare the beginning of

a new Bangladesh," he said.

Nahid said the July Declaration will "certainly be included in the constitution".

"July is not a matter of emotion. July will be our political manifesto. Our political destination. The future of Bangladesh will be guided by this July. Those who don't want to include July, the martyrs, or those injured in the constitution are the new guardians of Mujibism.

"After the mass uprising, Bangladesh will not be run at the behest of India, Pakistan, America, or China," the NCP leader said, adding that the people of Bangladesh will take decisions about elections, politics, and everything about the country.

"We need a new Bangladesh, a new system, new laws and regulations. We will not participate in your old games. We will not participate in your politics of extortion, your politics of terror."

Nahid said the leaders of the uprising demanded to ensure a neutral administration, neutral police, and a neutral judiciary. "If anyone acts like a partisan administration in the old ways, their fate will be like that of the fascists and collaborators of Mujibism," he warned.

"What was the fate of those

who stole votes, who were election commissioners in the 2018 polls? If you forget the power of students and the public within one year of this mass uprising, then you are mistaken," Nahid added.

The NCP leader said the people of Bogura were victims of political discrimination over the past 16-17 years.

"No one was given a job if they heard the name Bogura; they were not given a place anywhere. Bogura residents were indiscriminately given false and fabricated cases," Nahid said.

"After the mass uprising, we do not want any special privileges. We do not want any discrimination. We want everyone to have equal opportunities according to their merit and qualifications. We want backward areas to receive development commensurate with their needs," he added.

In Naogaon, Nahid said that the constitution must be rebuilt through several principles such as justice, reform and a fresh constitution, reports BSS.

"Justice, reform and the constitution are our main demands. The country must be rebuilt through these principles," he said during a brief rally.