

AAMIR KHAN returns to playback singing after 27 years

Aamir Khan is returning to playback singing after 27 years, since his iconic *Aati Kya Khandala* from *Ghulam* (1998). In his upcoming untitled comedy film, Aamir will sing two songs, having undergone formal vocal training under Sucheta Bhattacharjee.

The film's music is composed by Ram Sampath. Although Aamir plays only a cameo, he emphasised the role's significance and described the film as a lighthearted, feel-good comedy inspired by Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee.

Reflecting on his musical journey, Aamir fondly remembered Lata Mangeshkar, saying her songs still start his day. While the film's title and release date remain undisclosed, Aamir's return to singing brings a nostalgic charm to this much-anticipated Bollywood project.



I was excited to work with Mahde: MOSTAFA MONWAR

SHARMIN JOYA

Mahde Hasan's debut feature *Balur Nagorite*, internationally titled *Sand City*, has won the prestigious Proxima Grand Prix at the 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival—marking another proud achievement for the country. The film stars Mostafa Monwar and Victoria Chakma in lead roles, with Monwar portraying the character of Hasan. Speaking to The Daily Star from the festival, the actor shared his reactions, insights into the filmmaking process, and behind-the-scenes stories.

Let's start with your first reaction — what drew you to the script of 'Sand City'?

Back in 2018, while I was working on Rubaiyat Hossain's film *Shimu*, I first met Mahde Hasan on set. During our conversations, he mentioned that he was planning to make a film. He shared the idea with me—a story built around two parallel characters whose journeys, though separate, mirror each other in a deeply metaphorical way. *Sand*, he said, would serve as a powerful narrative element, subtly binding their worlds together.

Mahde's storytelling was riveting, and I couldn't say no. I was immediately drawn to the story, particularly the character of Hasan, who works in a glass factory. At first glance, he appears peculiar and unconventional, but beneath that odd exterior lies a deeply



complex individual, shaped by darkness and inner turmoil. What fascinated me even more was Hasan's childlike side—a vulnerability that surfaces when he's under extreme mental pressure. It's a rare and layered role, and portraying such a character is both challenging and incredibly rewarding for an actor.

'Sand City' won big at Karlovy Vary. How does it feel to have a Bangladeshi film recognised on such a global scale?

This festival is not commercial; it caters to passionate cinephiles, especially those who appreciate independent films. As one of the oldest film festivals in the world, established just after World War II, it holds a special place in the central

and eastern European region. It's a proud moment that Bangladeshi films, after receiving acclaim at Cannes and many other prestigious festivals, are now reaching new regions and connecting with fresh audiences.

How did it feel to receive the highest-ranked prize at the festival?

There's actually a funny story behind this. I asked Mahde if we were going to win any prize, and he said no—if there was, the festival team would have given us a hint. We arrived on July 6 and stayed in Karlovy Vary until July 10 before heading to Prague. Mahde planned to visit London afterward, and I was set to go to Switzerland. We were simply happy that our film had been selected and figured the festival was over, so we carried on with our plans. While visiting Friedhof Praha (Franz Kafka's grave), we suddenly got a call from the festival asking us to return immediately. By then, Victoria and our sound engineer had already gone back to Bangladesh. The festival covered all the travel expenses and arranged a car for us. At the award ceremony, we were stunned to learn we had won the top prize. It's a moment we'll never forget.

When are you returning, and what's next audience can look forward to?

I'll be returning on July 17. Meanwhile, my film *Saba* is set for release, and I'm currently in discussions for several new projects, including one in India.



Oni Hasan returns with all-star concert and masterclass

Celebrated guitarist Oni Hasan is set to return to the Dhaka stage with a special solo concert titled *Let's Vibe with Oni Hasan ft All Stars* on July 18 at Aloki Convention Centre.

Organised by Dhaka Broadcast, the event will run from 3pm to 10pm and include performances by leading figures in the local rock scene, such as Mizan Rahman (former Warfaze), Jamshed Chowdhury (Powersurge), and AvoidRafa. A guitar masterclass led by Oni will be held earlier in the day, featuring guest instructors Zubair Hasan (Indalo) and Tawakir Tajammul. Known for his work with Vibe and Warfaze, the singer now lives in China and is preparing for a US tour this autumn.



Charlize Theron slams Hollywood's bias against female-led action films

Charlize Theron has called out Hollywood's persistent bias against female-led action films, criticising studios for treating such projects as financial risks.

In an interview with The New York Times, the Oscar winner, currently promoting her Netflix sequel *The Old Guard 2* with Uma Thurman, said studios are far less likely to green-light action films with women at the centre.

She also pointed to double standards, noting that male actors often get repeated chances despite box office failures, while women rarely get a second opportunity.

Both Theron and Thurman are acclaimed for their action roles, with *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Kill Bill* cementing their places in the genre despite ongoing industry challenges.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Exhibition: 'Ten Shades'

Ten Shades brings together ten Bangladeshi artists in a powerful exhibition exploring identity, memory, and heritage. Through abstraction, calligraphy, and folklore, the works reflect diverse personal narratives and contemporary expression. The exhibition offers a compelling journey through layered visuals and cultural introspection, inviting viewers to engage deeply with each story.

DATE: FRIDAY-MONDAY | JULY 11-21, 2025
TIME: 3-9PM
VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, DHANMONDI

NEWS

BNP now a protector FROM PAGE 2

He further criticised the BNP, saying, "Previously one party was involved in corruption and extortion, and now another party continues the same practices. We fought against fascism, and we won't let it re-emerge in any form."

Nahid further declared, "We will force the government to accept the 'July Charter' by August 3."

Among others, Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah, Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, Joint Secretary Momtaz Sarwar Niva, Joint Convener Mujahidul Islam Shaheen, joint member secretaries Zahurul Islam Musa, Mushfiqur Rahman Johan, and Tamim Ahmed, and Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara and Senior Joint Convener Samanta Shermeen were present.

Earlier in the day, central and local NCP leaders joined a procession that began near the Circuit House and marched through key streets of the town before ending at the rally venue.

Woman, 2 children found murdered FROM PAGE 12

against unnamed persons with Bhaluka Police Station in the evening.

Kazi Akhtar Ul Alam, superintendent of police in Mymensingh, who visited the scene after the incident, said Rafiqul Islam was taken into custody for questioning.

Quoting Rafiqul, the SP said Nazrul was an accused in a murder case filed in Gazipur and had spent more than two years in jail. "Rafiqul had borrowed Tk 40,000 on interest to secure Nazrul's release on bail two and a half months ago."

OC Humayun said the bodies were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy. "We've launched an investigation and are looking into several possible motives. The autopsy report will help us determine more details."

He added that police are conducting drives to arrest Nazrul, who is currently the prime suspect.

No arrests were made till the filing of this report at 7:00pm.

Charges framed against ex-DMP chief FROM PAGE 12

The four produced before the tribunal are former inspector of Shahbagh Police Station Arshad Hossain; and constables Sujon, Imaz Hossain, and Nasirul Islam.

Shahriar Khan Anas, Sheikh Mahdi Hasan Junayed, Mohammad Yakub, Rakib Hawlader, Ismamul Haque, and Manik Mia were killed as police allegedly opened fire with lethal weapons on unarmed protesters in the capital's Chankharpool on August 5, 2024, when tens of thousands of protesters marched in Dhaka, ultimately toppling the Sheikh Hasina-led administration and forcing her to flee to India.

Justice Shofiul read the arguments placed by the defence and prosecution. While the four present before the tribunal had their own counsels, the absconding officials were represented by a state-appointed counsel.

"After carefully scrutinising

everything, we have found prima facie elements about the alleged involvement of the accused in the commissioning of the crime, which was widespread and systematic. There is sufficient and substantial evidence before the tribunal to frame charges against the accused," he said.

"You, Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman ordered subordinates through wireless to fire upon unarmed protesters to subdue a peaceful protest on August 5 (last year) in Chankharpool area.

"Acting on the order, you, Sudip Kumar Chakrabarty, monitored, controlled, and supervised and ordered to open fire on the innocent protesters. You, Shah Alam Md Akhtarul Islam and Imrul Hossain, along with 40-45 armed policemen, went to the spot and ordered to shoot indiscriminately with lethal weapons—Chinese rifles, shotguns.

Sohag murder being exploited for political FROM PAGE 12

"We strongly protest and condemn the use of obscene and indecent remarks against him in public.

"Protests against a political party and its top leaders, who are not in power, and use of indecent remarks targeting them raise the question whether we are once again being taken back to an era of fascism..." he added.

Fakhrul said those named in the police complaint, though not directly involved or present at the scene, were expelled from the party.

"Despite such a firm party stance, a group is deliberately showing the audacity to tarnish the image of our party and top leadership."

Fakhrul asked whether the voices of protest over the killing of a Jubo Dal leader in Khulna were equally strong from all sides.

Referring to the Sohag murder, Fakhrul alleged that the events of July 9 were deliberately spread online on 11 July during the "prime time" after Juma prayers.

Certain social media accounts and pages began sharing pre-prepared photo cards in a planned way.

"This suggests that propaganda materials had been prepared in advance, indicating a planned campaign to spread fake information

online," said Fakhrul. Fakhrul hoped that all responsible political parties will be aware of the current deteriorating political situation in the country.

If the path to democratic transition is obstructed through activities that violate political decency, those involved must bear the responsibility, he added.

Speaking at a Nayapaltna rally yesterday, Fakhrul accused certain political quarters of plotting to disrupt the election process by using the Mitford murder incident.

"Our only goal is to ensure that the national election is held in February 2026. There will be no exception to this."

He alleged that a vested quarter have lost their mind following the announcement of the election timeframe after the London meeting between Tarique and the chief adviser.

Fakhrul urged party members to stay calm and not be drawn by provocation.

At the event, BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas yesterday alleged that "a party" was taking money from Bashundhara Group, City Group, and other groups.

"There is another party that, apart from talking big, does nothing except

"You, Arshad, implemented superior commanders' instructions and ordered to open fire, lob sound grenades, and teargas shells on the protesters. You, constables Sujon, Imaz Hossain, Emon, and Nasirul Islam, participated and opened targeted fire with Chinese rifles and shotguns under the command of those accused and killed six protesters," Justice Shofiul read out.

"Therefore, you all eight [mentioned names, designations, and addresses] have been indicted under the International Crimes [Tribunals] Act," he added.

After reading out the charges in English, Justice Shofiul explained in Bangla to the four in the dock and asked each by turn whether they understood the charges against them.

All four denied the charges, claiming innocence, and demanded justice.

"cleverly collect donations and cleverly take 'hadia'."

The BNP leader said, "During the Ershad's time, they leaned on Ershad's shoulder; during the Awami League's time, they leaned on the Awami League's shoulder; during the BNP's time, they leaned on the BNP's shoulder."

"Now BNP is their only headache. If they can eliminate the BNP, then they think they will be able to rule. Whether or not they can tolerate Tarique Rahman, he will take the country forward with his capable leadership."

Referring to another party, he said, "There's something I must say, a one-man party... I don't want to mention his name. That man and his party are chanting slogans—the Awami League has gone down a path, and the BNP will follow the same path."

"Is it that easy?... That man and his group can no longer tolerate the BNP, but they had no problem tolerating the Awami League."

Recalling the 2013 Shapla Chattar incident, Abbas said, "When the Hefazat-e-Islam rally was attacked, where was the Pir of Charmonai? Did he stand up for the Muslims? He did not. Who stood up? The BNP."

Population policy updated FROM PAGE 12

Talking about the updated policy, Sarwar Bari, secretary of the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division, said the updated policy set six objectives.

The first objective is to attain the demographic dividend by transforming the population into a skilled human capital through ensuring quality and accessible healthcare and nutrition services, demand-based quality education, and social protection for all population groups.

The second object is to reduce the unmet need for family planning methods, preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths, as well as child marriage and all other harmful practices.

Other objectives include adopting plans to expand and manage technology to the benefits of the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions; ensure equal opportunities between urban and rural areas by guaranteeing citizen services; ensure gender equality and achieve gender dividends; and take effective measures to tackle natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, the secretary said.

He said 29 ministries would be involved in implementing the policy.

Ashrafi Ahmad, director general of the Directorate General of the Family Planning, told The Daily Star that policy would come into effect once the strategy, which is now under development, is approved.

Referring to the theme of this year's population day—"empowering young people to create the families they want in a fair and hopeful world"—the health adviser told the

event that theme highlights youth empowerment.

In her view, the prerequisite for empowerment is achieving economic self-reliance and when a young person is financially capable, the path to empowerment becomes much easier.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, emphasised the need to prepare our population to cope with the development of technology, including artificial intelligence and robotics.

Saidur Rahman, secretary of the Health Services Division; Prof Abu Jafor, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services; Prof Nazmul Hosain, director general of the Directorate General of Medical Education; Ashrafi Ahmad; Catherine Breen Kamkong, representative for UNFPA Bangladesh; and Jobaida Begum, additional secretary of the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division, spoke on the occasion.

Four 'ARA men' FROM PAGE 12

to be transferred to Camp 8 (East), under Nabi's control.

Nabi, who entered Bangladesh illegally from Myanmar's Chakmakata-Tambru area in 2023, is a commander of the ARA. He is accused of conducting armed training for group members, who are then deployed to border areas. He is also accused of trafficking arms and yaba, as well as smuggling.

Nabi has illegally constructed a 60-foot-long, 20-foot-wide concrete house inside Camp 8 (East), defying camp rules, the release added.

German doctor goes on trial for 15 murders

AFP, Berlin

A German doctor yesterday went on trial accused of killing 15 patients with lethal injections and acting as "master of life and death" over those in his care.

The 40-year-old palliative care specialist, named by German media

as Johannes M., is alleged to have killed 12 women and three men between September 2021 and July 2024 while working in Berlin.

The doctor is accused of injecting the victims, aged between 25 and 94, with deadly cocktails of sedatives and in some cases setting fire to their homes in a bid to cover up his crimes.