

ONIHASAN

electrifies Dhaka



PHOTOS: KHALAD BIN WALID

**Guitarist Oni Hasan made his long-awaited return with *Let's Vibe* – Oni Hasan featuring All Stars, held at Aloki Convention Centre yesterday, July 19. The event brought together some of the country's most prominent rock musicians for a night charged with a fascinating display of musical prowess. The daylong event featured both a guitar masterclass and a full-scale evening concert. The masterclass began at 3:30pm, followed by the concert at 7:50pm.**

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

The day opened with a special masterclass that offered more than just technical instruction — it became an interactive space where fans and musicians connected on a personal level. Zubair Hasan from Indalo led the session, breaking down the chord structures of his popular songs. He explained the progressions, answered questions, and gave aspiring guitarists a behind-the-scenes look at his creative process.

When Oni Hasan entered the scene, the admiration and craze was immediately evident by the way he got surrounded by fans. Despite the crowd, Hasan remained engaged and approachable. He answered a wide range of questions — from gear choices to practice habits — and even joined one attendee on stage for an impromptu jam.

By 7:50pm, the concert stage came alive. The venue was filled with fans eager to see the former Warfaze and Vibe guitarist headline. He was joined by an all-star lineup including Jamshed Chowdhury (Powersurge), Raef Al Hasan Rafa (AvoidRafa), Taawkir Tajammul, Zohad Yazdani (Bagdhara), Fardin Fayeze Omece, Minhaj Ahmed Mridul, and several others. Wali Muhammad Akbar (Vibe) also made a surprise appearance. Each artist brought their own sound and following, turning the event into a kind of unofficial summit of Bangladesh's rock scene.

The show opened with fan favourites like *Amar Shongbidhan*, *Sesher*


*Opashe*, *Bidhatari Ronge Aka*, and *Odhora* — all featuring Zohad on vocals, with Wali on keys for selected tracks. Interspersed between vocal performances were instrumental pieces showcasing Oni's solo work: *Blissful Youth*, *Until We Meet Again*, *The Himalayas is Where My Heart Rests*, and *Shrine Revisited*.

The tone of the evening shifted mid-show with a blistering Pantera tribute. Jamshed took on vocals while Rafa handled the drums for *Mouth for War*, *Walk*, and *Cowboys from Hell*. One of the night's standout moments came when Rafa took the mic for *Cemetery Gates*, delivering a powerful performance. The set wrapped up with *Fucking Hostile*, ramping up the energy in the room.

Two Megadeth classics — *Dread and the Fugitive Mind* and *Tornado of Souls*— followed, with Jamshed leading vocals.

The concert's final part returned to local originals, with Zohad performing *Shopnodeb* and *Chena Jogot*. The night concluded with all three frontmen — Zohad, Rafa, and Jamshed — sharing the stage for *Naa* and *Purnota*.

Despite some early delays, *Let's Vibe* delivered everything fans came for: tight performances, memorable collaborations, and a deep sense of nostalgia. For Oni Hasan, it marked not just a return to the Dhaka stage, but a reaffirmation of his place in the country's rock scene. Whether this marks the beginning of more solo work or new projects, one thing is certain — the audience is still listening, and they're ready for more.

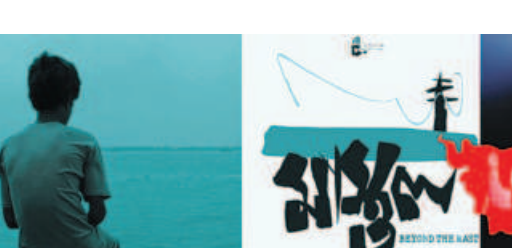


### ‘Captain Planet and the Planeteers’ live-action series underway at Netflix

Netflix is developing a live-action adaptation of the iconic 1990s animated series *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*, with Greg Berlanti and Leonardo DiCaprio serving as executive producers.

Tara Hernandez, known for *Mrs Davis* and *Young Sheldon*, is writing the script. Warner Bros Television is producing the new version under Berlanti Productions and Appian Way.

The show follows Gaia and five young Planeteers who summon Captain Planet to fight global issues like pollution and deforestation, while also addressing themes such as bullying and drug abuse.



### ‘Mastul’ invited to World Film Festival Kolkata

Bangladeshi film *Mastul*, directed by Mohammad Nuruzzaman, has been officially invited to the fourth edition of the World Film Festival in Kolkata.

The festival, organised by the Eastern Region of the Federation of Film Societies of India (FFSI), will be held from August 15 to 21 at Nandan, Kolkata's prominent cultural venue, with daily screenings from 12pm to 8pm.

The list of selected films, including *Mastul*, was recently shared by the organisers on their official social media platforms. FFSI, founded in 1959 under the leadership of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, continues to promote meaningful cinema. This year's festival is also being held in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific wing of the International Federation of Film Societies.

## NEWS

### Parties call for fair polls at Jamaat rally

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and justice. There is no alternative,” he added.

“Mujibism” must be defeated politically, economically, and culturally, said Sarjis Alam, chief organiser (north) of the National Citizen Party (NCP).

“We may have political differences, but in resisting Mujibism and authoritarianism, all forces of the uprising must remain united.”

He warned that pro-India elements were reactivating across the country and remarked that no foreign power, including India, should dominate Bangladesh.

He went on to demand a new constitution as there can be no “pro-Bangladesh system” as long as the “Mujibist 1972 constitution” is in place.

He also called for a fresh constituent assembly election.

“We don’t want the interim government to play a civil society role. It must act like a post-uprising government. Killer Hasina must be tried, and the verdict carried out.”

He also stressed the need to ensure the rights of women and minorities, uphold judicial independence, and prevent the misuse of law enforcement agencies for political

purposes.

Addressing the broader opposition alliance “Birodhi 24”, Sarjis said: “Unity does not mean blind loyalty. If anyone engages in extortion or syndicate politics, we must speak up. Let our political rivalry be based on values, rather than turning into personal attacks.”

The interim government has no right to decide on setting up a UN Human Rights Commission office while ignoring political parties, said Akhtar Hossen, member secretary of the NCP.

He accused the Awami League and its allies of committing mass killing and crimes against humanity.

Failing to bring these atrocities to justice would betray the spirit of the July uprising, he said.

“People of all religions — Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians — must be able to live peacefully in this country. That is what the July uprising stood for.”

Referring to the July Charter and Declaration, Akhtar said these must be implemented as the official roadmap for Bangladesh’s liberation.

These documents should be enforced through legal order based on fundamental reforms.

He ended his speech by calling on all anti-fascist forces to unite

in defence of Bangladesh’s independence and sovereignty.

Islamic forces must stay united, said Mahiuddin Rabbani, Hefazat-e-Islam’s central Nayeb-e-Amir.

He went on to demand a commission to investigate the 2013 killings involving Hefazat and the withdrawal of cases against Hefazat.

He also criticised the role of the current government.

“The caretaker has now become the owner of the house. And now they want to bring in the UN Human Rights Commission? We will never accept this. Where were you for the last 16 years? What did you do in Gaza? Were you able to uphold human rights there? In the name of human rights, we will not tolerate any activity that goes against the Qur’an and Sunnah in this country.”

The Qadlanis must be officially declared non-Muslim by the state, he said, adding that no law that goes against the Qur’an and Sunnah can be enacted.

“So long as you carry the flag of truth for humanity and Islam, Islami Andolon will stand by your side, In Sha Allah,” said Maulana Yunus Ahmad, secretary general of Bangladesh Islami Andolon.

Gono Odhikar Parishad President

Nurul Haque Nur demanded fundamental changes to the constitutional framework before moving towards elections.

“The historic change we achieved through blood must be made sustainable — the people have called for constitutional reform.”

He also called for a qualitative shift in student politics by holding all student union elections, including DUCSU, as the first step.

Expressing frustration over the delay in justice even after six years, Barkat Ullah, father of BUET student Abrar Fahad, said, “His only crime was that he spoke for the country. He posted a Facebook status opposing Indian dominance, aggression, and illegal agreements between the then government and India.”

Gobinda Chandra Pramanik, secretary general of the Bangladesh Hindu Mohajote, has voiced strong support for Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami’s demands, describing the party as a “universal university” and calling for separate elections for religious minorities alongside the introduction of proportional representation.

Several other political party leaders, as well as the injured and family members of the July uprising martyrs, also spoke at the rally.

### Journalism under siege

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extend beyond the newsroom. “When journalism weakens, civil society suffers. And without a strong civil society, politics becomes fragile. No economy can thrive without political integrity.”

Bhattacharya said meaningful reform in Bangladesh remains elusive, with progress slow, uneven, and often blocked by entrenched interests. “Reforms will happen, some partially, some incomplete, and some not at all. Yet new reforms will always be needed,” he noted.

He also said that power remains concentrated among the few. “A responsible government must prioritise those without voice, agency, or visibility.”

He underscored the critical role of the media in making the invisible visible and empowering the marginalised. “Only the media can turn the voiceless into full citizens with dignity and rights.”

On social protection, he acknowledged increased coverage but cautioned against complacency. “Nearly 40 percent are now included, but 56 percent of the vulnerable population remains outside. Much of the expansion happened under authoritarian rule, driven by political motives.”

He criticised recent budget allocations, saying the poor, especially in rural areas, received inadequate support.

He said, “Those who needed the most support, the rural poor, received very little.”

According to him, a large portion of last fiscal year’s public expenditure was directed toward the urban middle class. “This was likely a strategy to control public memory and suppress dissent, while rural poverty remained largely unaddressed,” he added.

Despite setbacks, Bhattacharya said, Bangladesh has made significant progress over five decades, driven by the productive force of ordinary citizens.

Referring to the White Paper Committee’s report, Professor Selim Raihan, executive director of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), pointed out the persistence of a “close-knit, reform-resistant coalition” within Bangladesh’s governance system.

This informal alliance, comprising

political, bureaucratic, and military actors, blocks essential reforms, he said.

Despite proposing 14 tax reform recommendations, Raihan said, none have been implemented because of a lack of initiative from relevant ministries and a tendency to prioritise crisis management over structural change.

He emphasised that institutional dysfunction predates the last 15 years but has intensified recently. Future political contenders, he said, must outline concrete plans to address systemic misgovernance.

Raihan also criticised the absence of a strategic vision for diversifying an economy overly reliant on garments and remittances.

He also warned that Bangladesh was drifting into “crony capitalism”. Citing Bhattacharya, he described a “sycophant economy” where informal influence trumps institutional rules.

Talking about the book, “The Economy of Scandal”, he said the omission of tax policy from the book was a major flaw. The book asks important questions, but the big question is: will these ideas help bring real change, or will they just stay as talk, hidden behind closed doors, he added.

Sharmind Neelormi, professor, department of economics, Jahangirnagar University, said this book is not just for students of economics or policymakers. It is equally for the everyday citizen who takes a rickshaw to the office, goes to the market, reads the newspaper, and quietly wonders.

She also said the “Economics of Scandal” is not just a book. “It is a long journey of reflection, self-criticism, and a challenge to look ahead with clarity and courage. For those who have not yet read it, I urge you—read it. Then ask yourself: What have you given to the state? And what has the state given you in return?”

The book’s author Masum said he tried to reflect his long career experience in economic reporting in it.

Radia Tamim, adviser of the Global Centre for Innovation and Learning, moderated the event.

Mahrulkh Mohiuddin, managing director of the University Press Limited, also addressed the event.

### No land, no death record

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or grandfather. When families are willing to divide property, that’s when death registration becomes necessary. But in our case, there were no such property issues, and that’s why I didn’t do it.”

The study also identified additional barriers to death registration, including low awareness of its benefits, especially in rural areas; the lack of essential documents such as digital birth certificates; and institutional hurdles like understaffing and poor inter-agency coordination.

Factors that encourage registration include better access to registration offices, higher digital literacy, and active involvement of community figures such as teachers and local leaders who assist families through the process.

Speaking at the event, Mamunur Rashid, joint secretary at the Health Services Division of the health and family welfare ministry, acknowledged the gender gap and its

consequences.

“The data clearly show significant gaps — particularly in female death registration. In Rangpur, for instance, only 32 percent of the recorded deaths in 2023–2024 were female. That’s 6,537 out of 20,202 deaths.

“One of the main barriers is that very few women in rural areas own land or property, so families often don’t see a reason to register their deaths. But this must change. These gaps have serious implications for equity and public health.”

Zahid Hossain, registrar general at the Office of the Registrar General (Birth and Death Registration) of the LGRD ministry, in his speech emphasised the urgency of coordinated action.

“There is a clear and persistent disparity between male and female death registration, and this is now becoming a public policy issue... While we’ve made good progress with digitisation, strong collaboration among authorities is critical. Civil

society, NGOs, and government agencies must coordinate more effectively at all levels to ensure no one is left out of the civil registration system.”

Professor Dr Farhana Dewan, president of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh, spoke about the medical community’s role.

“We still have a long way to go if we want to meet our SDG targets by 2030. As doctors, we are often the first point of contact when a woman dies. It’s not just about raising awareness among patients; we also have a responsibility. Health professionals can play a pivotal role by informing and guiding families to complete the death registration process.”

The study recommends enhancing public awareness around death registration, with a focus on gender-sensitive messaging to ensure families understand its importance for women.

It also calls for simplifying the

process and removing costs that discourage families from registering female deaths, particularly in low-income and rural communities.

Building human resource capacity at registration offices was identified as a priority to improve service delivery and reduce delays.

The study also suggests expanding the legal and administrative utility of death certificates, linking registration to essential services and legal processes.

Other recommendations include providing targeted legal incentives and strengthening grassroots-level communication strategies to support families through the process.

Researchers and participants at the study’s unveiling stressed that ensuring women are counted in both life and death is essential to building an equitable society. Strengthening gender-responsive civil registration systems, they noted, is key to meeting Bangladesh’s development and human rights goals.