

Spotlight on this year's  
BEST DIRECTOR FOR SERIES

Shihab Shaheen



Anam Biswas



Kazi Asad PHOTOS: STAR &amp; COLLECTED

**From heartfelt dramas to chilling thrillers, this year's Best Director (Series) nominees at Blender's Choice - The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024 showcase the remarkable range and creativity shaping Bangladeshi streaming content. Each director brings a distinct vision, whether reimagining literature, exploring regional authenticity, or bending genres, to expertly tell stories that echo deeply with audiences and critics alike.**

ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT DESK

## Let us have a look at the nominees this year.

In *Rongila Kitab*, Anam Biswas transforms Kingkor Ahsan's novel of the same name with creative freedom, elevating a subplot into the central story while retaining its emotional essence. His direction blends love, danger, and survival with thorough production and authentic performances from Pori Moni and



Vicky Zahed

Mostafizur Noor Imran. Acclaimed for the show's realism and emotional depth, Biswas definitely deserves the nomination for Best Director (Series) in the popular category.

Kazi Asad's *Adhunik Bangla Hotel* is a three-part anthology blending psychological horror, fantasy, and mythology, with each episode inspired by Shariful Hasan's short stories. Starring Mosharraf Karim in varied roles, the narratives begin with everyday moments around Bangla dishes before spiraling into eerie, supernatural territory. Asad's direction stands out for its atmospheric night shoots, authentic rural settings, and gradual shift from realism to chilling suspense. These qualities have earned him a well-deserved nomination.

Mohammad Touqir Islam anchors *Sinpaat* in gritty realism, rooted in

Rajshahi-Pabna culture and featuring non professional local actors. The narrative emerges from true events—especially those in Shohel Sheikh's life—and unfolds in authentic settings within small towns. The pacing is deliberate, driven by character depth over action. The director's commitment to regional authenticity and character as story creates an immersive, atmospheric crime drama. Touqir is a much-deserved nominee.

Shihab Shaheen's *Golam Mamun*



Mohammad Touqir Islam

spins off the popular character from *Buker Moddhye Agun*, unfolding as a tense crime thriller. The director's storytelling is compact and suspenseful, blending gritty realism with sharp dialogue, strong performances by Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Sabila Nur, and a brooding Dhaka backdrop. These strengths have secured Shihab Shaheen's nomination.

Vicky Zahed's *Chokro* is a 20 episode mystery thriller inspired by a tragic 2007 family incident in Mymensingh. Known for his signature genre-bending storytelling, Vicky adapts this unsettling real event into a haunting narrative that explores human psychology and supernatural undercurrents. Despite numerous production setbacks—including the tragic loss of crew members—the director persisted, delivering a chilling, atmospheric series that quickly secured a second season.

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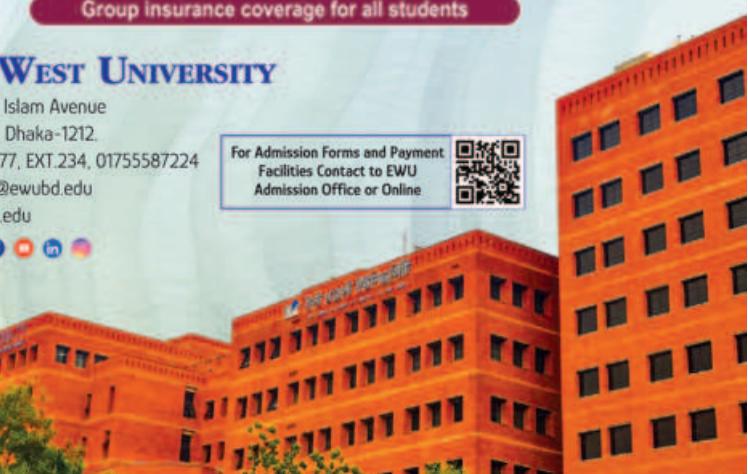
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## Five arrested

FROM PAGE 12

"The recovered stones will be returned to the Sada Pathor area, while drives will continue to stop stone looting."

Separately, another 2,500 cubic feet of stones were seized from Binnakandi area in Gowainghat upazila's Fatehpur union during a drive led by Gowainghat UNORatan Kumar Adhikari.

## Ctg-Dhaka

FROM PAGE 12

The inauguration ceremony was chaired by BPC Chairman Md Amin Ul Ahsan and attended by Energy Secretary Saiful Islam, Bangladesh Army's Engineer in Chief Major General Hasanuzzaman, and Project Director Colonel Sultan Mahmud.

Officials said the project is part of the government's efforts to strengthen the country's energy security.

## Two projects

FROM PAGE 12

December 2019, Dhaka WASA, the implementing agency, now aims for June 2027 completion.

As of May, the financial progress of the project is 82 percent while the physical progress is 89 percent.

Meanwhile, the ministry of youth and sports is seeking a two-year extension and a 73 percent increase in cost for its project to build mini stadiums in 186 upazilas.

The revised project, if passed, will cover 201 upazilas, cost Tk 2,855 crore and take two years extra.

Land acquisition, filling of earth, depreciation of the taka against the US dollar, land-related disputes and changes in the schedule of rates account for the escalation in estimated cost.

## 1,760 aid seekers killed in Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

The Israeli military said plans had been approved for a new offensive in Gaza, aimed at defeating Hamas and freeing all the remaining hostages.

The military intends to take control of Gaza City and nearby refugee camps, some of the most densely populated parts of the territory, which has been devastated by more than 22 months of war.

In recent days, Gaza City residents have told AFP of more frequent air strikes targeting residential areas, while earlier this week Hamas denounced "aggressive" Israeli ground

incursions in the area.

The Israeli government's plans to expand the war have sparked an international outcry as well as domestic opposition.

Arab and world leaders have rejected the idea of moving Gaza's population to any country. Palestinians say that would be like another "Nakba" (catastrophe) when hundreds of thousands fled or were forced out during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.

Qatar yesterday said that it, along with 31 Arab and Islamic countries, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), condemns

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statements regarding what he called "Greater Israel".

Qatar's Foreign Ministry, in a statement posted on X, said the Israeli PM's comments "represent a gross disregard and a blatant and dangerous violation of the rules of international law and the foundations of stable international relations".

UN-backed experts have warned of widespread famine unfolding in the territory, where Israel has drastically curtailed the amount of humanitarian aid it allows in.

Meanwhile, three sources told Reuters that South Sudan and Israel are discussing a deal to resettle Palestinians from war-torn Gaza in the troubled African nation.

The sources, who have knowledge of the matter but spoke on condition of anonymity, said no agreement had been reached, but talks between South Sudan and Israel were ongoing.

The plan, if carried further, would envisage people moving from an enclave to a nation in the heart of Africa riven by years of political and ethnically-driven violence.

## Election will be held

FROM PAGE 12

educated segment of society, yet often the hardest to guide. If you truly want to see progress, the change must begin with you," he said.

Speaking about the food prices, Jahangir said recent floods and heavy rainfall had pushed up vegetable prices. He accused middlemen -- often from privileged backgrounds -- of profiting at the expense of both farmers and consumers.

"Farmers are not getting fair prices for potatoes, while consumers are paying more for vegetables because of middlemen. If farmers don't get fair returns, they won't cultivate potatoes next season, which could again drive prices up," he warned.

On environmental concerns, Jahangir called for a nationwide shift from polythene bags to jute

alternatives.

"Polythene damages soil, blocks drainage, and does not decompose. It has no benefit ... If we replace polythene with jute bags, it will help farmers, improve public health, and protect the environment. If we return to jute bags, everyone will benefit," he said.

The adviser also issued a stern warning against extortion rackets, particularly in the Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas.

"Let me be clear: no extortionist will be allowed to remain in Bangladesh, no matter how powerful they are. Anyone involved in extortion will be brought to justice. But we need your cooperation in identifying them and supporting law enforcement instead of shielding them," Jahangir said.

## Bangladesh belongs to people of every faith

FROM PAGE 12

him to join the celebration.

"This joyful celebration has begun with songs and dance, and I am grateful that you have included us in this festivity. Thousands of devotees have gathered here today, and we are thankful to be part of your joy."

"This is the Bangladesh of harmony where Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, and Bangalee people have lived together peacefully for centuries. On this auspicious day, our pledge should be to maintain this harmony and brotherhood forever. This country belongs to everyone. There will be no division here -- not by

religion, caste, or creed. We are all citizens of this land, and each of us has equal rights over it. Together, we look forward to a golden future."

Waker stressed that the armed forces, including the navy and air force, remain committed to ensuring this spirit of unity. "Across Bangladesh, the armed forces are deployed to support you..." he said.

Calling on devotees to carry forward the teachings of Lord Krishna, the army chief said, "Let his teachings radiate from here to everywhere, inspiring us to live together in peace and unity."