



Arnob teases renewal of Coke Studio Bangla

“Ready for a bet?” writes Shayan Chowdhury Arnob from his social handle, posting a photo where he is sitting on his piano chair with a glance that shows a bottle of Coke.

A full-on hint at the return of Coke Studio. He further wrote, “When will the next song of Coke Studio be released, the day after tomorrow, or a day later, or today?” The message directly indicates that a renewal of the show is arriving soon.

With the release of *Obak Bhalobasha*, the third season of the popular show ceased to exist. However, after a long wait, Arnob himself announced the show’s return.



Heme accuses label of misusing her photos with objectionable captions

SHARMIN JOYA

Small-screen actress Jannatul Sumaiya Heme is spending time with her family in Canada, where she received an unpleasant surprise that left her annoyed and prompted her to post on social media.

On August 17, the actress posted on her Facebook account, tagging record and production label Laser Vision, to protest that the company’s verified Facebook page had used her picture with irrelevant and misleading captions. She clarified that she never used such dialogue in any of her projects.

The actress spoke to The Daily Star from Montreal. “I worked with the company a few years ago. They are a reputable and well-known organisation. Usually, they use these photo cards using a caption from the project for their promotions. However, some of my friends and acquaintances forwarded me those photocards carrying highly objectionable captions, which I never delivered as dialogues in any of my projects. I didn’t find those dialogues funny, but they seemed cheap to me! It came as a shock to me that they did not just use my pictures,



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

but some of the other renowned actresses as well.”

She also said that people might believe these misleading posts, which is why she protested and informed the audience regarding this matter. The company, however, later apologised for its actions and described it as an

“unintentional error”. The actress further said that she is grateful to the company for acknowledging their mistake and correcting it immediately.

Heme pointed out that after the monetisation of photos was introduced recently on social media, many are grabbing the chance to make a questionable business out of this.

Meanwhile, Heme added that she has been feeling extremely disturbed by the media’s role lately. She shared a recent incident that occurred during the Milestone tragedy. “A few renowned media portals ran headlines claiming I stated support of the pilot, which is absolutely untrue. And during that time, I was flying. I was on the plane. I made a post expressing my grief for the students and their parents. Later, when I contacted them to ask where they found such a statement from me, they couldn’t provide an answer. I had to clarify myself through a post that I never shared any such statements with any media. Such activities by the media are highly questionable, and I feel extremely sad that, without even attempting to reach out to me, they create vague news, much of which is often copied from other portals.”

Shobdo Theatre to stage ‘Socrates’ in Jessore



Theatre troupe Shobdo Theatre (Shobdo Natyacharcha Kendra) is set to present the third performance of its acclaimed play *Socrates* on Friday (August 22), at 7:30pm at the Jessore District Shilpakala

Academy.

The play, written by Masoud Zaman and directed by Arun Majumder, features an ensemble cast bringing the philosophical drama to life.

Shahidur Rahman stars as Archon, Rifat Mahmud as Melitas, Ibrahim Khalil as Enitas, and Sohel Rana as Plato.

Tickets, priced at Tk 100, are available at New Dhaka Bostraloy, Best Choice, and the District Shilpakala Academy in Jessore.

Tanvir Mokammel to receive Matua Ratna honour



Acclaimed Filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel is set to receive the Matua Ratna Shommanona 2025 for his documentary film *Matua Mangal*.

He will be presented the award on Saturday, August 31, at the Nilpadma Auditorium in West Bengal, under the initiative of the All-India Matua Mahasangha.

Matua Mangal portrays the lives of the people of Matua along with the philosophical aspects of their faith. The documentary premiered on July 12 at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in Agargaon, Dhaka, and was later released on Kino-Eye Films’ YouTube channel.

The film explores nearly 200 years of Matua history, their religious and spiritual beliefs, lifestyle, socio-economic context, as well as their present struggles and future possibilities. It also features interviews with community leaders as well as Matua men and women.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

JAZZ CONCERT ‘Seesaw’s Bounce’

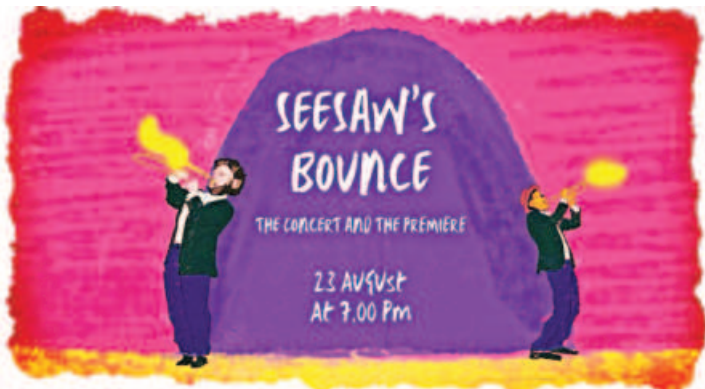
The Seesaw Collective will take the stage at Alliance Française de Dhaka this Saturday for an evening of vibrant rhythms. The event titled *Seesaw’s Bounce* will also premiere their latest single with Rupakalpa Chowdhury and an animated video by Mubtasim Alvee.

Joining them are Daruchini b9th’s swing trio, along with guest artists Mohaimin Karim and Hasin Aryan, making it a night of outstanding musical collaborations.

Date: Saturday | August 23

Time: 7pm onwards

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



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Calls to extend reform timeline

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beyond rhetoric.”

He criticised what he called a “patron-client” relationship between India and Bangladeshi parties, especially the Awami League. This dynamic, he said, shapes government behaviour.

He also argued that Bangladesh’s diplomacy is weakened by poor preparation compared to Indian counterparts.

Saiful called for “careful, tactful diplomacy” rooted in national interest, both to manage relations with India and to support inclusive, democratic politics at home.

On domestic politics, he opposed calls to ban major parties, including the Awami League.

“Proscribing the Awami League or other large parties is not practical and would be counterproductive. Political challenges must be addressed through organised, ideological and social means. Accountability for individual crimes is necessary, but banning parties with social bases can backfire.”

He expressed concerns over the rise of fundamentalist forces, blaming the previous government’s double standards for enabling them.

“While Awami League came to power

on an anti-fundamentalist platform, it is now accused of indirectly supporting and sheltering such groups. They are operating openly in the capital. This has undermined democracy, women’s rights and social equality.”

He warned of growing violence against women and shrinking safe spaces, describing the trend as “Taliban-like behaviour”.

However, he quickly added that Bangladesh is unlikely to become a Taliban state, as the public broadly rejects extremism.

Saiful also criticised the interim government’s failure to ensure public safety. “The lives of ordinary people, especially women and marginalised groups, are increasingly insecure.”

On youth politics, he said the ethical and moral foundations that once inspired young activists are eroding.

He criticised the newly formed National Citizen Party, which had initially raised hopes but is now plagued by allegations, ideological confusion and declining support. “These trends threaten to stifle future political engagement.”

Turning to election preparations, Saiful said his party has begun work in

its traditional constituencies as well as new areas where it has gained presence in the past five years.

“We are focusing on outreach, coordination and building organisational capacity. The final decision on seats is pending.”

He noted that while Gonotontro Mancha has not yet finalised electoral strategy, discussions remain possible. “We are open to further talks. Given the challenges before the polls, some understanding may help.”

Although there have been no formal talks with BNP, Saiful acknowledged that they have joined joint movements over the past two years. “BNP has said it wants to form a government with its movement allies, but we have not formally responded.”

About possible coordination with BNP, he said, “The basis for understanding is there. We will see how discussions evolve.”

He emphasised that parties involved in the movement against the previous regime should be represented in the next parliament.

“Whether through a front, alliance or understanding – these are undecided. But broadly, we want to see that movement represented.”

India tables bill

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Prime Minister to be tendered by the 31st day after being taken in such custody.”

Amit Shah said the legislation will be referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament for further examination. If enacted, it would ensure that any minister or chief minister held in custody for 30 days on charges carrying at least five years’ jail time would automatically lose office from the 31st day.

Currently, the Constitution has no provision for removing a prime minister or minister facing serious criminal charges.

The bill sparked fierce protests in the Lok Sabha, with opposition MPs tearing copies of the draft and throwing them towards the home minister.

Outside parliament, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, a member of Lok Sabha, called the proposal “draconian”. “It goes against everything our democracy and Constitution stand for,” she said, warning that it would allow governments to arbitrarily remove rivals by filing cases against them.

“They can slap any kind of case on a chief minister, have him or her arrested for 30 days... Their plan is out in the open for everyone to see. It is absolutely wrong, unconstitutional, undemocratic, and very unfortunate,” she said.

Dhaka asks Delhi

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in turn impact the ongoing efforts of the two countries in further enhancing the relationship.”

The statement comes in the wake of recent media reports claiming that the Awami League has set up a party office in Kolkata and New Delhi.

The AL leaders began relocating to India after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India on August 5, 2024, in the face of a mass uprising.

Hasina is believed to be somewhere near Delhi, and many senior AL and its affiliated bodies’ leaders, including former ministers, have rented homes

in and around Kolkata, reported BBC Bangla on August 8.

Indian newspaper The Print in an article on August 19 suggested that roughly 1,300 former ministers and leaders of AL and its affiliated bodies were in exile in India and other parts of the world.

Hasina and many of Awami League leaders face cases for mass killings during the July uprising.

Bangladesh, whose relations with India remained frosty since the fall of the Awami League, had written to India seeking extradition of Hasina, but has received no response yet.

The interim government has banned

all activities of the AL under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

In response to media queries on yesterday’s foreign ministry statement, Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the Indian government is not aware of any anti-Bangladesh activities purported by members of the AL in India or of any action that is contrary to Indian law.

“The government does not allow political activities against other countries to be carried out from Indian soil. The press statement by the interim government of Bangladesh is thus misplaced,” he said.

One in three community clinic buildings

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at the Bangladesh Medical Research Council auditorium in the capital and organised by the Trust.

Asked about the disruption of the medicine supply, Md Akhtaruzzaman, managing director of the Trust, said they have already procured medicines worth Tk 120 crore from Essential Drugs Company and 15,000 boxes have already reached the community clinics.

The rest of the medicines will arrive within a week, he said.

“Everyone will receive medicines by next week – we have the budget and will produce medicines worth Tk 200 crore more,” he added.

However, two officials of the Trust

said it may take one month to get the medicine supply back to normal. They received a lump-sum allocation for procuring medicines as the approval of the project is taking time, said one of them, wishing not to be named.

Earlier, in his presentation, Asif Mahmud, director (field administration) of the Trust, the clinics have been used as the first point of contact for poor and destitute people at the grassroots.

Apart from giving preventive advice, the clinics provide 22 types of medicines.

The clinics are being used as the outreach centres for expanded Programme on Immunisation, the national programme that provides routine vaccinations for children and

mothers.

The Health Service Reform Commission has given several recommendations to improve its services, and the Trust has already devised some short- and long-term plan in this regard, he said.

Apart from updating the list of medicines, they would supply necessary equipment like blood pressure machines, weight machines, glucometers on the basis of demand, he added.

Nasir Uddin, director (administration), Geeta Rani Devi, acting director (training) of the Trust, and SM Rezaul Islam, a JICA consultant working with the Trust, were present at the seminar.

Doctors falsified records

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Mahfuzur was testifying as a prosecution witness in the crimes against humanity case against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun.

He said 167 protesters were admitted to NINS during the uprising, most of them had severe head injuries. “Many had lost parts of their skulls. My team and I performed 33 surgeries to remove bullets and pellets,” he said, adding that 575 more gunshot victims were treated at the outpatient department.

Despite many of them needing admission, they could not do it due to a lack of space, he said. “Four were brought dead, and 29 others died while under treatment,” he said. A video clip, showing partially disabled victims with head injuries, was also screened before the court.

Hasanul Banna, associate professor of surgery at Ibne Sina Medical College

Hospital, Kalyanpur, said his hospital began admitting wounded protesters from July 18.

But in the evening, police, accompanied by local Awami League activists, obstructed treatment and asked staffers not to admit protesters. “Police told us anyone injured in the protests cannot be treated at private hospitals,” Banna said.

Officers checked the admission register and took a list of the patients. From the following morning, Jubo League and AL men besieged the hospital entrance, blocking ambulances, and preventing patient admissions, Banna testified.

On July 19, Mostakim Billah, a diagnostic centre technologist and husband of one of his colleagues, was shot in the head at Mirpur-10. He was brought to Ibne Sina Hospital via an alternative route, but no ambulance could fetch a neurosurgeon due to AL’s obstructions. Mostakim was taken to NINS, but he was denied admission and

later declared dead on arrival at Ibne Sina’s Dhanmondi branch, he added.

“To evade police surveillance, from July 18 to August 5 last year, gunshot victims were admitted under fake names and recorded with false causes for admission. They were secretly treated in post-operative wards, ICUs, CCUs, and special cabins,” Banna said.

He also held Hasina, Kamal, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, ex-foreign minister Hasan Mahmud, former state minister for information and broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, ex-state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, senior AL leaders, and top police officers responsible for the atrocities, and demanded justice.

Apart from Mahfuzur and Banna, Sonia Jamal, the mother of seventh grader Mehedi Hasan Junayed killed in police firing in the capital’s Chankharpul on August 5 last year, and Shahnaz Parvin, senior staff nurse at NINS, testified as prosecution witnesses before the ICT-1 yesterday.