

Nandita Das to serve as Busan Film Festival jury member



Actor and filmmaker Nandita Das has been named to the seven-member competition jury at the 30th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), where acclaimed Korean director Na Hong-jin will serve as jury president. BIFF 2025 introduces a new competition category with the Busan Award, to be presented in five sections including Best Film and Best Director.

Das, known for performances in *Earth, Fire, and Water*, as well as directing *Firaaq, Manto*, and *Zwigato*, joins an illustrious jury lineup. Members include Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Ka-fai, Iranian filmmaker Marziyeh Meshkini, Korean-American director Kogonada, Indonesian producer Yulia Evina Bhara, and Korean actor Han Hyo-joo. The winners will be announced at the festival's closing ceremony in Busan.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BLENDER'S CHOICE – THE DAILY STAR OTT & DIGITAL CONTENT AWARDS

Who will join Naziba and Rafsan as hosts?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

In just its fourth year, the Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards has already earned a reputation as the country's most beloved digital awards. Over the years, many have been honoured with awards, while trailblazing performers have left their

mark with unforgettable dance, music, and stand-up comedy acts. However, the backbone of the awards is arguably the anchoring – four hosts who carry the entire programme.

Rafsan Sabab and Naziba Basher are two stalwarts who have been with the awards since the first season, joined by the likes of Sunerah Binte Kamal, Yash Rohan, Azra Mahmood, Amin Hannan Chowdhury, and Aisha Khan. This year, they will be joined by two more industry veterans, neither of whom

has ever hosted an award show before. What's more, for one of them, it will be their first stage appearance of the year.

One thing is for certain: their charisma will completely change the awards' outlook. The catch is, you'll have to wait until September 7 to find out who they are!



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

BLENDER'S CHOICE

The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024

The fourth edition of Blender's Choice – The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards will celebrate excellence in digital entertainment. Artis, performers, and filmmakers will be honoured across 27 categories – including 15 Popular and 12 Critics' awards – culminating in a festive evening of stellar performances and recognition of outstanding contributions to the OTT industry.

DATE: SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

TIME: 6PM ONWARDS

VENUE: BANGLADESH CHINA FRIENDSHIP CONFERENCE CENTER (BCFCC)



Bulbul Ahmed's daughter pays homage to his legacy with 'Mohanayoker Gaan'

On the 84th birth anniversary of iconic actor, director, and producer Bulbul Ahmed (1941-2010), his eldest daughter, Tahsin Farzana Tilottoma, has launched the second season of her musical tribute *Mohanayoker Gaan*.

Presented by Selen Tea, the series honours Bulbul Ahmed's enduring legacy through six timeless songs from his films. The first track of the new season, *Duti*

Mon Jokhon from the film *Songini*, has already been released.

The inaugural season, introduced in 2023, featured six of Ahmed's most celebrated songs. Season two continues that heartfelt tradition, blending cinematic history with a daughter's personal homage to one of Bangladesh's most beloved screen legends.

NEWS

Rights groups condemn

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irresponsibly allowed these incidents to occur, but has endangered the minimum human rights of the people."

It added that "a mobocracy is running in the country" with either the indifference or the support of the interim government.

The committee also mentioned the brutal mob killing of cobbler Ruplal Robidas and his cousin in law Pradip Robidas in Rangpur's Taraganj.

The statement added that when houses of religious minority communities were attacked, looted and set on fire because of a Facebook post in the same district's Gangachara upazila, police arrested the Facebook user instead of the attackers – thus directly supporting the attack.

Furthermore, it said, "In Lalmonirhat, elderly barber Paresh Chandra Shil and his son Bishnu Chandra Shil were beaten by a mob under false accusations of blasphemy, and instead of arresting the perpetrators, police arrested Paresh and Bishnu, legitimising the mob."

In Dhaka, mobs cornered a discussion meeting on the Liberation War and later, the police, instead of

arresting the terrorists, arrested 16 people – including freedom fighters, university teachers and journalists who were the discussants – and then sent them to jail in an anti-terrorism case."

The committee added, "When multiple incidents of mob attacks have endangered people's lives and property, the chief adviser's spokesperson, by identifying mobs as 'pressure groups', effectively expressed support towards them and mocked the people."

It said that the current judicial system has normalised filing cases against those tagged with "League" and keeping people in jail without trial. "The right to bail of identified war criminals is being protected, but when Bawm citizens die in prison, the court does not recognise their right to bail."

The law enforcement's inaction in protecting the students of Chittagong University and Bangladesh Agricultural University from organised mob attacks was "astonishing", the platform added.

The HRFB statement was signed by Hamida Hossain, president of Naripokkho; Sultana Kamal, Supreme

Court advocate; Raja Devasish Roy; Z I Khan Panna, Supreme Court advocate and chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra secretariat and acting convener; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Zafir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Uddoyog; Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust; Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reforms and Development; and Khushu Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, among others.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Rights Committee's statement was signed by Anu Muhammad, retired professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University and human rights activist; Samina Lutfia, associate professor of sociology at Dhaka University and social activist; and activists Harun ur Rashid, Maha Mirza, Mahtab Uddin Ahmed and Marzia Prova.

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The judge left the courtroom briefly due to the chaos but returned at 3:25pm. After the hearing, the court rejected Monjurul's bail application.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Siam said, "Several lawyers attacked me in front of the judge without any reason. I demand justice for this incident."

Muktadir said, "The police were present but did not intervene."

Lawyer Muhiuddin denied the allegations against him. "I did not assault anyone inside the courtroom," he told The Daily Star.

Dhaka Bar Association General Secretary Syed Nazrul Islam said he went to the spot and tried to calm both sides. He said no official investigation committee has yet been formed.

Survivors desperately searching for family members sifted rubble, carried bodies on woven stretchers, and dug graves with pickaxes in the wait for aid to arrive.

Video showed trucks, some laden with sacks of flour and others carrying men with shovels, travelling to remote villages on higher slopes. Authorities also airdropped dozens of commando forces at sites where helicopters could not land.

Meanwhile, Court Reporters' Unity, Law Reporters Forum and Supreme Court Reporters Forum condemned the incident.

APHR reassured that ASEAN has ignored the root of the crisis, and now it is already at a critical stage."

Its member Raoul Manuel of the Philippines said Rohingya youth cannot remain trapped without access to accredited education and relevant skills training.

"We call on ASEAN to work closely with Bangladesh to make this possible."

Another Malaysian MP, Wong Chen, said the Rohingya people are from Myanmar and since Myanmar is an ASEAN state, member states of the organisation have an obligation to provide sufficient food aid to the refugee camps, which will soon be at risk of mass starvation.

APHR also suggested holding a high-level meeting involving ASEAN,

Does asking for forgiveness absolve

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The ex-IGP stands accused in a case over crimes against humanity during the July uprising. His co-accused include deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. Mamun has pleaded guilty and become an approver in the case.

State defence counsel Md Amir Hossain, who represents Hasina and Kamal, completed a cross examination yesterday, after the tribunal recorded Mamun's testimony earlier on Tuesday.

Amir asked Mamun whether he was among the police officials awarded the Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal for "ballot-stuffing on the night before the 2018 national election".

Mamun said he was but could not recall on which grounds.

The defence counsel further pressed: "When you became aware of the election irregularities, did you instruct your subordinates not to comply?"

Mamun replied, "I did. Some followed my instructions, others did not."

Amir then said, "By following illegal orders, you also committed a crime."

At that, prosecutor Mizanul Islam responded, "He has already admitted to his crimes and asked for forgiveness."

Amir shot back, "Does seeking forgiveness absolve one of their crimes?"

Mizanul replied that the tribunal would take that question into consideration.

Act to avert mass hunger

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on the Rohingya issue, which would enable high-level discussions and the development of a unified action plan reflecting the shared responsibility of all member states.

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Speaking to journalists later, the defence counsel said, "Former IGP Mamun admitted to his crimes and asked for forgiveness. But murder cannot be forgiven. Even if he admits the crime, he should still be tried ... I want to prove he is not innocent."

During cross examination, Mamun also revealed he had been given two contractual extensions after his service tenure ended. While he accepted the first, he was reluctant the second time.

"Despite my refusal, I was re-appointed IGP to conceal internal feuds within the police, especially involving officers from Gopalganj."

He also testified that during initial core committee meetings at the then home minister's residence, no order to shoot was issued. "The order to open fire on peaceful protesters came later."

When Amir claimed that around 700 police officers were killed during last year's uprising, Mamun replied he was unaware of any such figure.

Amir then retorted, "Then you were an unfit IGP..." – a claim Mamun rejected.

According to Police Headquarters, 44 policemen were killed during the July uprising.

Mamun further said the SWAT (special weapons and tactics) unit had obtained snipers before his appointment as IGP but, to his knowledge, those weapons were not

used during last year's movement.

Before the lunch break, Amir requested the two-member tribunal of Chair Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder and Judge Md Mohitul Hoque Anam Chowdhury to adjourn the cross examination until Sunday. But the tribunal chair rejected the plea, saying the court is already burdened with a huge caseload.

At the post-lunch session, Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder was not present. An hour after it began, the defence counsel appealed for adjournment again, citing headache and illness. Judge Mohitul Hoque sought the prosecution's opinion.

Prosecutor Mizanul said it would be better to have it completed yesterday, and the judge issued an order accordingly.

As the session resumed, Amir argued that Hasina and Kamal had not instructed the use of drones, helicopters, or lethal weapons against protesters, to which Mamun replied, "They gave instructions."

When Amir asked if such orders were issued in writing, the ex-IGP admitted, "No."

The defence counsel then said, "So during the July uprising, crimes were committed by your subordinates under your command without written orders."

Mamun denied this allegation as well.

Fashion legend Armani dies

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worked until his final days, dedicating himself to the company, the collections, and the many ongoing and future projects," the company said.

Armani had cancelled his menswear show in Milan this year due to health reasons. He also missed the Paris Armani Prive show on doctors' orders. "In 20 years of Armani Prive, it's the first time I'm not in Paris," he said in a statement sent to AFP in July.

"My doctors advised more rest, even though I felt ready."

He added that he had "followed and overseen every aspect of the show remotely", stressing: "I approved and signed off on everything you will see."

The Italian icon was credited with inventing red-carpet fashion, but also moved into a younger and less expensive range through Emporio Armani, and opened luxury hotels.

His death came just weeks ahead of celebrations marking 50 years of his eponymous label.