



PHOTOS: SNEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

This award is truly exceptional for me

PORI MONI

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The fourth iteration of Blender's Choice—The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024 recognised Pori Moni as the Best Actor (Female) in the Popular Choice category for her powerful performance in Anam Biswas's web series *Rongila Kitab*. This Hoichoi original, adapted from Kingkor Ahsan's book, also marked her debut on OTT platforms.

While receiving the award, the actress shared her experience of portraying the role, saying, "I have received many awards in my life, and perhaps I will receive more in the future, but this one will always remain special to me. It is different because this award came for playing the role of a mother, something I was personally going through at that time. It allowed me to relive the journey of my own motherhood."

She then called her director, Anam Biswas—whom she recognises as her mentor—on stage and expressed her gratitude for trusting her

with such a challenging role.

Pori Moni went on to add, "This is not just an award to me; it is much more. It is a recognition that a mother can do anything and achieve anything she sets her mind to. After giving birth, I was body-shamed for gaining weight. Many people commented on how 'fat' I had become. But only a few truly understand what a mother goes through—unless they are mothers themselves."

Reflecting on her journey, she spoke about how such remarks continued even after her transformation. "Today, when I entered the hall for this award show, many people again commented on how much weight I had lost. I don't believe a woman's dignity should ever be tied to her weight, her appearance, or any other external factor. What matters most is what she does as a person, what she achieves, and the content of her character."

She concluded by saying, "So, thank you to The Daily Star and Blender's Choice for giving me this honour. I am truly grateful."



'Byatikrom O Niyom'

Prachyanat brings Bertolt Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* to the Bangladeshi stage as *Byatikrom O Niyom*, adapted by Shahidul Mamun and directed by Azad Abul Kalam. Featuring Shatabdi Wadud, Sakhawati Hossain Rezvi, and Diana Maryline, the production blends striking visuals, music, and choreography with urgent political resonance.

Date: Wednesday-Friday | September 10-12, 2025
Time: 7pm-8:30pm

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

Aryan Khan's 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood' trailer teases star cameos, musical firepower



The *Ba***ds of Bollywood* trailer has dropped, giving audiences the first real look at Aryan Khan's directorial debut for Netflix. Loud, witty, and unapologetically larger-than-life, the seven-episode series is produced by Gauri Khan under Red Chillies

Entertainment.

The trailer teases cameos by SRK, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, and Ranveer Singh, among others, with quirky moments— from Avtar, played by Manoj Pahwa, mistaking SRK for rapper Badshah to Aamir defending idly sambar over vada pav.

Leading the cast is Lakshya as Aasmaan Singh, an ambitious newcomer, opposite Bobby Deol's superstar Ajay Talvar. With music by Shashwat Sachdev, alongside Anirudh Ravichander and T-Series, the series premieres on Netflix September 18.

Tanim Noor announces film based on Humayun Ahmed's work

Director Tanim Noor and his team behind *Utshob* were honoured with the Cinematic Excellence Award at Blender's Choice - The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards on Sunday, September 7.

While receiving the award, Tanim surprised fans by announcing his next project, which will be based on a story by the legendary Humayun Ahmed. He also hinted that the film is slated for release during Eid-ul-Fitr next year.

Sharing his excitement, Nuhash Humayun wrote on social media, "Best wishes to Tanim on his next film! *Utshob* felt like a wonderful throwback to stories of old. Excited for his new adaptation of my father's work."

Tanim Noor's *Utshob*, which premiered during Eid-ul-Azha this year, earned widespread praise from audiences and critics alike, performing strongly both in theatres and on OTT platforms.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NEWS

Protect people fleeing conflict in Myanmar

FROM PAGE 12
Around 1.2 million Rohingyas have fled atrocities in Myanmar and taken shelter in Bangladesh. More are fleeing amid conflicts between the military and the Arakan Army rebel group.

Despite escalating violence, the Myanmar military seeks legitimacy by organising military-controlled elections, Turk said.

"The people of Myanmar demand justice, peace, and democratic civilian-run institutions. Conditions do not exist for free and representative elections. I echo ASEAN's view that de-escalation and humanitarian access are the way out of this crisis, not elections," he said.

The UN rights chief also said humanitarian access must be ensured, and parties in Rakhine must respect

provisional measures imposed by the International Court of Justice to protect Rohingya lives.

Turk highlighted that civilians throughout Myanmar are suffering severe consequences.

Since the 2021 coup, over 7,000 civilians have been killed and some 30,000 arrested for political reasons. In August alone, 277 civilians were reported killed.

Some 350,000 people have been displaced in Rakhine and Chin States since November 2023, with 150,000 more Rohingyas seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

Turk said the long-standing persecution of the Muslim Rohingya minority has intensified. Armed groups, including the Arakan Army, have joined attacks on civilians.

Eight years after the Myanmar military massacred tens of thousands of Rohingyas, the Arakan Army now controls nearly all of Rakhine State, committing killings, abductions, torture, forced recruitment, and village burnings.

On August 5-6, 2024, drones and artillery strikes killed hundreds of Rohingyas attempting to flee across the Naf River, the UN rights chief said.

As the military loses ground, it increasingly targets civilians through aerial attacks and other human rights violations. Rohingya armed groups have also committed abuses, including killings, forced recruitment, and displacement.

Turk reiterated call for the UN Security Council to refer Myanmar's situation to International Criminal Court.

Career Slam

FROM PAGE 12
to be honest," said the 22-year-old Alcaraz, who has not made it past the quarterfinals in four trips to Australia.

"When I just go to the pre-seasons to what I want to improve, what I want to achieve, Australian Open is there."

"It's the first or second tournament of the year, and it is always the main goal for me to complete a career Grand Slam, calendar Grand Slam. So it's going to be great."

Alcaraz's compatriot Rafael Nadal holds the record as the youngest man to win all four majors. He achieved the feat at the age of 24 in 2010 when he won the first of his four US Open titles.

"Obviously I'm going to try to do

it next year, but if it is not next year, hopefully in two and three and four. So I will try to complete it," said Alcaraz.

He will reclaim the world number one ranking from Sinner on Monday, returning to the top of the men's game for the first time since September 2023.

Alcaraz dropped just one set throughout the tournament and continued his recent mastery of Sinner, getting revenge for his loss to the Italian in the Wimbledon final.

Alcaraz and Sinner are the torch-bearers of the current generation, sweeping the last eight majors between them and taking 10 of the last 13. Novak Djokovic has won the other three.

'Gaza is a graveyard'

FROM PAGE 12
In the Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a bus stop, killing six people and wounding several others, reports AFP.

Israeli emergency service Magen David Adom (MDA) said there were six victims dead in the shooting attack, updating an earlier toll of five. Police said the two gunmen were also killed.

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez yesterday announced nine measures aimed at stopping "the genocide in Gaza", including an arms embargo on Israel and a ban on vessels carrying fuel for the Israeli military from using Spanish ports.

Israel's defence minister told Hamas yesterday to lay down its arms or face annihilation, after US President Donald Trump said the group must accept a deal to release hostages in Gaza.

Courts grapple with shortage of judges

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However, among them, three are on leave and five have been kept away from judicial functions since October 16 last year following student-led protests on the SC premises, demanding removal of "pro-Awami League fascist judges", said SC sources.

"The huge backlog of cases in the Appellate and HC Divisions makes it very tough to get dates for hearing even for urgent cases," said SC lawyer Saqeb Mahbub.

"While recruitment of judges is an inevitable solution to the problem, its impact will be visible in the long term. The sufferings are likely to continue in the short term," he said, adding that the newly appointed HC judges are yet to preside over benches.

The Judiciary Reform Commission has suggested raising the number of lower court judges to at least 6,000 from around 2,000 to bring the backlog of cases to a manageable level.

When contacted, Md Muajjem Hussain, spokesperson for the SC, said steps have been taken to address the shortage of judges at courts.

More judges will soon be appointed to lower courts through Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC).

Besides, the chief justice has formed 13 monitoring committees comprising HC judges to keep the backlog of cases at a manageable level, he said.

Requesting anonymity, a law ministry official said the process of appointing around 100 lower court judges is at the final stage.

This correspondent called Law Adviser Asif Nazrul on his mobile phone several times and also sent a message but received no response.

THE WAY FORWARD

SC lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir, who leads Law Lab, said, "At least 1,000 judges should be appointed within the next few months both in higher and lower courts."

"The judiciary needs efficient judges who can dispose of cases quickly," he added.

Saqeb Mahbub suggested the introduction of a centralised management system that prioritises cases based on urgency and enforces strict time limits for hearings.

The cases deemed "non-urgent" may be put on the backburner, he added.

Ex-secy Abu Alam

FROM PAGE 12
banner of a platform called Mancho 71. A Dhaka court sent them to prison the same day.

Latif Siddique, Hafizur, Panna, Mostafa, Zakir Hossain, Tawsif Bari Khan, Amir Hossain Sumon, Shafiqul Islam Delwar, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Abdullahil Kayum were denied bail by separate Dhaka courts between August 31 and September 4.

The case statement said Latif Siddique conspired to destabilise the country to overthrow the interim government.

For his speech, people present there surrounded Latif Siddique and others and chanted slogans calling them "Awami fascists", the case statement said. The case also accuses 70 to 80 unidentified individuals.

Man hands over son

FROM PAGE 12
gave a confessional statement to the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, said Inspector Residul Islam of Goalanda Ghat Police Station.

The families of two other arrestees claimed they were minors. The mother of one of them said he was born in 2010 and is a student of class 10.

"When the incident took place, my son had only gone there for 10 minutes out of curiosity. Now, if he misses his exams, his future will be ruined," she said.

The aunt of another arrestee said he is a 12th grader at a college

in Faridpur. "He went out to offer prayers. When his father heard of the unrest, he brought the boy back home. But police arrested him when he was roaming near the Goalanda College area."

Police made the arrests in connection with the attack on law enforcers and vandalism of vehicles at the darbar sharif. Police filed the case accusing 3,000 to 3,500 unidentified people of obstructing police duty, attacking law enforcers, and vandalising vehicles.

Although a person was killed in the attack, his family was yet to file a case.

Total literacy elusive after Tk 4,000cr spent

FROM PAGE 12
The first project, taken up in 1991 by the BNP government, cost Tk 10.7 crore. When the project was discontinued in 1997, Bangladesh's literacy rate stood at 51 percent, up from 35.2 percent when it was taken up, according to Education For All Progress Report Bangladesh-2012.

In the meantime, the government in 1995 formed the Directorate of Non-Formal Education. Four more projects were implemented under DNFE before it was transformed into BNFE in 2005.

After the Awami League came to power in 1997, it took up the "Total Literacy Movement" project.

However, the BNP government cancelled the project in 2003 on allegations of irregularities and mismanagement. The BNP government instead took up the Basic Literacy Project in 2004, targeting working children (10-14 years) in urban areas.

The BNFE spent around Tk 2,912 crore on the projects, according to BNFE officials, EFA Progress Report of Bangladesh-2012, and Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the planning ministry.

Then in 2014, the AL government took up the Basic Literacy Project, and in 2018, a Tk 1,320 crore project to provide non-formal education to 9 lakh children who are either school

dropouts or have never attended school.

In September 2023, the government launched a pilot project titled "Skill-Based Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescents (SKILFO)" in Cox's Bazar.

Under the project, completed this June, 6,825 adolescents received literacy and technical training in 13 occupations and more than 6,000 of them were linked to jobs.

Now, the BNFE is preparing two more projects.

Based on the experience of SKILFO, it has prepared "SKILFO-2" project that will be implemented in 16 districts at a cost of Tk 460 crore if approved by the government.

The other project titled "Alternative Learning Opportunity" will be launched in one upazila with low literacy rates in each of the 64 districts.

The three-year-long project worth Tk 188 crore is expected to commence in October if approved.

Educationists, however, are sceptical about eradicating illiteracy with such a project-based approach. "All literacy initiatives have followed a piecemeal approach, which means that the drive ends when the project expires," said noted educationist Rasheda K Choudhury.

Literacy should be planned as part of the broader education system, not

treated as a short-term intervention.

She also cast doubt on the accuracy of Bangladesh's literacy rate, saying the previous government raised the figure by two percentage points each year, which hardly reflected the ground reality.

"If this [interim] government relies solely on such data without taking the actual ground situation into consideration, it leaves us deeply frustrated."

Rasheda, also the executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, stressed the need for designing a long-term, integrated literacy programme that spans early childhood through adulthood, ensuring continuous learning opportunities across all age groups.

Contacted, Devabrata Chakraborty, director general (additional charge) of BNFE, said: "We are no longer focused only on literacy. Now we are more focused on functional literacy."

Mentioning the SKILFO project, he said it is often difficult to bring students who dropped out back to formal schools. For them, flexible learning has been introduced; 100 hours of literacy lessons with 360 hours of vocational training.

The goal is to fully realise the objectives of SDG 4, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, Chakraborty said.