

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's political satire '840' lands on iScreen

After its theatrical release, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's film **840** is set to debut on the streaming platform iScreen on September 15. The series is being called a "double-up" of the director's wildly popular 2007 Channel i drama, **420**, which became a cultural phenomenon in its time.

A poster for the project was shared by iScreen on Friday, confirming the release date for what they describe as a mystery-filled plot.

840 features a stellar cast, led by Nasir Uddin Khan in the central role. Other acclaimed actors, including Marzuk Russell, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Zakia Bari Mamo, Shariar Nazim Joy, and Zayed Khan, also grace the film.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Cultural world mourns Farida Parveen, the 'Queen of Lalon Geeti'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Singer Kanak Chapa was one of the first artistes who rushed to the hospital after learning of the death of Farida Parveen, a trailblazer in Bangladeshi music. Hailed as the 'Queen of Lalongeeti', the 70-year-old singer took her last breath at 10:15 p.m. at a hospital in the capital.

"She was a learning tree, an inspiration," she said. "Whenever I wanted to listen to songs by Lalon, it was her voice which drew me the most. We lost a guardian."

The award-winning singer continued speaking, this time aiming her speech towards netizens, "Please, do not speak ill of artists who have passed away. Do not call them 'sinners,' because it is the artists who have no place to commit corruption. Neither do we endorse falsehoods, we simply make art."

The entirety of Bangladesh's entertainment industry was grief-

stricken after losing this legendary singer to kidney complications.

"Ever since I was little, all I wanted to do was to sing," said Beauty of Close-up One Iame. "I came into this industry, trying to emulate Farida Parveen. She was one of the artists that took Lalon's words beyond national barriers."

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Legendary actor Uzzal, visibly distraught, said, "An artist like this comes around maybe once in a hundred years; there surely won't be anyone like her, anytime soon."

"I express deep sorrow at the death of Farida Parveen," wrote Shakib Khan, known as Bangladesh's 'Mega Star.' "She was a shining light in our Lalon

songs, Nazrul Sangeet, and patriotic songs. Her voice carried the soul and culture of the soil and people of Bengal."

Legendary singer and Bangladeshi icon Runa Laila, unable to attend the funeral, joined over video call to pay her last respects to the singer.

In a condolence message on Saturday, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Dr. Mohammad Yunus, said, "For five decades, the songs of Lalon Sai from her voice have touched people's hearts. Her songs elevated the inherent philosophy and sense of life in our culture to a new level. Farida Parveen did not stay away from music despite various adversities. Her devotion to music has inspired generations."

Farida Parveen's body was taken to the central Shaheed Minar at 12 p.m. to allow people to pay their respects. She was laid to rest in her home district of Kusthia. Besides an everlasting legacy in music, she leaves behind four children.

Three plays, one ticket: Charuneedam celebrates 18th anniversary at Shilpakala



Charuneedam Theatre, the Dhaka troupe that began its journey in 2007, celebrates its 18th anniversary with an ambitious triple bill: the company will stage the 100th performances of three plays — **Arshola**, **Nana Ronger Din**, and **Sharater Megh** — this evening at the Experimental Theatre Hall of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Audiences can see all three productions on a single ticket when the curtain rises at 7 pm.

Renowned director Gazi Rakayet, who helms the company's Chekhov-focused season, has directed the three productions.



Bangladeshi Film 'The Eternal Journey' wins three international awards

In a landmark for Bangladeshi independent cinema, Fozle Rabby's **The Eternal Journey** won three awards at the 3rd Karditsa International Short Film Festival Opseis (KISFFO 2025) in Greece.

The experimental film, exploring self-identity, received the Cinematic Achievement Award, Best Short Experimental Film Award (dedicated to Greek director Angelos Frantzis), and Best Short International Actor Award for Pankaj Chowdhury Rony's powerful performance.

Inspired by Naznin Mostofa's play **Kute Kahar** and Arindam Natya Goshthi's stage production, the film blends documentary realism with poetic abstraction to tell the forgotten story of Bengal's palanquin bearers.

NEWS

Police adopt stringent criteria

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thrice or more previously for major offences, the officer will not be considered for selection.

Also, an officer will be disqualified for the post if punished for a minor offence within a year or for a major offence within two years prior to selection.

Candidates have to score an average of 80 marks in their Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) for five consecutive years and must not have any negative remarks from evaluators in ACRs for three years in a row.

On July 3, the police headquarters circulated the policy, signed by IGP Baharul Alam, to all unit chiefs for implementation.

"The policy aims to ensure selection of highly professional officers as OCs," IGP Baharul Alam

told The Daily Star recently.

He further said that many influential people, including political leaders, often lobby for certain officers to have them selected as OCs at preferred police stations. The new policy will help curb this.

Several police officials told this newspaper that during the Awami League government's tenure, officers loyal to the ruling party secured "lucrative" postings under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

At that time, both loyalty and lobbying played a decisive role in determining postings, particularly at strategically important stations. There were numerous allegations of officers bribing their superiors to secure postings. Some officers even exploited political links to accumulate wealth, they said.

In a confessional statement to a magistrate on March 24, former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, now on trial over crimes against humanity during the July uprising, said political interference in the police force intensified after 2018.

He alleged that a section of officers largely ignored directives from the IGP, believing they had political backing to act independently. Some even had close ties with senior leaders of the ruling party.

Giving an indication of the powers wielded by these officers, Mamun said that several OCs of police stations under DMP, along with senior officials, used to attend important meetings that took place at the residence of former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

True democracy guarantees equal rights

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Tarique also praised Khaleda Zia for advancing Ziaur Rahman's vision, despite enduring repeated attacks from autocracies.

He criticised the Awami League government for what he described as its obstruction of democracy over the last decade and a half.

Citing this year's theme for International Day of Democracy — "Achieving Gender Equality Action by Action" — Tarique said democracy guarantees equal opportunities and dignity for all genders, a fundamental human right.

"In a democratic society, a strong environment for protests exists, which prevents the deepening of gender divisions and ensures a steady move towards equal rights."

He urged everyone to work together to restore democracy in Bangladesh.

Tarique concluded his message with the hope of building a Bangladesh that ensures prosperity and self-reliance for future generations, alongside an inclusive and liberal political environment, and social stability and justice.

Nepal PM vows to meet

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for those killed in the unrest, before meetings began in the key government complex of Singha Durbar — where several buildings were set on fire during mass protests on Tuesday, reports AFP.

"The situation that I have come in, I have not wished to come here. My name was brought from the streets," Karki said. Parliament has been dissolved and elections set for March 5, 2026.

"We will not stay here more than six months in any situation, we will complete our responsibilities and pledge to hand over to the next parliament and ministers," she added, in a speech to the nation.

The arson and vandalism that occurred during the protest were criminal acts against the country,

she also said, adding that the criminal acts must be investigated and the truth made public, with those responsible brought to justice, reports The Kathmandu Post.

At least 72 people were killed in two days of protests, and 191 injured, the government's chief secretary Eaknarayan Aryal said yesterday, increasing an earlier toll of 51.

It was the worst unrest since the end of a decade-long civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008.

The appointment of Karki, known for her independence, came after intense negotiations by army chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel and President Ram Chandra Paudel, including with representatives of "Gen Z", the loose umbrella title of the youth protest movement.

Thousands of young activists had

used the Discord app to name Karki as their choice of leader.

Ordinary Nepalis said they were hopeful the government would bring change — but were aware the challenges were heavy.

"This government's list of responsibilities and issues to address isn't easy," said grocery shopkeeper Satya Narayan, 69, in Pharping village, about an hour outside the capital.

"It also needs to ensure unity and harmony in the country by taking all sections along".

President Paudel, who swore Karki into office, said late Saturday that "a peaceful solution has been found through a difficult process".

Soldiers have scaled back their presence on the streets, where they had been deployed in large numbers after the protests.

Elect women MPs through direct polls

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"Without women's rightful share, parliament cannot truly be a representative institution of the people," the statement read.

It insisted that simply increasing the number of reserved seats without direct elections would not give women genuine political power, warning that indirect nominations keep women MPs accountable to party leaders rather than the electorate.

The statement also highlighted the urgent need for financial support for female candidates.

"Election costs have become one of the biggest barriers for women's participation. If the state provides funds equal to the Election Commission's campaign expenditure limit, capable women will not be forced to step back due to financial hardship."

Formally launched on August 31 this year, the Forum for Women's Political Rights pledged to work for the implementation of women's constitutional rights, secure greater representation for women in parliament, and push for reforms to eliminate structural inequalities in political participation.

Urging strong measures to prevent both physical and online violence against female candidates, the forum

further said, "The Election Commission has a constitutional duty to create a safe environment for women at every stage of the electoral process."

Criticising the exclusion of women from the National Consensus Commission, the forum said, "Not including a single woman in the commission is not only discriminatory, but it makes the decision-making process one-sided and undemocratic."

In its closing appeal, the forum urged the consensus commission, political parties, and the government to treat women's representation not merely as a political obligation but as a matter of democratic necessity and social justice. "We want a parliament where men and women raise their voices equally, and democracy becomes truly inclusive."

The forum's position was endorsed by several women's and civil society groups, including Outraged Women's Society, Campaign for Popular Education, Durbar Network Foundation, Citizen Coalition, Women's Initiative Centre, Narigrantha Prabartana, Women's Solidarity, Naripokkho, Nareer Daake Rajneeti, Feminist Alliance of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Nari Mukti Kendra, and Voice for Reform.

Trials of defence officers

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former defence officials are in custody over crimes against humanity. They are Maj Gen (sacked) Ziaul Ahsan, accused of involvement in enforced disappearances and assassinations during his time with the Rapid Action Battalion, and Rear Admiral (ret'd) Mohammad Sohail, former Rab legal and media wing director, charged in a case over abduction, torture, and enforced disappearance.

While briefing journalists, the chief prosecutor said, "The tribunal law was originally formulated to prosecute members of the armed forces. Later, through an amendment, some other elements were added. Therefore, there is no scope to raise the question of whether the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, can try members of armed forces or not. It is irrefutably proven, and by mentioning every section and subsection of the law, we have shown the tribunal that this law is mainly for the trial of members of the armed and auxiliary forces."

"That is why this law separately mentions various forces, including all state forces, intelligence agencies, and different segments of the police. Crimes committed through them that amount to crimes against humanity, meaning crimes that are widespread and systematic in nature, can only be tried at the tribunal, and nowhere else. Such crimes cannot be tried even at an internal military court, nor at existing criminal courts. The law is very clear

on this."

Meanwhile, Tajul read out the opening statement in a case filed over the killings of six protesters in Ashulia. The protesters were shot and subsequently burned by police on August 5 last year.

The prosecution's witness testimonies and cross-examinations are scheduled to take place in the case today.

In his statement, he said 1,500 people were martyred during the uprising, and thousands of students and citizens suffered paralysis and blindness. On August 5, at least 29 people were killed and hundreds injured by police firing in Ashulia.

Later, the bodies of five deceased and one critically injured person were loaded into a police van and set on fire. He said, "It is beyond imagination how far humanity can fall for someone to commit such acts."

The prosecution stated that investigations show that police and armed activists of the Awami League deliberately opened fire on the peaceful student procession. Not only were people killed, but the perpetrators also tried to destroy evidence by burning the bodies and shifting the blame onto the protesters.

The chief prosecutor said the incident made the international community deeply concerned and constituted a clear violation of international human rights laws and multilateral treaties. He compared

Sheikh Hasina's rule to fascist regimes like Hitler, Mussolini, and Pinochet, saying, "This trial is not a revenge; it is a symbol of justice."

The prosecution added that the evidence against the accused is "irrefutable and beyond doubt."

Witness testimonies, digital footage, forensic reports, human rights organisation reports, and statements from 53 witnesses will be presented before the court, Tajul said.

"This trial will set a precedent in the nation's history. The hand of justice is long, and even absconding accused will not escape accountability," he said.

Man killed

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local betel nut orchards.

Neighbours rushed to the house after hearing the woman scream and discovered her husband lying in a pool of blood.

The victim's wife later told police that the suspect raped her after killing her husband. The suspect denied the allegation.

She was admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, where she is undergoing treatment following a medical examination.

Police have recovered the knife used in the murder and said further investigation is underway.

A case is being prepared to be filed over the incident.