



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

I dedicate this award to Iresh Zaker and Ome

SARAF AHMED ZIBON

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Director-turned-actor Saraf Ahmed Zibon, celebrated for his comedic performances, has added another accolade to his career.

He won Best Supporting Actor (Male) in the Popular Category at the Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2024 for his role in Kajal Arefin Ome's web-film *Osomoy*.

Known for his witty humour, Zibon delivered a lighthearted acceptance speech that delighted the audience. He recalled the innovative teaser of his directorial debut *Chokkor 302*, where Mosharraf Karim told him he could not act.

"I really don't know how to act. These are not my words but Mosharraf Karim's," Zibon

laughed, adding, "However, I don't know how but the audience still watches my work and appreciates it, which, again, are his words, not mine."

Zibon also acknowledged his co-star and fellow nominee Iresh Zaker, whose comic pairing with him in *Osomoy* was especially loved by fans. "I want to dedicate this award to Iresh Zaker and Kajal Arefin Ome," he said.

The actor first gained popularity through Ome's hit series *Bachelor Point* and was also seen in *Female 4* and *Hotel Relax*. His much-talked-about directorial debut film *Chokkor 302*, released on Eid-ul-Fitr this year, featured Mosharraf Karim in the lead role alongside Reekita Nondine Shimu, Tareen Jahan, Moushumi Nag, Intekhab Dinar, Rawnak Hasan, and Sumon Anowar.

‘Jaya Aar Sharmin’ set for Chorki release on September 25

Director Piplu R Khan's pandemic era drama *Jaya Aar Sharmin* will stream on Chorki from 12:01 am on September 25. Starring Jaya Ahsan and Mohsina Akter, the film follows an actress and her house help, whose fragile bond deepens and strains as they remain confined within a single home during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Originally released in theatres last May, the production also features a guest appearance by Tanjim Saiyara Totini. Piplu co-wrote the story, screenplay, and dialogue with Nusrat Islam Mati.

Jaya recalled the stripped-down shoot as "real and honest," while Mohsina praised the director's openness to improvisation and reflected on the pandemic's lessons about life and relationships.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHORKI

‘Taylor Swift: The Official Release Party of a Showgirl’ set for three-day theatrical run



Taylor Swift is turning her latest album launch into a cinematic event. To celebrate the release of her 12th studio album, *The Life of a Showgirl*, the pop superstar has announced a three-day theatre experience titled *Taylor Swift: The Official Release Party of a Showgirl*. The screenings begin on October 3, the same day her album releases, and will run through October 5 across theatres in the United States.

AMC Theatres is leading the rollout, with Cinemark also offering both standard and Cinemark XD formats. Tickets are already available online and high demand is expected.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



‘The Human Voice’

Ninad x Alliance Française de Dhaka stage Jean Cocteau's 1930 classic *The Human Voice*, a one-act monodrama tracing a woman's final, heartbreaking phone call with a lover who is leaving her. Performed by Sadika Swarna, this immersive production invites audiences to arrive early and experience the sound-sensitive staging.

DATE: THURSDAY-SATURDAY | 9-11 OCTOBER, 2025

TIME: OCT 9-7PM; OCT 10 & 11-3PM TO 7PM

VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, 26 MIRPUR ROAD, DHANMONDI

NEWS

Pakistani court indicts man over teenage influencer killing

AFP, Islamabad

A man accused of shooting dead a 17-year-old TikTok star at her home in Pakistan after she had repeatedly rejected his advances was formally indicted Saturday, an AFP reporter in court saw.

Sana Yousaf's murder in June drew nationwide condemnation and reignited debate over women's safety, after some online comments -- alongside condolences -- blamed her for her own death.

The 22-year-old accused, Umar Hayat, pleaded not guilty in Islamabad's district court Saturday.

"All the allegations made against me are baseless and false," the accused told Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka.

Yousaf had racked up more than a million followers on social media accounts, including TikTok, where she shared videos of her favourite cafes, skincare products, and traditional outfits.

TikTok is wildly popular in Pakistan, in part because of its accessibility to a population with low literacy levels.

Women have found both an audience and income on the app, which is rare in a country where fewer than a quarter of women participate in the formal economy.

Police described the killing as a "gruesome and cold-blooded murder", alleging Hayat killed Yousaf after she repeatedly rejected his proposals.

Some comments in social media posts sharing the news of Yousaf's murder suggested it was justified in a society where honour codes dictate how women should behave.

"You reap what you sow," said one comment.

Violence against women is pervasive in Pakistan, according to the country's Human Rights Commission, and cases of women being attacked after rejecting marriage proposals are not uncommon.

RU suspends ‘ward quota’ amid student protests

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Meanwhile, RU teachers, officers, and staff associations announced a full-day work abstention today to protest the alleged attack on teachers during a scuffle with students.

Prof Abdul Alim, president of the RU Nationalist Teachers' Forum, confirmed the development during a press conference in front of the Senate Bhawan following a meeting. They also demanded punishment for the attackers.

Students began yesterday's protests by setting tyres on fire in front of the university's administrative building at around 2:30pm.

Later, around 3:30pm, they surrounded VC Saleh Hasan Naqib's residence. But left the place after a

few minutes. At that time, they also blocked the Pro-VC Prof Mohammad Main Uddin's car.

Following that, students locked Prof Main's residence, preventing him from entering his home.

At 4:30pm when Main and Proctor Mahbubur Rahman tried to enter a building, they faced obstruction again.

The altercation broke out between the two groups at the time.

Several students, including some journalists, were injured in the incident.

Meanwhile, three students who have been on hunger strike since Thursday were taken to the emergency department of the RU Medical Centre.

NCP-backed student group eyes reforms

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meeting on the matter is expected by Monday, he told this newspaper.

According to sources, the NCP reviewed the Ducsu debacle at an executive council meeting, where leaders admitted BGCS had yet to establish itself as a strong organisation. They cited internal divisions and the absence of hall-level committees as major reasons for the defeat.

Mojumder acknowledged that stronger support from the NCP might have changed the outcome. Still, he noted, BGCS backed candidates managed to win the vice-president post in two halls and the general secretary post in four halls at Ducsu.

However, in the central Ducsu election on September 9, BGCS failed to secure any of the 28 posts, while in Jucus its candidates won only two out of 25. BGCS's Ducsu VP candidate Abdul Kader got 1,103 votes and GS candidate Mojumder received 2,131, both finishing fifth.

The polls also laid bare divisions within BGCS, with five leaders separately contesting for the assistant general secretary post. Among them,

Ashrefa Khatun secured 900 votes, while others drew between 300 and 3,000. After the defeat, leader Hasibul Islam, who ran for AGS, resigned from the organisation.

NCP insiders said BGCS's failure to attract non-residential students' votes and the lack of visible party backing undermined the student body.

"In Ducsu, Jamaat worked for Shibir internally while BNP worked for Chhatra Dal, but we could not do the same for Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad, nor openly declare it as our official student wing," said a central NCP leader.

Some fear the crushing defeat could impact NCP's national politics. But the party's Member Secretary Akhter Hossen dismissed such concerns.

"As a new organisation, BGCS has not yet built an organisational base, which was reflected in the Ducsu results. But the Ducsu election is not the final destination. With stronger ideological and organisational foundations, they will do better in the future," he told this newspaper.

Saif, Hridoy power Tigers

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Saif was the main aggressor in the Powerplay. Playing only his 10th T20I and his first major tournament, the right-hander showed composure and variety -- using his feet against pacers, timing shots with a twist of the wrist, and lofting spinners inside out.

Saif's 59-run second-wicket stand with Litton Das steadied the chase after the early dismissal of Tanzid Hasan Tamim in the first over. Litton, though less aggressive, kept the scoreboard moving with a 16-ball 23 before falling to Wanindu Hasaranga in the seventh over. In the process,

Litton surpassed Shakib Al Hasan to become Bangladesh's highest run-scorer in T20Is. He now has 2556 runs in 114 games, five more than Shakib's tally in 129 matches.

Saif and Hridoy then put on another brisk 54-run partnership for the third wicket before Saif was dismissed by Hasaranga. Hridoy, who struck two sixes and four boundaries, fell in the penultimate over, having all but sealed the win.

Jaker added two boundaries, including one in the final over, but his dismissal created last-minute jitters reminiscent of Bangladesh's infamous

one-run loss to India in the 2016 T20 World Cup. To the relief of the fans, nothing of the sort was repeated, as Nasum Ahmed hurried for a single just after Mahedi's dismissal to ensure the Tigers get over the line.

Shamim Hossain also remained unbeaten after a crucial 14 off 12 balls at the death.

Meanwhile, with the ball, left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman stood out, picking up three wickets for just 20 runs in his four overs. He also equaled Shakib's record as Bangladesh's leading wicket-taker in T20Is, with 149 scalps in 117 matches.

Govt plans sweeping overhaul of NHRC

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investigating officers given the same powers as an officer-in-charge of a police station.

Investigating officers will be directly answerable to only the NHRC. They cannot belong to the same organisation as the accused. They can summon and interrogate any individual, regardless of position, but arresting a civil servant or law enforcer will require a warrant from the NHRC or tribunal concerned.

NHRC appointed investigators can produce the accused before a magistrate to record confessional statements under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The draft allows victims, eyewitnesses, or others with credible information to file complaints with the NHRC, or with an OC or magistrate. The latter two must log a complaint as a general diary and forward it to the NHRC within 24 hours.

To aid prosecution, tribunals are proposed in every division -- or even every district -- headed by judicial magistrates. Tribunals will not require permission from the government or any other body to accept NHRC cases.

The commission and tribunals may also order the government to take interim action against any accused individual during investigations, with mandatory compliance.

The draft ordinance further tasks the NHRC with representing victims as legal counsel.

To safeguard independence, the NHRC is being given full financial autonomy. Its budget will be pre-fixed, beyond government discretion, and it will decide its own expenditures. It may also set up a fund to receive donations and grants.

Appointments will also be

overhauled. Members will be selected by a committee comprising a judge of the Appellate Division, two MPs (one ruling, one opposition), a female university professor, the National Press Club president (or nominated representative), a human rights specialist, and an activist from an ethnic minority community.

The President will appoint the human rights specialist and activist, the University Grants Commission professor, and the Chief Justice the judge. This sharply departs from the current system where members are appointed by the speaker, ministers, and bureaucrats.

At least three members, plus the chairperson, will be salaried, with three more voluntary members added.

Along with broader powers, the NHRC will face strict deadlines for investigations and trials, with penalties for delays.

The commission must prepare a primary report within 30 days of receiving any complaint -- not limited to enforced disappearances -- and complete probes within six months.

The enforced disappearance law requires investigations to be completed within 90 days, with a possible one-month extension. Officers who fail may face departmental action.

If a person remains missing, the NHRC must keep searching until their fate is determined, filing progress reports every three months and sharing with the families concerned.

Tribunals must complete trials within 120 days of charges being filed.

TOUGH TASK AHEAD

The barebones agency now finds itself staring down the barrel of more than 1,800 enforced disappearance complaints, each demanding swift resolution. Meanwhile, 936 unresolved

cases already weigh on its shoulders.

Of 27 officers currently posted, only five, including the director, work in its investigation unit. The NHRC currently has 43 posts for officers.

The entire commission, appointed in 2022 for three years, resigned on November 6 last year, three months after the fall of the Awami League government. Its last chairperson was former secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed.

Since then, the NHRC has been unable to resolve any human rights complaints.

Commission insiders say the body has not been included in manpower expansion discussions.

Meanwhile, members of the soon-to-be dissolved Enforced Disappearance Inquiry Commission warned that the death penalty provision for enforced disappearances also complicates prosecution and may hinder convictions. The commission had been consulted extensively during the ordinance drafting.

Shibir's wins in Ducsu, Jucus

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Many sacrificed their lives. In exchange for their sacrifices, today we have the opportunity to work in a free and independent environment. We must not boast in overexcitement. We must remain humble. We must be servants of the people," he said.

The day-long programme, presided over by Jamaat's Central Women's Division Secretary Nurunnisa Siddika, featured a keynote on "Political Situation and the National Election 2026", presented by the party's Secretary General, Mia Golam Porwar.