

**“I wanted to try out my luck for three months, and then get back to my studies. As it was probably written in fate, those ‘three months’ never really ended!”**



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## ‘It doesn’t feel like I’ve been here for 26 years’: SHAKIB KHAN

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

It was an otherwise unremarkable evening at The Daily Star – the newsroom not particularly abuzz with headlines as of yet. At least it was, before an entourage of 20+ people burst onto the scene, drawing eyes from the lobby. A towering figure got out of his classic white car, adorned with a suave green suit and an expensive-looking timepiece. His aviators reflected the dwindling sun onto the onlookers’ eyes. Shakib Khan had dropped by, to the surprise of many in the building. Accompanying him was his team – everyone from photographers and image consultants to makeup men and journalists.

“It’s been a while, huh?”, said Shakib, as he took the lift to the seventh floor. Affectionately called the ‘megastar’ by his fans, he has undoubtedly been the flagbearer of Bangla cinema for the better part of his 26-year career. In recognition of this, Blender’s Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards conferred to him the Silver Jubilee of Cinematic

Excellence Award, which was to be handed over to him on the day of the event. “I apologise that I couldn’t make it to the event,” said Shakib, in conversation with The Daily Star’s Editor & Publisher, Mahfuz Anam. “My son was so sick, that he had to be hospitalised. I had to immediately fly back to the USA.”

The cameras rolled, even in conversation. “I was just an eager teenager, stumbling on to a film set. I was discovered because I probably looked handsome at the time,” jested the artiste. “I wanted to try out my luck for three months, and then get back to my studies. As it was probably written in fate, those ‘three months’ never really ended!”

As jam-packed as the conference room on the seventh floor was, the view outside was of more intrigue. People eager to click a selfie with the person they’d seen on the silver screen, someone who has successfully rejuvenated his career in the last decade or so. “I know it might sound cliché, but I owe every single thing I have to the fans. Without them, I

would not be where I am right now – no one in my line of work would.”

Shakib also credited his co-stars for supporting him throughout his career. “Every director that I’ve worked with, and every other artiste with whom I’ve shared the screen with – I am grateful to them,” he said, in a visibly reflective mood.

Before moving on to a photoshoot, Dhallywood’s ‘King Khan’ had a request for the journalists at The Daily Star, “Our film industry is a treasure-trove of possibilities. Even foreigners are watching subtitled Bangla films with utmost eagerness. Please, talk about our dwindling halls, and how our infrastructure needs to improve. We need to raise our voices.”

After the small-ish formal ceremony concluded, the Taandob star took the time to indulge his fans waiting to take a picture with him, before finally having to leave because of prior commitments. “I promise, I’ll be back to try some of the ‘famed’ canteen food of yours,” smiled Shakib Khan.



## Family launches website to preserve Prabir Mitra’s legacy

A website dedicated to preserving the life and work of late film actor Prabir Mitra has been launched by his family, announced at a memorial held at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation.

The site, actorprobirmitra.com, will feature photos, film credits, and archival material to introduce future generations to Mitra’s career.

Prabir Mitra, who died on January 5, appeared in more than 300 films, including Titash Ekti Nadir Naam, Fariyad, Rokto Shopoth, and Fakir Majnu Shah, and won a National Film Award for Boro Bhalo Lok Chhilo.

The acclaimed actor’s debut came with H Akbar’s Jolchhobi in 1971. His son Mithun Mitra said the archive aims to preserve his father’s legacy, offering researchers and fans access to a lasting record of his contributions.

## SELENA GOMEZ marries Benny Blanco

Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco are officially married. The couple, who began dating in 2023, exchanged vows in California on September 27.

For the ceremony, Selena chose a white halter-style gown adorned with floral details, while Benny Blanco donned a tuxedo paired with a bow tie. Both ensembles were specially designed by Ralph Lauren. Sharing the moment on Instagram, Selena captioned her

post with “9.27.25” Benny responded to the post by writing, “My wife in real life.”

The singer’s wedding album featured intimate moments, including a photo of her sitting on the ground with Blanco resting his head on her lap, and another of her adjusting his bow tie before giving him a kiss. The post’s comment section was soon flooded with congratulatory messages from fans and celebrities.



### WHAT’S THE HAPS?

## ‘Oitijher Poth Dhore: Pujoy Puran Dhaka’

Heritage Walk Dhaka offers participants an immersive journey through Puran Dhaka’s rich history, architecture, and culture. Coinciding with *Sharadiya Durga Puja*, the walk explores bustling Shankhari Bazar and Tantibazar, festive pandals, colonial landmarks, and zamindari relics—blending tradition, cuisine, and celebrations into a vivid portrait of the city’s secular spirit.

Date: Wednesday | October 1, 2025



Time: 8:40 am- 3pm

Venue: Old Town, Dhaka

## NEWS

### Yunus calls for national unity

FROM PAGE 16 Investment Development Authority (BIDA) jointly organised the event titled “NRB Connect Day: Empowering Global Bangladeshis”, which included different engagements, including a plenary session, the launch of a new digital app, and diaspora engagement.

NRBs shared their perspectives, raised concerns, contributed ideas, and helped shape initiatives that strengthen their connection to Bangladesh.

BIDA Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun highlighted Bangladesh’s economic progress over the past 15 months since the July Uprising and outlined government initiatives to create an investment-friendly environment.

The chief adviser launched a mobile application named Shubheccha, designed to provide NRBs with essential services, guidance, and investment opportunities.

Yunus lauded the invaluable contributions of NRBs, mentioning that their remittances have been central to strengthening the country’s economy.

“Our economy had totally collapsed. Nothing was left. The economy kept drifting from bottom to bottom. Who has helped the economy bounce back? It was remittance. Remittances gave birth to a new Bangladesh,” he said.

“Look at the Bangladesh map in a different way. Bangladesh is truly spread all over the world. There is no distance between us. You [NRBs] are very much part of Bangladesh,” he said.

The chief adviser emphasised that they can play a vital role in advancing the changes ushered in by the July uprising through their respective contributions.

“My confidence grew when I saw political leaders agreeing to join us on this visit,” Yunus added, expressing strong optimism about Bangladesh’s future.

Speaking at the event, Fakhru praised Yunus, saying he saw in his words the reflection of the late President Ziaur Rahman’s dream of a democratic, developed, and corruption-free Bangladesh.

“Two days ago, at a US-Bangladesh business forum, when our respected and globally acknowledged Professor Yunus was speaking, I repeatedly felt as if I was listening to Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, the proclaimer of our country’s independence,” he said.

Nayeb-e-Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Syeed Abdullah Muhammad Taher reiterated his party’s commitment to building a corruption-free Bangladesh and urged the NRBs to actively participate in nation-building efforts.

National Citizen Party leader Akhtar Hossen spoke of taking a strong

position on ensuring NRB voting rights and hoped to play a significant role in rebuilding Bangladesh.

NCP leader Tasnim Jara described the present situation as a “very critical moment,” saying that while differences of opinion will remain, the country must never return to old violence.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, Law Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul, Special Envoy on International Affairs Lutley Siddiqi, National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman, BNP leader Humayun Kabir, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami US Spokesperson Mohammad Nakibur Rahman also spoke at the event.

During a meeting with Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Anaclaudia Rossbach, Yunus called on UN-Habitat to expand its presence in Bangladesh to help develop sustainable and affordable housing solutions for communities frequently impacted by climate-induced disasters, said Chief Adviser’s Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder.

Rossbach confirmed UN-Habitat’s interest in attending the upcoming Rohingya conference and responded positively to an invitation from Housing and Industries Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan to visit the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh in the coming months.

### Country in urgent need of law

FROM PAGE 16 of good laws, policies, and practices. He accused BNP and Jamaat-aligned forces of using delays in government policy as a political tool to portray the administration as ineffective.

He also criticised disputes over BNP-Jamaat men’s administrative appointments, saying promises of reforms are often short-lived. “Non-cooperation started from December.”

On reforms, he said, “From my end, I am trying. At least we want to move forward with the wage board, journalism protection law, and media commission. We want media houses to prepare a code of conduct by November.”

He acknowledged bureaucratic and political hurdles and said the ministry is focusing on short- and medium-term measures while flagging longer-term reforms.

Of 23 reform recommendations given by the Media Reform Commission, 13 short-term measures were selected, including circulation thresholds, advertising rates, and wage guidelines.

“We won’t weaponise laws against the media. But we cannot allow anyone to simply call themselves a journalist without accountability. Freedom of expression without responsibility is dangerous.”

Mahfuj reiterated his pledge that no media house would be closed during his tenure.

“There are three concentrated centres of power – bureaucracy, business, and media owners – and vested interests are deeply embedded. You cannot transform the whole ecosystem overnight.”

He appealed to journalists to adopt self-regulation and professional ethics and supported UNESCO-led efforts to develop a code of conduct.

Kamal Ahmed, head of the Media Reform Commission and consulting editor at The Daily Star, criticised the government’s delay in implementing proposed reforms.

He urged the establishment of an independent media commission and laws to protect journalism and journalists, saying press freedom cannot be ensured and journalists’ rights cannot be safeguarded without them.

Ahmed expressed frustration that despite months of proposals and calls for public consultation, no clear progress has been made.

“We expected an explanation for

why there is a delay, especially six months after our report,” he said, adding, “Without action, promises of reform will remain empty words.”

He also urged the government to publish draft laws for public feedback and stressed the need for financial security for journalists for independent journalism to survive.

He highlighted gaps in existing laws, adding, “Without proper implementation, the reforms will be ineffective.” He warned that self-regulation must not become censorship and called for a legally backed framework to protect press freedom.

Prof SM Shameem Reza, of Dhaka University’s journalism department, urged independent research into why public trust in the media is declining in Bangladesh.

He said no serious, impartial study has been conducted. “Such research should be carried out by independent bodies, not media owners, to ensure objectivity, and should include the experiences of rural journalists in the reform process.”

BNP Media Cell Convenor Moudud Hossain Alamgir Pavel stressed the need for self-reflection and moral responsibility in journalism to protect its role as the “fourth pillar” of the state.

He voiced concerns over growing social media influence, where accountability is absent, and over how mainstream media follow social media trends without verification, threatening credibility.

Pavel said the media should prioritise truthfulness and not become a propaganda tool, especially during elections. He called on media houses to maintain independence, adopt codes of conduct, and deliver accurate information to the public.

He urged journalists to hold political parties accountable to voters and warned that without ethical reform, journalism would fail to reflect public aspirations and instead be exploited for political manipulation.

Advocate Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, assistant secretary general of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, stressed comprehensive media reforms and stronger political commitment to press freedom.

“Despite discussions, there has been little progress,” he said, urging all stakeholders to take ownership of reforms. He called for political parties

to include clear commitments in their manifestos and warned about new trends of online activism and targeted criticism threatening press freedom.

Jubairul Hasan Arif, chief joint organiser of Chattogram’s National Citizen Party, said Bangladesh needs both theoretical and practical reforms to strengthen media independence.

He welcomed the Media Reform Commission’s proposals, especially laws to protect journalists, regulate cross-ownership, and establish the “One House-One Media” policy.

Arif urged the establishment of an independent wage board and called on political parties to state their positions on independent media and consider forming a civil society group for regulation.

Sohrab Hossain, a former senior journalist at Prothom Alo, expressed concerns over press freedom, saying that 266 journalists face charges of murder or attempted murder, with around 16 in prison. “In many cases, no formal charges have been filed even after a year.”

He described this as a continuation of repressive practices and a form of persecution, and stressed the need for regulatory frameworks. He urged political parties to commit to protecting press freedom in their manifestos.

When The Daily Star’s Senior Reporter Zyma Islam reiterated the number of cases against journalists, M Abdullah, former president of a section of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, strongly disputed the claim of 266 journalists currently charged with murder.

“The figure is baseless.... No credible evidence exists. While harassment, imprisonment, and violence occur, there is no reliable record of such a large number of murder or attempted murder cases.”

He added that a review committee under the information ministry found only 72 cases, mostly outside Dhaka and arising from personal disputes, not political persecution. Mahfuj Alam endorsed Abdullah’s statement.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Nazmul Haque Pradhan, Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Abdullah Al Kafi Ratan, Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan, and AB Party Joint General Secretary Nasreen Sultana Mily also spoke at the event.

### Israeli strikes kill 77 more in Gaza

FROM PAGE 16 first time ever. We will get it done,” Trump said in a Truth Social post that was issued as he rode in his motorcade to his suburban Virginia golf club.

Trump said on Friday talks on Gaza with Middle Eastern nations were intense and that Israel and Palestinian Hamas militants were aware of the discussions, which he said would continue as long as required.

Vance described himself as “cautiously hopeful” about reaching a deal.

“I feel more optimistic about where we are right now than where we have been at any point in the last few months, but let’s be realistic, these things can get derailed at the very last minute,” he said.

He said the plan has three main components: Returning all hostages,

ending the Hamas threat to Israel, and escalating humanitarian aid in Gaza.

“So I think we’re close to accomplishing all three of those objectives,” Vance said.

When international leaders gathered at the United Nations in New York this week, the US unveiled a 21-point Middle East peace plan to end the nearly two-year-long war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas.

That plan calls for the return of all hostages, living and dead, no further Israeli attacks on Qatar and a new dialogue between Israel and Palestinians for “peaceful coexistence,” a White House official said.

A Hamas representative said on Saturday that the group had not seen the US plan.

The Civil Emergency Service in Gaza said late on Saturday that Israel

had denied 73 requests, sent via international organisations, to rescue injured Palestinians in Gaza City.

Israeli authorities had no immediate comment. The military earlier said forces were expanding operations in the city and that five militants firing an anti-tank missile towards Israeli troops had been killed by the Israeli air force.

Over the past 24 hours, the air force had struck 140 military targets across Gaza, including militants and what it described as military infrastructure, the military said.

The World Food Programme estimates that between 350,000 and 400,000 Palestinians have fled Gaza City since last month, although hundreds of thousands remain. The Israeli military estimates that around a million Palestinians were in Gaza City in August.