

Taylor Swift drops eight new acoustic tracks from 'The Life of a Showgirl'



Taylor Swift has unveiled eight new acoustic tracks from her latest studio album, *The Life of a Showgirl*, originally released on October 3.

The limited-edition acoustic versions, featuring re-recorded vocals and new production by Max Martin and Shellback, include *Opalite*, *Ruin the Friendship*, *The Fate of Ophelia*, *Wish List*, *The Life of a Showgirl*, *Eldst Daughter*, and *Elizabeth Taylor*.

Available across four CDs for 24 hours via Swift's website, the release follows her record-breaking *Eras Tour*, which ran from March 2023 to December 2024, spanning 149 shows and generating over USD 2 billion.

The Fate of Ophelia has already become the year's most-streamed song in a single day on Spotify, cementing Swift's continued influence in contemporary pop music.



PHOTOS: SHAHRIAR SHAFT

'A MEDITATION ON PEACE' a sensory delight through artistic hypnotism

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

As a child, staring at stained glass windows in movies was one of my greatest delights. In architecture school, when I learned about Gothic architecture, my love for this particular building element deepened. Fast forward to last week, I stumbled upon an artwork similar to stained glass. Dwip Gallery shared their event of upcoming art exhibition *A Meditation on Peace* by Farhana Afroz Bappy. Needless to say, I had to visit and write about her art in any way I could.

On 3rd October *A Meditation on Peace*, second solo exhibition by Farhana Afroz Bappy, curated by Shehzad Chowdhury was inaugurated at Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia

in the presence of Art. Luva Nahid Chowdhury, Director General of Bengal Foundation as the chief guest.

Born in 1971, she completed her MFA and BFA on printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. During the pandemic, the world came to a standstill and most humans were confined within the four walls of their home. To process the anxiety, the turmoil, the overwhelming emotions, like many other artists, Farhana resorted to her creative pursuits.

Dwip Gallery is filled with Farhana's enthralling abstract paintings. They have the ability to put the viewers into a meditative state. The gradual shift from one hue to another, creating abstract forms with a hierarchy of colors speak of the artist's skills,

whereas the lines creating the cells are fluid, precise, and effortlessly flowing. The shapes are intriguing as I felt like I saw a hooded child, the Pegasus, and a butterfly in a single painting. A lovely and lively audio-visual experience.

The artist explained that she needed to meditate and pass her long hours during the pandemic. These paintings became the reflections of her musings. Curator Shehzad Chowdhury described Farhana's art as "strangely dynamic despite having a minimalistic approach". Even though she began this particular journey back during the COVID lockdown, she decided to continue this path of healing, reflecting, meditating, and enriching her soul. Dwip Gallery will run this exhibition till October 12, 2025.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Her & the City'

Her & the City, the second group exhibition by nine women artists, brings together bold, vibrant, and thought-provoking works at Bhumi Gallery. Curated by Easel, the showcase celebrates women's creativity, offering a dynamic glimpse into the city's artistic pulse and the diverse voices shaping its cultural landscape.

Date: Friday-Saturday/October 3-11, 2025
Time: 4 pm - 9 pm

Venue: Bhumi Gallery, Lalmatia



Nuhash Humayun's 'Waqt' heads to SXSW Sydney



Nuhash Humayun's *Waqt* has been officially selected for the Episodic strand of the South by Southwest (SXSW) Sydney festival, which opens on October 13.

Part of Chorki's second anthology season of *Dui Shaw*, the episode premiered last December. Co-written by poet Gultekin Khan and Nuhash, *Waqt* tells the tale of five friends whose sins spiral into five eerie, supernatural fates. The cast features Allen Shubhro, Rizvi Rizu, Refat Hasan, Abdullah Al Sentu, Rafayatullah Sohan, Saikat, Sahana Sumi, and Yashrib Habib.

"This project has received equally strong responses from both festival curators and local audiences, which is rare. Usually it's one or the other, but with *Waqt*, both sides have embraced it," says Nuhash.



Jason Bateman, Tom Holland to adapt Grisham's 'The Partner' for screen

Emmy-winning director Jason Bateman is set to collaborate with actor-producer Tom Holland on a film adaptation of John Grisham's 1997 legal thriller *The Partner*.

Produced under Bateman's Aggregate Films, with Michael Costigan also involved, Holland will both produce and star as Patrick Lanigan, a young Biloxi lawyer who fakes his death in a fiery car crash.

Lanigan absconds with \$90 million stolen from client accounts, fleeing to South America where he finds love and freedom. His past, however, catches up as the firm's client tracks him down, forcing Lanigan to confront the FBI and the family he left behind.

Bateman, acclaimed for *Ozark* and *Bad Words*, continues his focus on complex, character-driven narratives.

NEWS

NCP warns

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He said, "If the NCP does not get the Shapla symbol, it will definitely affect the election. Without an independent commission, there can be no fair polls. If the election is not fair, there will be bloodshed on the streets. But we will try to avoid that. If our backs are against the wall, we will have no choice but to resist."

"If we are deprived of this right, we will work to form an independent and constitutional election commission democratically. We will not back down from achieving our demands and will continue our fight politically."

"We are not fighting for Shapla alone. We are fighting to give the people of Bangladesh the gift of democratic transformation and an independent Election Commission," the NCP leader said.

The NCP, founded in February this year, has been campaigning with the Shapla symbol since July, using it at rallies, and on posters, social media.

According to EC records, the party initially proposed Shapla, Pen, and Mobile as its preferred symbols in a letter submitted on June 22, and later, on August 3, revised the list to include Shapla, Sada Shapla (white water lily), and Lal Shapla (red water lily).

However, under Rule 9(1) of the Representation of the People (Conduct of Elections) Rules, 2008, Shapla is not currently among the approved symbols.

Contacted, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said that the NCP's registration was approved despite unresolved issues regarding its requested symbol. "Since Shapla is not on the Election Commission's list, we asked the party to confirm an alternative one. Upon getting its reply, we will issue the public notice specifying the final symbol."

French PM

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immediately urged President Emmanuel Macron to resign, or call a snap parliamentary election.

Lecornu, who was Macron's fifth prime minister in two years, stayed in the job for only 27 days. His government lasted just 14 hours, highlighting divisions in the French parliament as the euro zone's second-largest economy struggles to put its finances in order.

French politics has been increasingly unstable since Macron's re-election in 2022. Macron's decision to call a snap parliamentary election last year deepened the crisis by producing an even more fragmented parliament.

Bangladesh, KSA ink deal

FROM PAGE 12
reports of labour abuses, including high recruitment costs, joblessness, underpayment and deportation of Bangladeshi workers.

"It is hoped that through the signing of this agreement, the recruitment of skilled workers in various professions from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia will increase, and the rights and interests of both workers and employers will be better protected," the statement said.

"This will play a role in further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations," it added.

Prior to signing the agreement, Asif Nazrul and Ahmad Bin Solaiman Al-Rajhi held a bilateral meeting.

During the meeting, the adviser requested the Saudi minister to

ensure that the employers provide the right job contracts to the workers, take full responsibility for paying the fees for work permit renewals, and arrange exits quickly when workers wish to return home.

The Saudi minister instructed relevant parties to take effective steps for the speedy resolution of these issues, while also calling upon Bangladesh to play its role in ensuring safe and fair migration.

They also discussed the issues of recruiting more skilled workers and increasing cooperation to ensure the welfare and protection of workers.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Delwar Hossain, Deputy Chief of Mission SM Nazmul Hasan, and Labour Counsellor Muhammad Reza E-Rabbi were present on the occasion.

Restoring public trust

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the EC stands at a crossroads, with two possible paths ahead: either emerge as a hero or risk being seen as a villain. "We hope the commission chooses to be the hero."

Referring to the consensus commission's proposal to have a referendum on the July Charter, The Financial Express Editor Shamsul Huq Zahid cast doubt over whether it is possible to hold the referendum on election day.

The dialogue was conducted in two sessions: the first with representatives from electronic media and the second with print media journalists.

Several journalists also urged the commission to ensure that they can work and broadcast live from the voting centres without any hassles.

They said EC's guidelines for the media are not conducive to effectively covering the election. Without supportive guidelines, it becomes difficult to expose those involved in electoral malpractice, they said, adding that a media-friendly policy framework therefore must be developed.

Journalists also recommended that returning officers be appointed from within the EC rather than the civil administration and that EC officials be granted magisterial authority.

They also suggested that ballot papers be sent to the polling centres the morning of election day.

Tobacco use drops

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The current rate exceeds global and regional averages, and without multi-pronged government action, like stronger anti-tobacco laws, it will be hard to reduce the rate further.

Tobacco use is a common risk factor for four major non-communicable diseases — cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes, health experts say.

According to a research conducted by the Bangladesh Cancer Society and published in 2019, the economic losses due to tobacco consumption — covering treatment costs and productivity losses — amounted to Tk 30,560 crore in 2017-18 fiscal year.

GLOBAL, REGIONAL SCENARIO
The trend analysis in this report is based on data from nationally representative, population-based tobacco-related surveys conducted between 1990 and 2024.

According to the report, the global average is projected to be 19.2 percent in 2025, down from 26.2 percent in 2010.

The report shows the global number of tobacco users dropped from 1.38 billion in 2000 to 1.2 billion in 2024.

The average for the South and East Asia region is projected at 22.7 percent this year.

Among the 10 countries in the region, Bangladesh ranked third from the bottom, just ahead of Myanmar (42.5 percent) and Timor-Leste (48.9 percent), the report says.

The rates of tobacco consumption in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are projected to be 21.9 percent, 28 percent, and 20.4 percent respectively this year.

Contacted, Aatur Rahman, advocacy manager of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said decline in the use of bidi and some smokeless tobacco products like Sada Pata contributed to reduction in the overall prevalence rate.

He, however, referring to the data from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), said cigarette sales have increased lately, posing a new challenge to go down the prevalence rate further.

Even though the prevalence rate has reduced, the number of real tobacco users has increased, making it a mammoth task to achieve the target of tobacco-free nation by 2040.

According to the WHO, a country is considered "tobacco-free" or having achieved "tobacco-free status" when the prevalence of tobacco use among adults drops below 5 percent.

No surprises as Bulbul

FROM PAGE 1
Council (NSC) nominated directors. Although neither Ishfaq nor Yasir were on the final voter list, they received NSC nominations after Salman Hossain and Ibrahim Khalilullah resigned as councillors. Election Commissioner Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is also the executive director of NSC, confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Following the polls, the newly formed board held its first meeting, where director Faruque Ahmed proposed Bulbul's name as the new president and he was elected unopposed.

Former BCB president Faruque Ahmed and Barishal Division's director Shakhawat Hossain were also elected unopposed as vice-presidents.

Former vice-president Fahim, who was expected to retain his position, did not contest.

Bulbul said the board meeting, adjourned yesterday, would resume today at the BCB headquarters at noon. He also expressed optimism about announcing the chairmen of the 23 standing committees today.

"The important thing is that our board is completely new — you could say it was born today," Bulbul said in his first press conference after getting re-elected.

"We will evaluate everyone's skill sets, decide who fits which department best, and hopefully announce the committees tomorrow [today]."

Bulbul also vowed to invite all stakeholders to work together for the betterment of Bangladesh cricket.

"We all want to work together for Bangladesh cricket. Whether someone is in the cricket board or not, we will invite all stakeholders to work for Bangladesh cricket and assist us."

The outcome of the election seemed like a formality after several candidates — including former national skipper Tamim Iqbal — withdrew their nominations, alleging government interference and conspiracies.

Two major controversies clouded this year's election. The first arose when Bulbul sent a letter to the Ministry of Youth and Sports on September 18, admitting that several divisions and districts had failed to properly nominate councillors through ad-hoc committees and thus the BCB twice extended the

nomination deadline.

The second controversy involved 15 Dhaka Metropolis clubs, whose councillorships were repeatedly cancelled and reinstated within a week, triggering protests and eventually leading to nearly 20 candidates withdrawing from the race.

Tamim, representing Old DOHS Sports Club, was among 34 club voters who abstained from voting. In total, 115 out of 156 voters cast their votes — both through e-voting and in person.

Earlier in the day, Bulbul and Fahim were elected from Category-1 (Dhaka Division) with 15 votes each. Mukhlesur Rahman and Hasanuzzaman were elected from Rajshahi and Rangpur Divisions, respectively, each securing seven votes.

In the club category, Ittekar Rahman Mithu and Manzur Alam retained their positions from the previous board with 34 and 39 votes, respectively. Others elected from this category included Faruque (42), Ishtiaque Sadeque (42), Adnan Rahman Dipon (40), Fayazur Rahman (40), Abul Bashar (40), Amzad Hossain (41), Shahnian Tanem (42), Mokhsedul Kamal (41), M Nazmul Islam (37), and Mehrab Alam Chowdhury (41).

In Category-3, former national captain Khaled Mashud Pilot defeated Debabrata Paul of Jahangirnagar University by 35-7 votes to secure his place on the new board.

Sign deals

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block attempts to transfer the properties to other parties, he added. "So, we were recommended to ink deals with the firms before the transfer of any such laundered assets," he added.

As per the BB's suggestion, banks will select a lead bank for signing the agreements with the firms by this month. The central bank will play the role of a coordinator.

If the firms trace and help recover the money, it will get a cut of the recovered assets, he added.

"It is a good and structured approach to make an effort to recover and bring back the laundered money," he said.

At the meeting, the BFU also shared 125 companies it has identified as money launderers.