

Aurthohin dedicates 'Phoenixer Diary 2' to A K Ratul

The band revealed that the album will officially drop on October 17, 2025, across all major streaming platforms, including YouTube Music, Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, and Qobuz.

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

Celebrated Bangladeshi rock band Aurthohin officially announced the release of its much-anticipated album *Phoenixer Diary 2* at a press conference held today at Skyfall Rooftop Restaurant in Mohakhali, Dhaka. The event was organised by Cool Exposure.

Though the event was delayed due to the rain, anticipation ran high when Saidus Salehin Khaled Sumon (Bassbaba Sumon), Mark Don and Ehtesham Ali Moen took the stage to unveil what they described as a "darker, more dramatic chapter" in the band's musical journey.

The band revealed that the album will officially drop on October 17, 2025, across all major streaming platforms, including YouTube Music, Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, and Qobuz. The announcement also included details of a highly secret "Listening Party" for Aurthohin's



PHOTOS: THABIT AL BASHAR

dedicated fan community, known as "Adbhut", which will take place on October 10.

Comprising eight tracks, the album continues the unfinished story introduced in *Phoenixer Diary 1*, which pioneered the Bangla Nu Rock genre later recognised by Spotify. While the first album explored themes of endurance and rebirth, the sequel depicts the Phoenix's transformation from a symbol of hope to one of destruction — consumed by vengeance after

great loss.

In a statement, Aurthohin described the album as "darker, more intense, and musically richer" than its predecessor. It features collaborations with Grammy-nominated guitarist Frank Gambale; saxophonist Bob Franceschini, known for his work with Mike Stern and Paul Simon; bassist Bubby Lewis, who has played with Snoop Dogg, Stevie Wonder, and Dr Dre; and Ahnaf, son of frontman Bassbaba Sumon.

The band dedicated the album to the late sound engineer and artiste AK Ratul, whose contribution to Bangladesh's rock music community remains profound. While talking to The Daily Star, frontman Bassbaba Sumon said the team worked under intense emotion and urgency to honour him. "We finished the entire album in only eight days — pushing ourselves beyond limits to complete what Ratul had helped us begin," he said. Sumon added that a separate tribute song for Ratul might be released later as a standalone track. He said, "He has been so mixed with our lives. I wanted to write a few lines just for him."

With its international collaborations and ambitious production, *Phoenixer Diary 2* marks an important evolution for Bangladeshi rock music, reaffirming Aurthohin's role as one of the country's most influential rock bands.

Aurthohin also extended gratitude to Mercedes-Benz Bangladesh for sponsorship, and to Shell, Framework Finance Limited, Get Set Rock, and Verse Imagine for their support.

Ministry of Cultural Affairs to celebrate Ustad Allaiddin Khan at Lalbagh Fort

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs, in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, will organise a classical music evening today (October 8) at 7 pm at the historic Lalbagh Fort in Old Dhaka.



The event is part of the ministry's ongoing initiative to honour legendary figures who have significantly enriched Bangladesh's cultural and artistic heritage.

The programme will mark the 163rd birth anniversary of Ustad Allaiddin Khan, the maestro of classical music, revered as the *music emperor* for his unparalleled contributions to South Asian classical traditions. Ustad Allaiddin Khan's great-grandson, Ustad Shiraz Ali Khan, will perform on stage, accompanied by Sri Aarchik Banerjee on tabla. The event is by invitation only.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Chhader Chhobi

Chhader Chhobi: Morshum Char, Porbo Dui invites cinephiles to an evocative rooftop screening celebrating Bangladeshi storytelling. This edition features three acclaimed documentaries by filmmaker and visual artist Molla Sagar—*Siren*, *Dudh-Koyla*, and *Dadu*. The evening concludes with an intimate conversation exploring his cinematic vision and creative journey.

Date: Saturday | October 11, 2025
Time: 6:30 pm onwards
Venue: 101 Indira Road

Shatabdi Wadud named Prachyanat Chief Secretary

Prachyanat, one of Bangladesh's most prominent theatre troupes, has announced its new executive committee for the 2025–27 term.

At the general meeting held on September 24, the troupe announced several key appointments to strengthen its leadership and training initiatives.

Acclaimed stage and film actor Shatabdi Wadud was appointed as the theatre group's chief secretary, while

renowned acting specialist and stage persona Sahana Rahman Sumi was concurrently appointed as secretary of the Prachyanat School of Acting and Secretary of Training.

Other appointments include Arif Reza Khan as Finance Secretary, Bin-e Amin as Information Technology and Communications Secretary, and Tanji Kun as Production and Publications Secretary.



Adnan Al Rajeev's 'Ali' bound for Spain after Cannes honour

Ali, a 15-minute Bangladeshi short directed by Adnan Al Rajeev, has been selected for the official short-film programme at the 70th Valladolid International Film Week (Seminci) in Spain. The festival runs from October 24 to November 1.

Previously the film earned a Special Mention from the jury in the short-film section at the prestigious 78th Cannes Film Festival, this year. The film represents a growing trend of international co-production for Bangladeshi shorts, pairing local storytellers with overseas partners to reach broader festival audiences.



NEWS

Trio win Nobel for revealing quantum

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"This year's Nobel Prize in Physics has provided opportunities for developing the next generation of quantum technology, including quantum cryptography, quantum computers, and quantum sensors," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which awards the prize, said in a statement.

Quantum computers use principles of quantum mechanics to make complex calculations, predict outcomes and perform analysis that in some cases could take traditional computers millions of years.

The field is considered to have the potential to help solve some of humanity's most pressing concerns, such as tackling climate change. But it also faces challenges, including improving the accuracy of its chips, and timelines for commercially viable quantum computing remain disputed.

British-born Clarke is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, in the United States.

Devoret, who was born in France

and was congratulated on X by French President Emmanuel Macron, is a professor at Yale University and the University of California, Santa Barbara, also in the United States, where Martinis is also a professor.

Martinis, an American, headed Google's Quantum Artificial Intelligence Lab until 2020. At Google, Martinis was part of the research team who in 2019 said they had achieved "quantum supremacy", in which a computer harnessing the properties of sub-atomic particles did a far better job of solving a problem than the world's most powerful supercomputer.

Devoret, besides his professorship, is also the chief scientist of Google Quantum AI. It is the second straight year that a Nobel has been won by scientists with Google ties. The 2024 chemistry prize was awarded to Demis Hassabis and John Jumper at Google DeepMind while Geoffrey Hinton, who worked for Google for more than a decade, won for physics the same year.

The Nobel physics prize is awarded

by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and includes a prize sum totalling 11 million Swedish crowns (\$1.2 million) that is shared among the winners if there are several, as is often the case.

The Nobel Prizes were established through the will of Alfred Nobel, who amassed a fortune from his invention of dynamite. Since 1901, with occasional interruptions, the prizes have annually recognised achievements in science, literature, and peace. Economics was a later addition.

Physics was the first category mentioned in Nobel's will, likely reflecting the prominence of the field during his time. Today, the Nobel Prize in Physics remains widely regarded as the most prestigious award in the discipline.

Past winners of the Nobel physics prize include some of the most influential figures in the history of science, such as Albert Einstein, Erwin Schrodinger, Max Planck and Niels Bohr, the latter three all pioneers of quantum theory.

NCP presses EC for 'shapla' symbol

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The letter further expressed hope that the EC would amend Rule 9(l) of the Election Conduct Rules, 2008 and allocate one of the following symbols in favour of NCP: shapla (water lily), White shapla or Red shapla.

Ahead of the upcoming 13th parliamentary election, the EC increased the number of electoral symbols from 69 to 115 for registered parties and independent candidates.

But "shapla", due to being the national emblem of Bangladesh, was not reserved as an election symbol under Rule 9(l) of the Election Conduct Rules, 2008.

When applying for registration on June 22, the NCP had sought Pen and Mobile as its party symbol other than shapla — which was previously sought by Mahmudur Rahman Manna's Nagorik Oikya.

Then on August 3, the NCP sent another letter to the EC mentioning its preference for the shapla, White shapla and Red shapla symbols.

The EC remained firm. On September 30, the EC asked the party to select an alternative from its reserved list of 50 symbols by October 7.

Regarding the matter, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said that the NCP will not be allocated the shapla symbol as it is not included in the EC's reserved symbol list and asked the NCP to submit an alternative proposal.

A final decision would be made through mutual agreement, he added.

China PM to visit N Korea this week

AFP, Beijing
China's premier will pay an official visit to North Korea this week, Beijing said Tuesday, announcing the high-level diplomatic engagement to the isolated nuclear state.

Despite periods of strained ties between China and North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, the neighbours have maintained a close relationship in recent years.

Growth outlook brightens

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"The economy has shown resilience, but this cannot be taken for granted," said Jean Pesme, World Bank Division director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Inflation averaged 10 percent during FY25 but has begun to ease as monetary policy tightened and the taka stabilised after months of volatility. The local currency depreciated by 8.7 percent over the year, boosting exports but keeping import costs high. The World Bank expects inflation to moderate to 5.5 percent by FY27, assuming global commodity prices remain contained.

LABOUR MARKET WEAKNESS, POVERTY

The report highlighted a marked deterioration in labour market conditions. The labour force participation rate fell from 60.9 percent to 58.9 percent between 2023 and 2024, driven by a sharp decline in female participation — down 3.1 percentage points to 38.4 percent.

That decline meant 30 lakh more working-age people were outside the labour force, of whom 24 lakh were women. Total employment dropped during that period by almost 20 lakh to 6.91 crore.

All major sectors lost jobs, with services hardest hit (-3.6 percent), followed by agriculture (-2.1 percent) and industry (-2 percent). Unemployment rose only marginally to 3.7 percent, as many discouraged workers simply stopped looking for work. The World Bank warned that this trend "masks deeper labour market distress," especially among youth and women.

The national poverty rate is estimated to have climbed to 21.2 percent in FY25 from 20.5 percent in FY24, "reflecting the combined impact of slower growth, high inflation, and deteriorating labour market conditions", according to the report. It forecast that poverty would ease to 19.1 percent by FY26, though that would still be higher than the 18.7 percent recorded in FY22.

Persistently high inflation eroded purchasing power across households, but the impact was sharpest for low-paid workers, whose real wages fell by almost 2 percent in FY25, the report said.

"Poverty at the \$3 line is projected to rise to 8.9 percent, pushing about 12 lakh more people into poverty."

Inequality, however, is expected to narrow slightly as income pressures were felt broadly across the distribution. Migration and remittances provided an important cushion; with more than

one million people leaving annually, remittance-receiving households remained relatively more resilient.

Bangladesh registered its first current account surplus in eight years — \$149 million in FY25, supported by robust remittances, which rose by 26.8 percent, and an 8.8 percent increase in exports led by the garment sector.

However, fiscal pressures intensified. The budget deficit widened to 4.7 percent of GDP, as revenue collection weakened to 6.8 percent of GDP, among the lowest in Asia. Rising subsidies and debt servicing costs strained public finances, with public debt climbing to 38 percent of GDP.

The World Bank warned that delayed reforms in tax policy and energy pricing — both part of the IMF programme — risked undermining debt sustainability and investor confidence.

Bangladesh's banking sector is still under severe strain, the report said, with non-performing loans reaching 24.1 percent by March 2025 — the highest in South Asia. The system-wide capital adequacy ratio fell to 6.3 percent, well below the regulatory minimum.

Investor sentiment, it said, remains cautious. However, the World Bank expects the pace of reforms to pick up following the election, provided stability is restored and policy continuity ensured.

"With the conclusion of the national election in FY26 and the resulting dissipation of political uncertainty, growth is projected to gain momentum from FY27 onward," it said.

LDC GRADUATION

Regarding the forthcoming graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in November 2026, the report said it may not adversely affect export performance immediately due to the continuation of preferential tariff rates until 2029 for the European Union, Bangladesh's largest export market.

LDC graduation would be an opportunity to carry out comprehensive reforms to expand trade, strengthen private sector competitiveness, and promote economic diversification.

Policy clarity and accelerated reforms following the election could support a faster-than-expected growth rebound, job creation, and poverty reduction, it added.

Bangladesh is among South Asian countries that rank among the least open to international trade and finance. The region's high tariffs protect sectors where employment opportunities are shrinking.

Reforms failed to address inequality

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Asian country. This inequality is not just economic; it has led to state capture by the financial elites of our respective societies, which has compromised the nature of democracy."

Sobhan went on to accuse the policymakers and economists, whom he dubbed the "G-parties".

"When you talk about inequality, you talk about social protection, welfare programmes and inclusive growth — but without structural change. The structural sources of inequality, injustice, and the perpetuation of poverty have completely escaped those of you who wanted a fairer society."

Referring to his book "Challenging the Injustice of Poverty", Sobhan said that genuine progress requires addressing systemic issues such as unequal access to land, finance and education that lock millions into low-income traps.

The Global South is now gaining strength in terms of resources but domestic inequality threatens to undercut that progress.

"The Global South has reconstructed itself with the capacity

to become the dominant region. But where we have failed is in addressing internal distribution. It is now the North that is retreating from globalisation into protectionism, unable to compete with the dynamism of the South, particularly Asia."

Sobhan urged the new generation of policymakers, researchers and economists to take up the unfinished agenda of structural reform.

"This is the world as it is. We made some contribution to it."

The state had used its power to create and reinforce economic disparities between East and West Pakistan.

"These were not market-driven disparities; they were state-driven. The Pakistani state, while promoting a strong private sector, had itself created and patronised that sector."

Because the private sector was heavily concentrated among non-Bengalis from West Pakistan, the result was a systemic transfer of resources from East to West.

"When we began to address the implications of the strong state, the issue of nationalisation came to the fore, both during Bhutto's

time in Pakistan and later during Bangabandhu's period in Bangladesh. Our original belief was that the Six Points, even within a united Pakistan, would not be enough to change the structure of disparity," he added.

Leftist and rightist ideologies and policies continue to dominate discourse, said Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud.

"But what we have not yet figured out is how to build a system of governance. That is the real task before us. The debates on ideology and policy can come later. Our current objective is far more fundamental to ensure a meaningful, effective and representative democratic transition."

The interim government wants to establish strong and independent state institutions, which will function under democratic accountability.

Within such a framework, human rights and citizens' rights must be safeguarded and disparities in power and income among different social classes must be reduced.

"We seek a democratic system based on accountability, where political and economic power are fairly distributed."