

## Pantha Kanai fulfils 'lifelong dream' with 'Sei Ek Shomoy Chhilo'

Renowned singer Pantha Kanai has returned with a heartfelt new track, 'Sei Ek Shomoy Chhilo', evoking memories of the global lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The song, written by Shahid Mahmud Jangi and composed by Pilu Khan, has been released on Ajab Records' YouTube channel.

The singer noted that the song holds deep emotional value, bringing back memories of a time when the world was forced into isolation. "The world has moved on, but many have started to forget those difficult days. This song will remind listeners of that period — of fear, reflection, and hope," he said. "For me, it's unforgettable, and I plan to include it in my upcoming concert performances."



Questionable videos presenting deceased famous individuals in various situations has sparked debate online.

## The uncomfortable AI resurrection of dead celebrities

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

A new, and deeply unsettling, trend is flooding social media feeds. It is not a dance challenge or a recipe video. It is the digital resurrection of deceased celebrities, all generated by artificial intelligence. Albert Einstein as a UFC fighter. Tupac Shakur hanging out with Elvis Presley. A stand-up routine from Michael Jackson. This is the latest frontier of AI content, and it is raising urgent questions about consent, taste, and who gets to control a person's legacy after they are gone.

The source of this trend is OpenAI's new Sora 2 video generator. The company launched the tool with promises of safety, stating it would block depictions of public figures. However, it turns out this prohibition has a significant loophole: it only applies to the living. An OpenAI spokesperson confirmed to tech magazine PCMag that the company "allows the generation of historical figures". This policy has opened the floodgates for users to create videos featuring anyone from Albert Einstein to Kurt Cobain, without any permission from their families or estates.

For living individuals, Sora 2 offers a 'cameo' feature. This allows a person to scan their own face and voice,

giving them control over how their digital likeness is used. But this system completely fails the deceased. They cannot opt in. They cannot revoke consent. They are, in effect, digital props for anyone with an idea and an app.

The human impact of this is very real. Zelda Williams, daughter of the late Robin Williams, recently pleaded to stop sending her AI videos of her father. In an Instagram post, she called the recreations a "horrendous

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Frankensteinian monster", stating emphatically that it is not what he would have wanted. Her distress highlights a core problem: these AI resurrections are not just a technical novelty; they can cause genuine pain to grieving families and fans who feel a beloved figure is being disrespected.

Legally, the situation is a minefield. According to a recent article by US-based news website Arcs Technica, in

the United States, laws governing the use of a deceased person's likeness vary from state to state. Some, like New York, have laws against using a "digital replica" in a way that could deceive the public. However, these can often be bypassed with a simple disclaimer. The result is a legal grey area where estates may soon be forced to launch lawsuits to protect their loved ones' images.

Perhaps the most ironic twist is seeing figures who warned about AI's dangers being used to promote it. Stephen Hawking famously expressed concern about super intelligent AI, yet he is now one of the most frequently simulated celebrities, often in violent or humiliating scenarios.

OpenAI has shown it can change its policies when faced with backlash, as it recently did by shifting to an opt-in model for copyrighted characters. But by explicitly allowing historical figures, the company is essentially endorsing this new form of digital grave robbing.

As these videos continue to spread, the countdown to the first major legal challenge begins. Until then, the digital afterlife of our most cherished figures remains in the hands of internet strangers, and the ethics feel deadlier than the celebrities they are reviving.

## Lady Gaga to appear in 'The Devil Wears Prada 2'



Lady Gaga is set to appear in the highly anticipated sequel to *The Devil Wears Prada*, balancing the project alongside her ongoing Mayhem Ball Tour.

Following four consecutive sold-out shows at London's O2 arena, the Oscar- and Grammy-winning artiste was spotted in Milan, where production for the sequel to the 2006 blockbuster comedy — which originally starred Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, and Stanley Tucci — is currently underway.

*The Devil Wears Prada 2* marks Gaga's first major film role since *Joker: Folie à Deux*. Earlier this year, she also made a cameo appearance in Netflix's hit series *Wednesday*. Her brief stop on set comes just before her upcoming performance at Stockholm's Avicii Arena on Sunday.

## Live2Web launches A K Ratul studio in honour of Owned frontman

A K Ratul, the late vocalist of the renowned Bangladeshi rock band Owned, was also celebrated in the industry as a gifted producer, having crafted numerous hit albums and singles for fellow rock bands.

His sudden passing on July 27 left music lovers and musicians across the country heartbroken. Recently, his brother A K Rahul announced that Live2Web has dedicated a studio in his memory, naming it the A K Ratul Studio. Sharing the news, he wrote: "Thank you, Live2Web. Thank you, Hasi. This means the world to our family."



## NEWS

### NHRC reforms hinge on bodies, not just law

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"The most important of these are the High Court and the Parliamentary Committee. And along with this, we need to make some other accountable institutions stand strong, the most notable of which is the NHRC," he added.

In the existing law, the selection committee tasked with choosing the members of the NHRC mostly included bureaucrats.

The new draft law allows the inclusion of university professors as well as representatives from civil society with human rights experience, journalists, small ethnic groups and backward communities in the selection committee.

The new draft law says the chair of the selection committee must be a judge, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Ministry of Water Resources.

"If judges were always endowed with sound judgment, then incidents of extrajudicial killings would not have continued for years."

Although the judiciary has moved forward and issued directives against mass arrests, there has been helplessness in implementing judicial decisions and instructions, she said.

"What has been stated about the commission's functions — we must see how much capacity it will truly have to do that. Just seating a few people in chairs will not suffice."

There must also be an evaluation of the members' performance. Furthermore, it should be stated that the recommendations of the commission must be implemented, she added.

A judicial system must be built where people from any corner of the country can say that they have confidence in the judicial system and the courts, said Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, head of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

The NHRC has always grappled with politicisation, said Adilur Rahman Khan, founder of Odhikar, a

human rights organisation.

A national human rights commission was formed during a military-supported regime and was staffed with political activists later on.

"There were efforts to take away the rights of people. Even when the struggle of July was going on, a director of the National Human Rights Commission wrote to the United Nations that terrorists were creating terrorism in Bangladesh," said Khan, adviser to the industries ministry.

Supreme Court lawyer Sara Hossain described the empowerment of the NHRC to investigate law enforcement agencies as a major achievement.

She praised the clause mandating that one-third of the commissioners be women — an improvement from the previous single female member — but emphasised the need for even greater female representation.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman commented that the definition of human rights should be specific in the new law.

Speakers included UNDP Bangladesh Resident Representative Stefan Liller, Deputy Head of Mission of Danish Embassy Anders K Carlsen, Swedish ambassador Ritu Sinfred Renggli, law secretary Hafiz Ahmed Chowdhury, Senior Legal Adviser of the Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Institutions Greg Hism, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Naripokkho founder Shireen Haque, Chakma Circle adviser Rani Yan Yan, Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman, Consulting Editor of The Daily Star Kamal Ahmed and Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances member Nur Khan Liton, among others.

The session was moderated by Romana Schweiger, Senior Advisor on Rule of Law, Justice and Security at UNDP Bangladesh; Tasneem Siddiqui, president of Odhikar; Sanjida Islam, coordinator of Maayer Daak, and Supreme Court lawyers Ehsan Abdullah Siddiq and Saqeb Mahbub.

### 2 killed as Rab

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Rab-8 Patuakhali Camp Commander Squadron Leader Rashed said, "About 15 to 20 of the injured are in critical condition."

The Rab personnel were travelling with their families from Barishal to Kuakata on a family picnic, he added.

Rescue teams from Rab, police, army, and the fire service carried out a joint operation.

Alim and Priyon died on the way to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

Doctor Tamanna Rahman Shanta of Patuakhali Medical College Hospital said, "The injured started arriving around 9:00am. Among them..."

Injured Rab members and their families were moved to the Lebukhali Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal for better treatment, officials said.

### Yunus leaves

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(FAO) of the United Nations, where policymakers, researchers, and entrepreneurs from across the world exchange views on the future of food systems. This year's event is being held at the FAO headquarters in Rome from October 10 to 17.

The chief adviser's visit is being regarded as a significant reflection of Bangladesh's proactive diplomatic engagement on the international stage. He is scheduled to return to Bangladesh on October 15.

### Trump slaps 100%

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choosing to act now. "Some very strange things are happening in China! They are becoming very hostile," he said.

Trump said other countries had contacted the United States expressing anger over China's "great Trade hostility, which came out of nowhere."

He also accused Beijing of "lying in wait" despite what he characterised as six months of good relations, which have notably seen progress on bringing TikTok's US operations under American control as required by a law passed by Congress last year.

His outburst comes just weeks after he had spoken of the importance of meeting Xi at the APEC summit and said that he would travel to China next year.

### TIB slams hasty approval of data protection

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According to the TIB statement, subsection 15(4) of the draft creates scope for data controllers and processors to be exempted from their duties and responsibilities, while section 24 allows broad access to personal data in the name of "crime prevention".

"It is essential to clarify how provisions meant to protect data have instead been turned into tools for control and surveillance," said Iftekharuzzaman.

He further warned that allowing government agencies unrestricted access to data servers without judicial oversight poses serious risks of misuse.

"The draft fails to reflect the

constitutional commitment to ensuring the privacy of personal information, which is truly alarming," he said.

TIB also raised objections to the way the ordinance criminalises information misuse, saying it could have negative implications for business and commerce.

Criticising the absence of an independent data protection authority, Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the National Data Governance Ordinance 2025 had been abruptly approved to create a "so-called interoperability authority" that is inconsistent with global practices and based on unrealistic concepts.

"This approach reflects an

authoritarian mindset and risks being self-defeating," he said.

TIB stressed that while data governance legislation is necessary in today's digital world, addressing such a complex issue through one or two hastily prepared laws, without assessing the broader digital ecosystem or engaging relevant experts, would only deepen complications and increase the risk of rights violations through expanded government surveillance.

The organisation urged the government not to enforce the two ordinances in their current form and instead hold meaningful consultations with stakeholders and experts before implementation.

### Justice key to protecting

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The BNP said justice not only ensures punishment for past incidents but also provides assurance that such injustices are not repeated. Full respect for law and human rights can form the foundation of a peaceful and accountable state, it said.

A country should operate according to the law of the land, it said.

"Just as the actions of certain individuals should not be attributed to an institution, it is equally improper to question the integrity of that institution based on their misconduct," read the statement.

Throughout the entire period of fascism, the BNP, as the party that suffered the most from enforced disappearances, killings, and oppression, fully supports justice for all human rights violations.

People's emotions, trust, and respect for a patriotic force should have no connection with the isolated crimes of any individual, nor should it, the party said.

Every member of the armed forces is a proud child of this country and this land.

"Therefore, the vast majority of military personnel surely wish, from their hearts, that those who violate boundaries face justice, so that no government can ever again give the armed forces orders to commit injustices such as enforced disappearances or killings. BNP fully agrees with this universal aspiration," read the statement.

### 'Israeli forces tried to instil fear in us'

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Shahidul noted they were held in one of Israel's most secure prisons, located deep in the desert. While there, a fellow detainee, who had been captured from another ship, told him that Israeli forces had accused him of being a Hamas agent and threatened to shoot him once inside the facility.

Shahidul said he and several other detainees went on a hunger strike during their imprisonment, adding that they were made to sleep on iron beds.

"The toilets were deplorable. But, something extraordinary happened. Those in cell seven composed a parody to the tune of Bella Ciao, the iconic Italian resistance anthem. Their version was called 'Working toilet, working toilet'."

"They sang it loud. Their toilet was broken, and despite their complaints, nothing was being done. Soon, others joined in and made sure their voices were heard."

"Even when guards stormed in with guns and ordered us to stop, we kept singing," recalled Shahidul, adding that for them, it was an act of resistance.

Describing his peers as extraordinary, Shahidul said despite being aware of the risks, they remained committed to justice for Palestinians.

When asked by a journalist about their next steps, Shahidul Alam replied, "Because some truly remarkable individuals came together, we've decided to build an international network. Since global leaders won't take action, we activists are preparing to fight for what must be done. We've already drafted a blueprint, and even before returning, we resolved to go back. Next time, a thousand ships will sail."

Shahidul thanked the people of Bangladesh and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for supporting the flotilla, unlike many other big countries.

"Free Palestine," he said before ending the press conference.

As part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, Shahidul's ship, the Conscience, along with eight other smaller vessels, was sailing toward war-ravaged Gaza to challenge Israel's blockade and deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the besieged enclave when it was intercepted on Wednesday.

This was the second interception, after Israel the week before stopped about 40 vessels and detained more than 450 activists in an aid convoy, the Global Sumud Flotilla, that was also attempting to deliver supplies to Gaza.