

WHAT'S
THE
HAPS?**'Khona'**

Renowned theatre troupe BotTala brings back its acclaimed production *Khona*, a powerful retelling of the legendary astrologer Lilabati's life. Written by Samina Luthfa Nitra and directed by Mohammad Ali Haider, the play examines gender, class, and power through a timeless story that continues to challenge and inspire audiences today.

DATE:
WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY OCT 29-31, 2025
TIME: 7PM-9PM
VENUE: STUDIO THEATRE HALL, BSA



The goal is to push Asian cinema forward: MANOJ PRAMANIK

SHARMIN JOYA

"Being a student after a long time was quite interesting — that too when I am a teacher myself," shared actor Manoj Pramanik, who recently returned from Busan, South Korea, after seven months. The actor-turned-producer came back with a renewed and deeper understanding of the world of cinema. During his time there, he attended a film production course at the Busan Asian Film School (AFiS). Manoj has been teaching at the Department of Film and Media Studies at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University since 2016.

"What was the course all about?" — "The course offered a thorough understanding of film production, co-productions between Asian countries, and ways to create an avenue to expand the overall Asian film market," shared the actor. Everything about the programme left an impression on him — the teaching style,



PHOTOS: STAR AND COURTESY

the mentors, and the content. "There were 20 students from 15 Asian countries, and I was the only participant from Bangladesh. We lived in the same building, cooked different cuisines in a shared kitchen, exchanged cultures, and attended classes together. Most importantly, I made some wonderful friends."

He mentioned that producers from Bangladesh, such as Tanvir Hossain, Fazle Hasan Shishir, and Arifur Rahman, among others, previously took this training, and their productions are shining across the international film festivals. Manoj recently ventured into production, producing several short films, including *A Snail without Shell*, directed by emerging filmmaker Mohin Rakhaire, which earned accolades from international film festivals as well.

When asked about when he plans to put this experience into practice, Manoj smiled, "I already have. As part of the course, I had to submit a project, and I'm continuing to work on it now.

I'm looking at ways to further develop it and will soon apply for international funding. The goal of this course was to push Asian cinema forward in the global market. We discussed why we still can't compete with Hollywood — and how we can overcome those weaknesses to build one of the biggest film markets in the world."

But did he miss acting during his time away? "Very much," he admitted. "I was eagerly waiting to face the camera again. I returned home on October 22, and two days later, I shot a commercial. That should tell you how eager I was — I didn't want to waste a single moment."

Manoj has also worn the director's hat. "That was just for learning," he said humbly about his short film *Hoite Surma*, which has already travelled to film festivals.

His next big project is *Sheyana*, a government-funded feature film. "If all goes well, we'll start shooting early next year," he revealed. "Right now, we're making a few script corrections. Once that's done, we'll finalise the casting," he said, adding that he won't be acting in this project.

For now, Manoj has just wrapped up a new commercial and is planning to shoot a short film soon. He also feels that the industry has slowed down a bit, though he hopes it will recover soon. "Due to a lack of audience attention or sponsors, the number of projects being made has decreased. But I want to believe that the situation will bounce back, as our audience has always shown eagerness for projects that are mindful and have merit," he concludes.



Shironamhin set to release 'Ei Obelay 2' this December

Popular band Shironamhin will release *Ei Obelay 2*, a sequel to their 2019 hit *Ei Obelay*, in the first week of December.

The song marks the final track of their *Batighar* album and will be released in both Bengali and English.

Written by bandleader Ziaur Rahman and composed by drummer Kazi Ahmad Shafin, who also directed the video, the song's visuals were filmed across scenic locations in Thailand.

Actress Neel Hurerzhan stars in the video, while actor Tawsif Mahbub appears in stills. Meanwhile, the band — comprising Ziaur Rahman, Kazi Ahmad Shafin, Sheikh Ishtiaque, Symon Chowdhury, and Sudipto Sinha Dipu — will perform in Toronto on November 1, their first-ever show in Canada.

Thom Yorke strongly opposes performing in Israel again

Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke has declared he will not perform in Israel again, distancing himself from the Netanyahu-led government amid the ongoing conflict.

Speaking before the recent Israel-Hamas ceasefire, Yorke said he would "absolutely not" return, adding, "I wouldn't want to be 5,000 miles anywhere near the Netanyahu regime."

Lead guitarist Jonny Greenwood, whose wife Sharon Katan is Israeli, disagreed, arguing that boycotts can worsen divisions. "I can't apologise for collaborating with Arab and Jewish musicians," he said. Radiohead previously faced backlash for performing in Tel Aviv in 2017 despite BDS pressure to cancel.



NEWS

Seized vehicles rotting under police watch

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Meanwhile, some vehicles parked on the roads have become public nuisances and breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

At Banani Police Station, around 38 cars, several motorbikes, and a pickup occupy five roads around the premises. The 20-foot-wide road in front of the station is lined with two rows of abandoned cars, causing daily traffic jams.

When The Daily Star visited on October 10, pedestrians and drivers complained. "Why don't the police remove them? They block half the road," said a passerby.

Resident Abdur Rahim said the problem worsens in the evening when traffic increases.

Officer-in-Charge of Banani Police Russell Sarwar said, "These cars are court evidence and cannot be removed without a court order. It has become a burden for us. Traffic authorities also ask us to move them, but we can't."

He added that in his 14 months at the station, no owner had returned with valid court papers to reclaim their vehicle.

"We often receive calls through the 999 hotline asking us to remove the cars. Residents living on the streets where these vehicles are stored complain and pressure us to clear them, but we can't do anything without court orders," the OC said.

Anisur Rahman, joint commissioner (traffic admin and planning) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they have no designated impound lots or dumping stations, so

vehicles are kept at police compounds or nearby roads.

"We use four temporary grounds — Shahbagh, Bosila, Postgola, and Uttara police line. We've applied for at least four permanent dumping stations. The situation will improve when we get them," he said.

The Shahbagh dumping ground, where seized vehicles from different divisions are kept, presents a grim picture. The open field has no boundary wall, and pools of water and mud make it nearly inaccessible.

People can walk in freely; some are seen removing car batteries, tyres, or other parts. Only one police constable stands at the gate, often occupied with other work.

Constable Mohammad Rakib said that approximately 150 autorickshaws, a few buses, and several motorcycles are stored there. "We work in three shifts, but only one constable is present per shift. There is no security inside. People come in, claim a car as theirs, and take parts away. We cannot stop them as we lack manpower."

During a visit on October 8, a 30-year-old man was seen removing tyres from an autorickshaw. When approached, he identified himself as Nur Mohammad. He said it was his vehicle, seized by traffic police. When he came to pay the fine, he found the tyres missing, so he was taking what was left.

Another man, Al Amin, was also seen removing his car battery and seats to save them from theft. "If we do not take the parts, they will be stolen."

Asked about these incidents, Senior officers concede the system is broken. "Due to a shortage of designated dumping grounds, seized vehicles remain as evidence until trials end. We can't release or auction them without court orders," said one official.

"There is a provision for auctioning, but delays make it nearly impossible. Meanwhile, cars rot, parts are stolen, and the value is lost."

Asked about stolen parts and damaged vehicles in police custody, Hasan Md Shawkat Ali, additional commissioner (logistics, finance, and procurement) of DMP, said they had limited resources and refused to elaborate.

Additional Public Prosecutor Md Samsuddoha Sumon said the courts have no impound lots for seized cars.

"After trial completion, police can remove those with court orders."

However, he added that police could act proactively by submitting reports to courts in time to release vehicles from custody.

Meanwhile, Morium Akter's

ordeal sums up the human cost.

"My Tk 7.5 lakh car is gone. Nobody

is taking responsibility. There's no

compensation nor accountability."

Constable Rakib said, "Our superiors told us to check papers when someone comes to reclaim a vehicle. Beyond that, we cannot do anything."

On reports of theft from the dumping ground, DMP Joint Commissioner Anisur said, "We'll try to install boundaries and lighting to prevent such incidents."

The problem is structural — lack of space, limited manpower, and bureaucratic delays.

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Deploy law enforcers

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ensuring a free and fair 13th national election.

All field-level administrative officials — deputy commissioners (DCs), superintendents of police (SPs), upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) and officers-in-charge (OCs) — must be appointed through a full lottery-based system to ensure neutrality.

Jamaat also demanded to hold a national referendum in November following the gazette notification on the implementation of the July Charter.

"The EC must make the 'July Charter' and its reform agenda public so voters can make informed choices," Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told reporters after the meeting at the EC headquarters.

At the meeting, the EC did not mention any challenge or incapacity

in organizing the referendum, he said.

Jamaat demanded installation of CCTV cameras in all polling centres (subject to technical and financial feasibility), ensuring equal rights and privileges for all political parties, maintaining law and order, recovering illegal arms and arresting identified criminals, allowing election officials (presiding, polling, Ansar) and expatriates to vote through postal ballots or other easy mechanisms, appointing election observer organisations only after verifying that they have no political affiliation, and ensuring the neutrality of the administration during the polls.

The party also proposed that in the case of alliance-based voting, each party should contest using its own electoral symbol, as per the latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO).

Jamaat termed it "very unfortunate" that a political party had recently objected to the amendment and demanded its reversal.

The party described this move as a "naked violation of the level playing field" under a so-called "gentlemen's agreement", calling the objection "alarming" and a "bad omen" for a fair election.

In response to a question, Parwar

termed BNP's objection regarding the appointment of officials from Islami

Bank and other financial institutions as "regrettable" and "unpolitical".

Jamaat has no ownership links with any of the institutions mentioned by the BNP, describing such claims as part of a "bad political tradition", he said.

Issuing counter-statements or lists

"is not a political courtesy", he said.

Metro mishap exposes legal void

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Section 28 mandates that DMTCL

insure the metro rail, all passengers, and third parties — a category that includes pedestrians affected by metro rail incidents. The licensee is also required to collect compensation from the insurance company within three months and provide it to the injured person or their family.

But DMTCL has yet to implement any such insurance coverage, leaving victims unable to benefit from these legal provisions.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, Khondaker Ehteshamul Kabir, company secretary of DMTCL, admitted that neither the metro rail structure, its passengers, nor third parties are currently covered under any insurance policy, citing the enormous financial cost involved.

In this situation, the authorities have proposed an amendment to the Metro Rail Act to address compensation issues on a case-by-case basis.

When this correspondent pointed out that the existing law stipulates compensation, Kabir responded

that the current rules under the act contain no such provision. "That's why we proposed an amendment to the act, and the proposal remains pending with the ministry."

Contacted, Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan said he announced Tk 5 lakh in compensation for the victim in accordance with the Road Transport Act, due to the absence of relevant provisions in the metro rail regulations.

He added that the government will work on a process to ensure compensation for the victim.

EU to deploy full team

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Miller praised the July National Charter, describing it as a "very important" document aimed at ensuring a smooth democratic transition.

He also commended the recently approved labour law reforms and initiatives to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, calling them "notable successes".

"These are all important steps," he said, stressing the EU's continued support for the Election Commission's efforts to ensure free, fair, and credible elections in February.

Miller described the upcoming polls as "an opportunity to reset the reputation of the country".

The envoy also reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's smooth graduation from a least developed country to a middle-income nation.

Discussions also focused on strengthening trade and investment ties, with both sides exploring the possibility of an economic partnership agreement and cooperation in aviation and shipping.

They also agreed to work closely on tackling human trafficking and

illegal migration.

Yunus said Bangladesh is expected to sign an agreement with global shipping giant AP Moller-Maersk for the development and management of the Laldia Terminal at Chattogram Port.

Miller noted that the Danish company plans to invest around \$800 million to develop Laldia into one of the top terminals in the region.

The two sides also discussed the election environment, candidate eligibility, and ensuring due process to uphold human rights ahead of the national vote.

Ceasefire in tatters as Israel strikes Gaza

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were Israel's violations of the ceasefire.

Israeli media earlier reported an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and Hamas fighters in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment on the reports.

Hamas said it was complying with the ceasefire terms and Netanyahu was looking for excuses to back away from Israel's obligations.

Under the ceasefire terms, Hamas released all living hostages in return

for nearly 2