



‘BHALLAGENA’: Arnob’s new album is a triumph of cohesion and variety (New)

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

“I promise that I won’t take another 10-year gap to release my next album!” jested Shayan Chowdhury Arnob, at the intimate launching ceremony of *Bhallagena* on October 27. This was his first solo album after *Doob*, which was released in 2015. A 10-year gap can be devastating to a musician, even someone of Arnob’s stature—times change, styles become outdated, and industries move on. But this is Arnob we’re talking about—he helms Coke Studio Bangla, performs all over the world, and has relentlessly reinvented himself throughout the years, all while keeping his signature, quirky timelessness, which is also evident in *Bhallagena*.

When an artist takes a long time away, expectations run high, and the album’s reception may hinge on how it compares with his earlier landmark works, of which Arnob has many. On top of that, Arnob tends to work with poetic lyrics and deeper themes, which means that the audience will likely take time to fully absorb his compositions. Featuring contributions from Kolkata-based friend Taufiq Riaz (writer of popular songs like *Bhalobasha* *Tarpor* and *Tor Jonno*) and the late Rajib Ashraf, the album serves as a poignant tribute to the latter.

The album starts with *Joker*, penned by Srijata Bandopadhyay.

Its lilting rhythm and evocative, floating imagery speak of both the liberating flight and the inherent fragility of existence. But the emotional anchor is the title track, *Bhallagena Kichu*. This duet, featuring Arnob and his beloved, Sunidhi Nayak, is a raw, palpable burst of feeling—it functions simultaneously as a deep lament for a lost friend and a cathartic release. This was the last song that Rajib Ashraf gave Arnob, before his untimely demise.

Dushu Cheler Gaan, by its unusual, mischievous nature, is a groovy treat, accentuated by the masterpiece of a bassline by Faizan Rashid Buno.

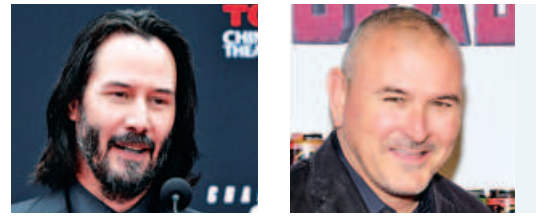
Haay Chil adapts a Jibananda Das poem. It deliberately slows the pace, drawing the listener into a meditative and dreamlike space, a clear echo of the longing and solitude that have always permeated Arnob’s best work. This particular song has been composed by The Seesaw Quartet, headed by tenor saxophonist Rahin Haider.

The latter half of the album further develops this reflective mood. *Tomar Mati* offers a feeling of deep belonging, grounded in earthy and resonant musical layers. *Shopnorigi* introduces a trance-like state and elevates not only the album, but the listener.

The album is concluded by *Okale Brishti*, which translates the chaos of sudden rain into a metaphor for unresolved, tempestuous inner feelings.

Bhallagena is a triumph of cohesion and variety; it feels like a collection of small, emotionally charged vignettes that form a much larger, cohesive emotional landscape. It is an album that demands to be absorbed whole, in a single sitting, where the silence between the songs often speaks with the same eloquence as the music itself.

The album is a thoughtful, mature comeback from Arnob—one that leverages his strengths wonderfully. For fans of the artist’s previous work, this is a welcome and satisfying escapade. For newcomers, this might be a great entry point into the more reflective side of Bangladeshi music.



Warner Bros nears deal for Keanu Reeves and Tim Miller sci-fi film ‘Shiver’

Warner Bros is reportedly in the final stages of negotiations to acquire *Shiver*, an upcoming sci-fi action film that will unite Keanu Reeves with *Deadpool* director Tim Miller.

It is penned by Ian Shorr, who previously penned *Infinite* starring Mark Wahlberg and Chiwetel Ejiofor, and *Office Uprising* for Sony Crackle. Aaron Ryder and Andrew Swett are producing the film under Ryder Picture Company, alongside Matthew Vaughn, best known for directing *Kingsman* and *Kick-Ass*.

Reeves, currently performing on Broadway alongside Alex Winter in *Waiting for Godot*, has had a packed year. He recently voiced Shadow in *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*, which grossed over \$492 million globally. He also stars in Aziz Ansari’s comedy *Good Fortune*, which is now in theatres.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘Batigharer Natok: Monkey Trial’

Batighar Theatre returns with the 26th staging of *Monkey Trial*, adapted from Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee’s classic play. Directed by Muktonil, the production revisits the historic 1925 *Scopes Monkey Trial*—a landmark case that questioned the teaching of evolution in schools and ignited global debates on science and faith.

Date: Monday | Nov 10, 2025

Time: 7:15pm

Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA



NEWS

Raozan gripped by fear amid BNP factional feud

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The other victims include Awami League activists Abdul Mannan, Muhammad Yusuf Miah, Abu Taher, and Muhammad Hasan.

Contacted, Akbar said, “I don’t practice the politics of arms, nor do I need it. A group that enjoyed a favourable position in politics during the Awami League period is now instigating party leaders and workers.”

He says he never instructed any of his activists to engage in gunfights or killings.

“However, what is happening now is embarrassing for everyone. I demanded a joint-force operation to

recover arms, but no such major drive has taken place,” Akbar added.

Also contacted, Giasuddin said, “There’s a big difference between Akbar’s politics and mine. He’s not even a voter of Raozan. Now, by taking shelter with the AL men and criminals, he is trying to show his strength there. More than three of my boys—all innocent—have been killed in their attacks. He’s doing whatever he wants.”

“If the local police had shown firmness, there would be no room for terrorists in Raozan,” he said, adding that the police are merely avoiding responsibility by dealing with the

situation through cases and counter-cases.

“I myself am now formally requesting the chief adviser to set up a Rab camp in South Raozan—there will be no space for extortion and terrorism there.”

Belayet Hossain, assistant superintendent of police (Raozan-Rangunia Circle), told The Daily Star that several raids were carried out to arrest the suspects involved in political violence.

“Efforts are ongoing to capture the armed criminals,” he said, adding that many flee into the surrounding hills after committing crimes.

peaceful, and festive,” Yunus said.

The army, navy, and air chiefs informed the chief adviser that the armed forces are fully prepared for election duties, according to the press statement.

A total of 90,000 army personnel, 2,500 members of the navy, and several from the air force will be

deployed to maintain law and order during the polls. One army company will be deployed in each upazila, the release read.

At the meeting, the chiefs of three services also invited the chief adviser to attend the Armed Forces Day celebrations on November 21.

Ensure blanket security

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The chief adviser instructed the chiefs of three services to ensure that the upcoming election is held under a blanket of security.

“The interim government is committed to ensuring that the election, to be held in the first half of February, is free, fair, neutral,

Arakan Army threat grows

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Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, commander of the BGB’s Ramu sector, told this newspaper, “The BGB member was injured while on duty along the zero line. There were not supposed to be any mines in that area, but the Arakan Army violated international law by placing them there.”

Asked about taking steps or communicating with Arakan Army, he said, “We have sent a protest note to the Myanmar authority and the Arakan Army. They have not responded yet.”

He added that they have already taken steps for mine-sweeping operations to avert any untoward incidents in future.

Meanwhile, the BGB Headquarters said Akhtar was buried at his village home in Bhola yesterday with full state and military honours.

“The BGB is deeply grieved by the loss of such a sincere, brave, and dedicated member. His supreme

sacrifice in protecting the sovereignty of the nation will be remembered forever,” it said in a statement.

BORDER TENSIONS

Local sources said clashes between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups such as Arsa, RSO, and ARA have become frequent along the border, stretching from Duchhari in Naikhongchhari to Whykong in Teknaf.

On October 25, a Bangladeshi woman, Chenoara Begum, was wounded by stray bullets from a gunfight across the border in the Whykong area.

Sirajul Mostafa, a local union member, said, “Many who own shrimp farms or catch crabs along the Naf river are afraid to go out.”

Regarding the issue, BGB official Col Mohiuddin said the clashes were taking place inside Myanmar. “We continuously urge locals to stay alert and have intensified patrols to ensure no armed groups cross into

Bangladesh.”

ABDUCTION

At least 116 Bangladeshi fishermen were abducted by the Arakan Army from the Bay since August, according to official data.

In the first nine months of this year, the Arakan Army abducted 235 fishermen—124 have since returned, but 111 remain captive, including 62 Rohingyas.

Sajid Ahmed, president of the Teknaf Kawkhali Fishing Trawler Owners’ Association, said fishermen are now too scared to go to the sea.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sheikh Ehsan Uddin, Teknaf upazila nirbahi officer, said based on received complaints, 106 fishermen still remained captive.

“Several Rohingyas are also among them. As there is no formal channel of communication with the Arakan Army, efforts are being made informally to bring them back.”

8,850 youths to be trained in martial arts

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The mention of “firearms” in Asif’s post sparked debate and confusion.

The following day, he made another post stating that “8,250 young men and 600 young women aged 18 to 35 will receive training.” He also changed “firearm shooting” to simply “shooting.”

However, he shared four photo cards with his post—one of which continued to mention “firearms”.

When The Daily Star contacted Asif for comments, he did not respond.

Speaking to BBC Bangla recently, the adviser explained, “The idea is to implement mass defence in Bangladesh. Given our military and geographical realities, this is essential. It doesn’t mean we will always have to go to war, but it’s important to maintain morale and increase the number of reserve forces.”

“Considering Bangladesh’s geographic and military position,

mass defence is our only option. If someone has basic training and at least knows how to operate a weapon, they can serve the country if given arms.”

Regarding the firearms training, Asif said that while live bullet firing had been intended, it was not feasible due to lack of approval and limitations in budget and infrastructure.

He noted the potential to expand the training in future, depending on national security needs.

“If live round firing can be taught, I think it will be an important addition to mass defence and national security. Training 20,000 youths each year would be a major achievement. In 10 years, the trained force would reach 200,000, which is huge and would significantly bolster our reserve forces.”

According to the BKSP admission notice, the 15-day residential training will be conducted in 114 batches at BKSP centres in Dhaka, Cox’s Bazar,

Chattogram, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, and Dinajpur.

Eligible candidates must be Bangladeshi citizens aged 18 to 35, physically and mentally fit, and have passed at least the Secondary School Certificate examination.

Participants will receive free accommodation, meals, a tracksuit, T-shirt, and shoes during the course. Upon successful completion, they will be awarded a certificate and a daily allowance of Tk 300, amounting to Tk 4,200 for the entire training period.

According to BKSP, only female participants will be trained at the Dhaka centre, while male participants will undergo training at the other six regional centres.

Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis via the online portal bksps.gov.bd, where aspirants must fill out the prescribed form and upload necessary documents.

Nat’l unity a must to save the country

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for future politics and strengthen our democracy.”

Yunus added that people expect reforms that will foster a democratic culture in Bangladesh, prevent any future dictatorship, ensure overall national development, and protect the civil rights and dignity of every citizen.

“The most encouraging aspect is that these reforms have been agreed upon by us, not imposed from outside. In the past, foreign mediators, including representatives of the UN and friendly countries, have often intervened in Bangladesh’s political dialogue. But after the July mass uprising, the political parties decided to solve our own crisis internally. All parties have come together, engaged in political debate, and paved the way for a solution. Instead of relying on the world, we have presented our national unity as an example to the world,” he said.

On behalf of the nation, he thanked all political leaders who worked tirelessly to make the charter possible, calling it a historic achievement.

achievement.

The July charter is a unique global example, he said. “Nothing like this has happened anywhere else in the world. It will be a shining moment in political history. Other nations may consider forming a ‘Consensus Commission’ during times of crisis as a model for nation-building.”

He also acknowledged the contributions of the Vice-Chairman of the National Consensus Commission, Ali Riaz, members Badiul Alam Majumdar, Iftekharuzzaman, Safar Raj Hossain, Justice Emdadul Haque, Mohammad Ayub Mia, Special Assistant Monir Haider, and media representatives who covered the commission’s work for months.

“We must preserve the unprecedented unity we have achieved in state reforms. Fascist forces have devoted all their strength to divide the nation. For the past 15 months, we have unitedly confronted their various conspiracies. To defeat fascism and safeguard this country, there is no other option but to maintain national unity,” he added.

Tanzania president

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Tanzania’s main opposition party CHADEMA—which was barred from the election for refusing to sign a code of conduct and had its leader arrested for treason in April—said on Friday that hundreds of people had been killed in the protests.

The UN human rights office said credible reports indicated that at least 10 people were killed in three cities.

The government dismissed the opposition’s death toll as “hugely exaggerated” and has rejected criticism of its human rights record. Reuters could not independently verify casualty figures.

The authorities have imposed a nationwide curfew since Wednesday and restricted access to the internet. Many international flights have been cancelled, and operations at Dar es Salaam’s port, a hub for fuel imports and exports of metals mined across the region, have been disrupted.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a statement issued on Friday by his spokesperson, called “for a thorough and impartial investigation into all allegations of excessive use of force” and deplored the loss of life.