

RITWIK GHATAK AT 100

Rajshahi home lies in ruins

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PHOTOS: SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI

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Once a proud ancestral residence, the Rajshahi home of legendary filmmaker Ritwik Kumar Ghatak now stands in ruins—its walls weathered, rooms overrun by wild growth, and memories fading into dust. Today marks the 100th birth anniversary of this iconic filmmaker.

The remnants of the house in the Ghoramara area of Miyapara sit like a chronicle of neglect: mounds of red bricks under the open sky, a moss-covered broken boundary wall, and fragments of the structure strewn across the ground. Faded murals on cracked walls, including one commemorating Ghatak's birth anniversary, offer a final glimpse of a place that once nurtured a cinematic mind.

The dilapidated structure was demolished last year. What remains are piles of brick and a few fragments of its former form—markers of the childhood home of one of Bengal's most brilliant filmmakers.

Born in 1925, Ghatak spent



his early years here, studying at Rajshahi Collegiate School and Rajshahi College before his family migrated to India after Partition. The home was later listed as vested property under the district administration, as the family had left the country in 1947.

In 1985, Rajshahi Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital authorities purchased the leased land. The building, however, remained intact for decades.

"We did not want the house to be demolished," said Dr Anisur Rahman, principal of the college. "We used it as an outdoor facility for the hospital. Some of our former students planned to demolish it, but we had forbidden them. Unfortunately, one evening they went ahead and brought it down. Still, the annual programme marking Ritwik Ghatak's birth anniversary will continue there, as it does every year."

Ritwik Ghatak Film Society President Ahsan Kabir Liton said the filmmaker spent one of the most important periods of his life in Rajshahi, and the city's environment deeply influenced his later work. "The Padma River, the Varendra Museum, and even the nearby public library—all these shaped his sensibility," he said. "When we formed our film society in 2008, most people didn't even know Ghatak had lived here. We

began organising festivals and tributes from his ancestral home and renamed the group Ritwik Ghatak Film Society in 2009."

He added that the house once had a drawing room, bedrooms, a courtyard, and an old well, with a homoeopathic college established on the vacant land during the Ershad regime. "We demanded preservation and even received an official estimate of Tk 52 lakh from the administration for its restoration. But the initiative never materialised," he said.

"Ritwik's early exposure to Rajshahi's culture and landscape left a profound imprint on his filmmaking," Liton said. "When he made 'Ajantrik', a story about a car, it was a radical departure from the mythological themes dominating Indian cinema at the time. His thought process was far ahead of his era."

The society continues to commemorate Ghatak's birth anniversary on November 4 each year. "This year, however, there is no house left to hold the event," Liton continued. "Still, we hope the site can someday be turned into a museum or film institute in his memory."

Mahmud Hossain, general secretary of the Ritwik Ghatak Film Society, echoed the demand. "We have long urged that something be established there in Ghatak's name. With the help of the then deputy commissioner, we found records showing the land was originally under the name of Indubala Devi, Ghatak's mother. The college authorities cannot simply claim ownership—it was leased to them during the Ershad government," he said.

Professor Mozammel Hossain Bokul, moderator of the Rajshahi University Film Society and chairman of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, said that after the demolition, legal steps became difficult. "They took the leased land and prepared documents to declare it as college property," he said.

When contacted, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) Tukluk Talukdar, who chairs the governing body of the college, said, "When the building was demolished, I was not in charge. So, I am not fully aware of the circumstances. The principal can better explain the ownership and demolition issues."

Despite the loss, those who cherish Ghatak's legacy remain determined to keep his memory alive in Rajshahi. To them, the decaying remains of his ancestral home are fragments of history that once nurtured a filmmaker who reshaped Indian and Bangla cinema.



'SNL' spoofs NYC mayoral debate with Miles Teller and Ramy Youssef

The latest episode of *Saturday Night Live* opened with a sharp parody of the New York City mayoral debate, featuring an ensemble of spot-on impersonations. Miles Teller portrayed former Governor Andrew Cuomo, poking fun at his past controversies, while Ramy Youssef played Assembly member Zohran Mamdani, satirising liberal guilt and gentrification.

Shane Gillis appeared as Curtis Sliwa, and Kenan Thompson took the moderator's seat in the hilariously chaotic exchange. The sketch captured the absurdity of political showmanship, from Sliwa's bizarre anecdotes to Mamdani's flirtatious charm. It wrapped up with James Austin Johnson's Donald Trump crashing the stage, announcing he might enter the mayoral race himself.

Adnan Al Rajeev's 'Ali' wins another international accolade



Bangladeshi filmmaker Adnan Al Rajeev's short film *Ali* has won the Youth Jury Award at the 70th Valladolid International Film Festival (Seminci) in Spain, one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious cinematic platforms.

The film, which continues to earn international acclaim, has already received a Special

Mention at the 78th Cannes Film Festival and another at the Kyiv International Short Film Festival.

It was also nominated for Best Short Form (Scripted) at the Asian Academy Creative Awards 2025. The latest recognition at Valladolid further cements Adnan Al Rajeev's reputation as one of Bangladesh's most promising contemporary filmmakers.

NEWS

Design, building

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audit will guide replacement of any defective components.

Both the incidents — the latest and the one last year — occurred under Contract Package CP-05.

"The defect liability period for this contractor was supposed to end on June 29, but we have not accepted it because a number of outstanding works, deficiencies and defects still exist. Until these are repaired, we will not accept the defect notification period."

The financial implications like performance bond, performance security and the final bill could not be released as the work had not been fully completed.

"The project remains under the defect notification period, and the contractor has to address all remaining defects."

Following last year's incident in September, DMTCL conducted a full-corridor drone survey in October and recorded visuals of each pier.

The company then carried out physical inspections of every pillar, with the report completed two months ago.

"We found deformation in some locations. Notifications were issued immediately and rectification and mitigation measures taken. We installed barricades beside the columns to prevent further movement," he said, adding that the contractor had been instructed to replace certain bearings.

Teams had revisited all piers after the latest incident.

"Where minor displacements within tolerance were observed, we placed barricades and tightened mechanical fixtures as immediate measures. But the ultimate solution is replacement. Wherever defects have been notified, we are seeking bearing replacement."

He also announced a new monitoring initiative using CCTV cameras on metro rail bearings to track their functionality in real time, calling it "a new concept".

However, he clarified that this would only be a temporary measure.

"It might offer some relief or quick response, but it can't be the ultimate solution. If we start putting CCTV everywhere, the whole country would fall under surveillance. What we need is a permanent solution," he said.

On October 26, a pedestrian died when a bearing pad from pillar 433 of a metro rail station fell on him in Dhaka's Farmgate area. Two other people were also injured.

Animal welfare demands

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on private organisations, while feeding unsterilised dogs has since driven the population from 38,000 to 73,000."

Rubaiya added that while vaccination drives have halved rabies deaths since 2014, culling continues. "There's still time... But humane management cannot be sustained without regulation, funding, and political will."

Legal expert Dr Cynthia Farid said animal welfare faces an enforcement crisis rather than a legislative one. "There are many shortages in Bangladesh, but the shortage of laws is not one of them — the real challenge lies in enforcement."

She said welfare is an intersectional issue tied to governance and science. "Whether it's controlling dog populations or managing city pollution, we must rely on data and expert guidance — not emotion."

Farid pointed out that while the Animal Welfare Act-2019 exists, the rules are yet to be framed, leaving gaps in jurisdiction and enforcement. "Even well-intentioned efforts fail without legal clarity. Coordination and education must be our priorities."

Lawyer Saqueb Mahub cited the 2021 case against Dhaka South City Corporation's removal of stray dogs as evidence of institutional resistance. "Section 7 of the act clearly bans relocating or culling ownerless animals, yet political pressure stalled enforcement."

"Public interest litigations have helped in certain cases, but without administrative will, legal victories alone cannot ensure lasting reform," he said, adding that section 18 of the act limits citizens' ability to file abuse cases, calling for revision of the provision.

Dr Nusrat Jahan, senior associate veterinarian at Bangladesh Animal Care Centre, said veterinary care remains costly due to dependence on imported medicines and instruments. "If local production or easier imports were possible, treatment costs would fall," she said, urging policy reforms to ensure 24/7 government and university-run veterinary services. She also warned against unethical breeding and untrained rescuers, stressing the need for regulation and accreditation.

Actor and activist Jaya Ahsan called for clear policies and ethical guidelines for using animals in Bangladesh's film and television industries. "Many think feeding

animals or keeping them under a shade is enough — but that's far from true. They don't understand the animal's needs because there are no guidelines or expertise."

She added that keeping foreign breeds as status symbols reflects "social vanity and a lack of empathy toward local animals." "Without laws, enforcement, and education, real change will remain out of reach."

Journalist and lawyer Zafar Sobhan said the media plays a crucial role in shaping humane, fact-based narratives on animal welfare. "How stories are told makes all the difference — media can foster empathy or erode it."

Recalling his interview with Rubaiya Ahmad five years ago, he said sensationalism still dominates coverage. "Responsible media must educate and fact-check," he said, urging editors to create dedicated animal welfare beats. "Animal rights reflect our humanity — and readers care deeply about compassion and justice."

The roundtable concluded with a unanimous call for stronger coordination among the DLS, city corporations, and civil society groups. Participants stressed that animal welfare should no longer be treated as a fringe concern but as part of urban governance, public health, and national development.

The discussion was hosted and moderated by Naziba Basher, senior sub-editor at The Daily Star.

No more RPO edits

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From there, they have announced to organise mass rallies on November 6 to submit a memorandum with their demands to the Chief Adviser.

"The amended RPO must be retained as it is — we do not accept any exclusion, addition, or modification," said Khilafat Majlish Ameer Maulana Mamunul Haque at yesterday's briefing.

Besides, they will prioritise three demands: the immediate issuance of the order to implement the July Charter, holding the referendum before the national election and retaining the amended RPO in full. "These are now our core demands. We hope that through dialogue, all political parties can reach a solution, and the next election will be held based on the legal foundation of the July Charter."

He also warned that if the demands are not met, the alliance will hold a protest rally in Dhaka on November 11.

Mamdani leads as NYC votes today

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as an independent after losing his party's primary contest to Mamdani.

The Republican party candidate polling in third place is Curtis Sliwa, 71, a loud anti-Trump voice in America's biggest city is going to get news," Lincoln Mitchell, a politics professor at Columbia University, told AFP.

"Frankly, a Muslim candidate for mayor of New York is an enormous story," Mamdani, 34, has attacked his opponents for Islamophobic rhetoric and smears, calling out both Republicans and Democrats for "anti-Muslim sentiment that has grown so

threatened to withhold federal funds from the city."

endemic in our city".

NYC Board of Elections data showed 275,006 registered Democrats had cast ballots, as had 46,115 Republicans, along with 42,383 voters unaffiliated with any party in the first five days of early voting, which ends November 2.

Mamdani's ascent has highlighted the gulf between the left and centre-right of the Democratic Party.

New York's state governor Kathy Hochul, a centrist, appeared at a Mamdani rally on October 26 but was drowned out by "tax the rich" chants, an AFP correspondent saw.

questions over reforms, many of which aim to undo changes that undermined public interest in favour of those in power. Yet that, too, is a testament to the strength of the document. Through vibrant discussion and impassioned debate, the constitution should, as always, continue to evolve, adapt, and embody the aspirations of the people.

ICT-1 expresses

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The tribunal intervened immediately, asking, "What benefit do you expect from this question? The fact remains that her husband was killed. The witness did not even name your clients."

When Amir responded that such questions might help his clients, the tribunal then said, "You talk too much. You make remarks that embarrass the court. Earlier, you dragged a simple point into a long discussion. What will you gain from such questions?"

In her testimony, Niha also alleged that police tried to take away her husband's body after locals brought it home. "We hid the body. Protesters gathered around our house and suddenly teargas shells were fired from a helicopter targeting our building," she said, adding that her mother narrowly escaped injury when a shell exploded on their rooftop.

Another witness, Md Yakub of Rampura also testified as the fourth prosecution witness in the case. He described how the area turned into a "war zone" on July 19.