

# Music should be accessible for everyone, especially children: PRINCE MAHMUD

**"I have been working on several new songs about the martyrs of the Liberation War – ones who lost their lives in the armed struggle, genocide, and various clashes against East Pakistan during 1971."**

**SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ**  
An ongoing cultural backlash is at the forefront of the entertainment industry, as many artistes have called upon the government to reconsider its decision to abolish the posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools. At the forefront of this movement was Chhayanaut, which staged a demonstration at 4:30 pm yesterday to protest the decision.

Legendary music director Prince Mahmud, however, has been outspoken about the need for music in primary schools. "I would argue that government primary schools are where we need music teachers the most," said the audibly determined musician over the

phone. "Elites can afford to send their children to music schools, but most middle-class parents can't. Music should be accessible for everyone, especially children." According to the award-winning musician, it is very much possible to reach a middle ground on the issue. "I think that the government should think about making the music and PE classes optional – so in that way, students or parents who object to it don't have to attend."

Prince Mahmud, who is known for his soul-jerking patriotic songs, had recently announced that he is making a song for Abrar Fahad and the martyrs of July. "I have forgone many commercial projects in order to focus on this project. I only begin a project



Once I am certain of my own preparation. Currently, I am working on seven individuals, including Abu Sayeed, Mir

Mugdho, Wasim Akram, and Shaikh Yamin. I have done this for myself, not to make headlines. I have done it out of an inner drive."

On top of that, the *Bangladesh, Ma*, and *Baba*-famed music director is also working on songs revolving around Bangladesh's liberation war. "I have been working on several new songs about the martyrs of the Liberation War – ones who lost their lives in the armed struggle, genocide, and various clashes against East Pakistan during 1971. I had made 5 songs about the martyred intellectuals who were victims of the genocide on the night of March 25, 1971, back in 2004/5. I am redoing those with a completely new sound."



## Orlando Bloom visits Bangladesh as UNICEF goodwill ambassador

Hollywood star Orlando Bloom arrived in Bangladesh after eight years for a four-day visit as part of his duties as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador, the organisation confirmed in a press release.

Bloom, known worldwide for his roles in *The Lord of the Rings*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *Kingdom of Heaven* visited Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, on Wednesday. During his visit, he met with Rohingya children, youth, and teachers, learning about their educational programs and challenges.

Bloom, who has served as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador since 2009, has been actively involved in promoting the rights and welfare of underprivileged children around the world.

## Chhayanaut holds demonstration to protest government decision



Chhayanaut has called upon the government to reconsider its decision to abolish the posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools.

As per their announcement by the General Secretary of Chhayanaut, Laisa Ahmed Lisa, artistes, students, and well-wishers gathered in front of the Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban at 4:30 pm yesterday, where they

performed songs, urging the authorities to review the decision. In attendance were Laisa Ahmed Lisa, alongside Nazrul Sangeet exponent Khairul Anam Shakil, and Kalpana Anam. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education recently cancelled the newly created posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools following criticism from religion-based organisations. Alongside

the cancellation, several "wording changes" have been made to the Government Primary School Teacher Recruitment Rules 2025. However, the decision has sparked protests from various organisations demanding its withdrawal. Chhayanaut has joined these voices, emphasising its statement that "there is no alternative to music education and physical exercise for building a liberal and tolerant society."

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

### ALI AZMAT x JAMES - Legends Live in Dhaka



Two legendary rock icons, Ali Azmat, widely known as "voice of Junoon" and Nagarbaul James, are set to perform together for the first time in Dhaka. The concert, titled *Legends Live in Dhaka*, organised by ASSEN Communications, will bring together audiences from across the region. Music lovers will get to experience an unforgettable night filled with classic hits, energetic performances, and the magic of two of South Asia's biggest rock stars on one stage.

**Date:** Friday | November 14, 2025  
**Time:** 5 pm – 11 pm  
**Venue:** United Convention Centre

## NEWS

### July victims faced 20 barriers to care, last rites

**FROM PAGE 12**  
inadequate or delayed care; mismanaged referrals; overwhelmed facilities; shortages of workforce or resources; documentation errors; ethical breaches in healthcare; financial barriers or informal payments; and premature or coerced discharge.

Obstructions during the last rites of deceased victims included non-identification of several bodies, police interference during inquests, harassment during body handovers, lack of private mortuary services, overcrowded public morgues, delays in autopsies, and difficulties in obtaining death certificates.

Ehsanur Rahman said, "There were three primary reasons behind such obstacles: gaps in emergency preparedness, coordination and leadership, and legal and infrastructural support."

The four root causes, Shamim Hayder said, were the deprioritisation and over-politicisation of the health sector; absence of institutional ethics promotion and culture; and lack of acknowledgement of political conflict as a special health need.

The study made five recommendations: strengthening the enforcement of medical neutrality and ethical accountability; depoliticising the health sector; improving emergency response; modernising outdated medico-legal laws; and ensuring transparency in data.

Prof Muzaherul Huq, a member of the Health Sector Reform Commission, said emergency medical care has not developed adequately in the country, noting that hospital emergency departments lack essential equipment and workforce,

leading to the poor response during the July uprising.

Regarding allegations that some doctors refused to treat the injured during the uprising, he said, "A doctor's primary and ethical duty is to treat patients under all circumstances," adding that ethics and ethical behaviour are not properly taught in the country's medical schools.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said the crisis exposed by the research lies in political and economic issues.

"While the country's health sector faces many problems, the weakness of emergency medical care was particularly exposed during the July uprising."

"An emergency medicine course – the first of its kind in the country – is set to be launched at Bangladesh Medical University next year, but it will take five to seven years to develop experts in the field."

He added, "Additionally, there is a plan to procure 500 ambulances and appoint paramedics for ambulance services, which will take between one and two and a half years to implement."

"All these will be available one day, but the situation will not improve unless the political and financial issues involved are addressed."

Prothom Alo Special Correspondent Shishir Moral, who was also involved in the research; Zahirul Islam, a representative of Swedish SIDA; Khairul Islam, regional director (South Asia region) of WaterAid; and several injured victims of the July uprising also spoke at the programme.

### Tarique

**FROM PAGE 12**  
responsibility to ensure his security, Akbar said.

Asked whether the BNP has held any meeting with the government over Tarique's security issues, he said: "Once we know the exact date of his arrival, we will make a formal request to the government."

The party has initiated the process of purchasing two bulletproof SUVs for Tarique, The Daily Star has learnt from people with direct knowledge of the matter.

Tarique will stay at the two-story house next to his mother Khaleda Zia's current home "Feroza". The house, which is built on 32 kathas of land, is now being prepared for Tarique, they said.

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, was allotted the plot after the assassination of her husband, President Ziaur Rahman, on May 31, 1981.

She retained control of the property for years, and after the interim government assumed office, it was officially registered in her name on June 5, when an adviser handed over the documents.

### Will not accept

**FROM PAGE 12**  
or Canada. But after the elections, they fail to keep those promises. In the past 54 years, the people of this country have been deceived many times. This time, say no to these deceivers."

The Jamaat leaders said voters must not be misled by flowery rhetoric but should instead realise the reality before them.

"For too long, we have been quarrelling over the past. As a result, we have lagged behind in global competition. While other nations have moved forward, we remain backward. But now it is time for a change. To transform the fate of the nation, we must move forward with positive plans and ensure their implementation."

Shafiqur called upon the youth of the country to remain uncompromising in the field to ensure the victory of the scale symbol in the upcoming election to build an ideal and value-based society founded on justice and fairness.



Participants at a discussion on anti-discriminatory law organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, at the Bangladesh-China Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## Democracy cannot survive discrimination

**FROM PAGE 12**

discrimination is a must alongside creating institutional obstacles to prevent the decay of democracy," Osmani added.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, said the core spirit of the July uprising was anti-discrimination and what emerged out of it are the guarantee of justice, elections and reforms.

In order to get justice, citizens must be protected from discrimination. When citizens are empowered, they can express their opinions and actively take part in political and governance process.

"Effective reform is in no way possible without ensuring the rights of the citizens," said Debapriya, also a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

If discrimination continues and

deepens, it will not only hinder justice or reform, but will also eventually endanger democracy and development.

Subsequently, he called on the interim government to issue an ordinance of the anti-discrimination law.

The political parties should include it in the manifesto so that the law is passed by the next parliament, he added.

The civil society groups for long have experienced that there were various forms of discrimination in society in the names of caste, creed, ethnicity and gender and initiated drafting an anti-discrimination law in 2013, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Finally, the cabinet had approved a draft law that went to the standing committee in 2022. The draft was

not passed for unknown reasons despite promises by the then law minister.

The promise of the Liberation War and the July uprising was to build a humane, non-discriminatory society free from inequality.

"But that has not been possible yet," she said.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman said as per the constitution, all citizens are equal, but the country repeatedly sows divisions based on religion.

In recent times, another division has entered the scene: political discrimination.

"The entire social system has been driven into such a vicious cycle of criminalisation of politics," he said, while calling for coming out of such social, religious, and political divisions and discriminations.

Two notifications, signed by Mohammad Shahidur Rahman, assistant secretary of the EC's Personnel Management Branch, were issued yesterday.

They stated that 21 election officials and two upazila election officers have been transferred to different upazilas

until further notice. The changes take effect immediately in the public interest.

Among those transferred, one notification posted Muhammad Harun Molla, upazila election officer of Akhaura, Brahmanbaria, to the Narayanganj District Election Office.

Mehedi Hasan, upazila election officer of Jashore's Bagharpara, has been moved to the Daulatpur Thana Election Office in Khulna.

could be sold in Bangladesh for less than Tk 50 per kilogramme.

Currently, importers are required to pay a total of 10 percent import duty on onions. Since prices in neighbouring countries remain relatively low, the BTTC said there is no need to reduce the existing duty.

It added that swift imports would help stabilise local supply and prices.

According to a BTTC report, the

## Commission urges govt to authorise onion imports

**FROM PAGE 12**

artificial shortage.

"We have recommended granting prompt approval for limited onion imports."

At present, onion prices are lower in India than in the local market. Importing onions from neighbouring countries could help ease domestic prices.

Even after duties, imported onions

average price of onions in March 2025 was Tk 42 per kilogram, which soared by about 150 percent to Tk 105 in November.

The report said that onion prices have historically jumped by over 100 percent between March-April and November over the past three years, indicating the need for a long-term solution to this recurring problem.

### Govt reshuffles DCs

**FROM PAGE 12**  
13th national parliamentary election, reports BSS.

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