

These are trying times, you need to let us work: Shihab Shaheen

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

With the web film 'Tomar Jonno Mon', director Shihab Shaheen has crafted yet another bittersweet and relatable love story—this time featuring the acclaimed pair of Yash Rohan and Tanjim Sayara Totini. The director, known for his mastery in subverting audience expectations, speaks to *The Daily Star* about the project, his upcoming work, and more.

How did you come up with the concept of 'Tomar Jonno Mon'?

I had this image in mind of two people sitting morosely beside a coffin on a pickup truck. It stayed with me for a long time, and I had been waiting for the right opportunity to bring it to the screen.

Was the pairing of Yash and Totini your

first choice to lead the web film?

I don't develop a concept with any specific actors in mind—I focus solely on the story. That being said, I truly applaud Yash and Totini for bringing the characters of Piul and Raonak Hazari to life. It was a challenging task, especially considering the semi-rural setting and dialect.

Rising actor Arefin Zilani, in my opinion, was a standout in the film. How did you come up with his character?

(Laughs) I have to give partial credit to Chorki for that discovery. Zilani is extremely hard-working and made that comic relief character memorable through his own talent. I wanted to shed light on hypocritical people—those who think highly of themselves but, in reality, never extend a helping hand to others.

Which of your projects are

next in line for release?

Myself Allen Swapna 3 and *Golam Mamun 2* will be released very soon!

I'll give you the floor to say anything you'd like.

I just want to tell the audience that these are truly trying times. It has become increasingly difficult to enjoy—or even produce—any form of entertainment or art.

So, I ask everyone to have faith in us and allow us to continue our work.



PHOTO: COURTESY

ADELE to make acting debut in new Tom Ford film

Adele is set to transition from music to acting with her debut role in Tom Ford's upcoming film.

The Grammy-winning singer will join an impressive cast that includes Nicholas Hoult, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Colin Firth, Paul Bettany, and *Adolescence* breakout star Owen Cooper in *Cry to Heaven*.

The film is based on Anne Rice's 1982 novel, which unfolds in the 18th-century world of the castrati—male singers who were castrated to maintain their high-pitched voices.

Tom Ford will serve as the director, producer, and screenwriter for the project. However, the specific roles of Adele and her co-stars remain under wraps.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?



Legends Live in Dhaka'

For the first time, two South Asian rock icons—Pakistan's Ali Azmat and Bangladesh's James—share the stage in a historic cross-border concert. *Legends Live in Dhaka* celebrates the spirit of rock, unity, and musical rebellion that shaped generations across borders.

Date: Friday | November 14, 2025

Time: 7pm onwards

Venue: United Convention Centre, Dhaka Tongi Highway



Shakib Khan to star as 'rockstar' in new romantic film

Acclaimed actor Shakib Khan has signed a new film with Sun Music and Motion Pictures, slated for release during Eid-ul-Azha 2026. While currently busy shooting his action project *Soldier*, the Dhallywood superstar has officially signed this second big-budget film.

The project will mark the feature debut of Azman Rusho, a prominent advertising director known for his acclaimed commercial work. While the film's title and female lead remain undisclosed, producers confirmed it will feature several new faces.

Shakib will begin shooting this new production after completing *Prince*. The story has already been finalised, marking a significant addition to Shakib Khan's upcoming slate of films and building anticipation among audiences ahead of the festive release.

NEWS

Judge's son 'strangled to death' 9 assaulted, handed over to police

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sharp weapon.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police's Deputy Commissioner (CTTC) Gaziur Rahman said that a sharp weapon had been recovered. "It's not an ordinary kitchen knife. He must have brought it with him beforehand," he added.

He said according to the initial inquest report, it is suspected that the judge's son was likely strangled to death, as marks were found on his neck. There were also two injuries below his knees, but those are not believed to be the cause of death.

He further said that the assailant entered the flat and was talking with the judge's wife. At one point, an argument broke out, and the attacker pulled out a knife.

Seeing this, the judge's wife ran into a room and locked herself in. As the assailant tried to break the door, the judge's son, who was sleeping in a nearby room, came out and confronted the suspect. During a scuffle, the attacker allegedly strangled the son.

The house help managed to run out and alert the neighbours, said Gaziur.

He added that during a recent visit to her son-in-law's home in Sylhet, the victim's mother, Tasnim, met a young man named Limon.

Disturbed by his behaviour, she filed a General Diary (GD) with Jalalabad

Referendum

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Taher said, "The chief adviser gave two flimsy reasons—that holding the election and referendum together would save some money. Yes, it may save a little, but state budgets are meant for national needs. The expenditure in this case is negligible compared to the benefits to the nation."

He added that the eight parties will explain today why the chief adviser must withdraw his announcement to hold the two events on the same day.

Taher further said, "We had hoped the chief adviser's address would help resolve the political stalemate surrounding the election and other demands, bringing relief to the nation. But after analysing the speech, it cannot be said that the nation's expectation for relief and clarity has been fulfilled."

He also announced that as part

of the eight-party simultaneous movement, protest rallies will continue across the country today to press home their five-point demands.

When asked about Dhaka's specific programme for the day, Taher said the details would be announced at today's press conference.

Meanwhile, in an instant reaction to CA's address, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said the decision to hold the national election and the referendum on the same day could trigger a new political crisis.

By announcing the national election and the referendum on the same day, the government has ignored the people's demand. We want to make it very clear that this announcement has not fulfilled the aspirations of the people," Porwar also told reporters at a press conference at the party's central office in Dhaka's Moghbazar.

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holding a fair and credible election would not be possible without their cooperation.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin, in his opening remarks, said all 54 registered political parties are equal in the eyes of the commission, regardless of their size or influence.

"We want to act as a neutral referee. Without your cooperation, it will be difficult to play that role or to ensure a fair election. If the main players do not cooperate, the election will become questionable."

Addressing the timing of the dialogue, the CEC said political leaders had long been engaged in discussions with the National Consensus Commission on electoral reform. "If we had held simultaneous talks with the parties, it would not have been practical. That's why we waited."



Protesters beat up a rickshaw-puller and hand him over to police, accusing him of being an Awami League supporter. The photo was taken yesterday in front of the AL party office in Gulistan.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

leader of NCP.

This newspaper tried to contact her over the phone for comment several times, but she did not receive calls.

Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of DMP's Ramna Division, identified the woman, who was beaten at Dhanmondi 32, as Salma Akhter. He said she often visits places linked to the AL on different occasions to create chaos.

Yesterday, she was beaten after

reportedly chanting the "Joy Bangla" slogan.

An officer from Dhanmondi Police Station, who wished to remain anonymous, told this correspondent that no action was taken against those who carried out the assaults on the suspected AL operatives.

"It was like a mob. The current situation is not favourable to taking action against them," he said.

When asked why the police did

not take action against those who checked people's phones and beat up the suspected AL activists, DMP spokesperson Talebur Rahman said they were unaware of any such incident.

Meanwhile, in front of the Awami League's central office in Gulistan, several groups, including July Joddha, Inquilab Moncho, and Islami Chhatra Shibir, gathered from morning, chanting slogans and attempting to remove terracotta designs from the building's facade. A banner of Dhaka South Islami Chhatra Shibir was seen hanging in front.

Around 1:00pm, a group of agitators entered the office building and set fire to the fourth floor after piling up wood, cartons, and other materials, police said. Witnesses added that protesters questioned several people in the area and handed at least two of them over to police.

Around 1:30pm, the group identifying themselves as "July Joddha" beat up a rickshaw-puller named Mohammad Babu on suspicion of being an AL supporter.

He was dragged into a nearby market and beaten unconscious, witnesses said, adding that even as police tried to take him into a vehicle, the attackers struck him again.

Moniruzzaman, an inspector (investigation) of Paltan Police Station, said four people were taken to the police station from the Gulistan area, including the two detainees handed over by protesters.

Decision on referendum after formal instructions: CEC

The Election Commission will decide on the referendum only after receiving formal instructions from the government, the CEC told reporters near the end of the dialogue.

Regarding the chief adviser's address, mentioning that the national election and the referendum on the July charter would be held on the same day, the CEC said he had not heard the speech and therefore could not comment.

"I was present at a dialogue, and I did not know what exactly was said or in what context. Since I did not hear it, it would not be appropriate to comment without knowing the details."

"Once we are formally informed, we can review, discuss, and provide our opinion in consultation with all involved."

Some parties slam EC over RPO changes

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The CEC also urged parties to strictly follow the code of conduct. "If anyone stubbornly refuses to comply, it will create confrontation. We don't want conflict with anyone."

Referring to the large number of posters now covering Dhaka city, the CEC said, "We have already banned posters. These must be removed. Once the schedule is announced, we will take strong action."

Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarkar said restoring public trust is the commission's biggest challenge, echoing the CEC's remark that it cannot ensure a fair election without cooperation from political leaders.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Kazi Sazzad Zahir Chandan said the candidate deposit should be reduced to Tk 10,000 so elections are not limited to the wealthy.

Biplabi Workers' Party General

Secretary Saiful Haque said the EC should have consulted parties before proposing amendments to the RPO and urged it to remain firm on delivering an election free from any kind of influence.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidium member Lt Gen (retd) Chowdhury Hasan Sarwardy said voter safety remains a concern across the country and urged the authorities to ensure security before announcing the election schedule.

In the morning session, the EC talked with LDP, Bangladesh Congress, Bangladesh Muslim League, National People's Party, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, and Jamiatul Ulama Islam.

The afternoon session included the CPB, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Biplabi Workers' Party, Bangladesh Nationalist Front, and Bangladesh Nationalist Movement.