

‘ALOKER EI JHORNA-DHARAY’ pays luminous tribute to Rabindranath Tagore



Bishwakabi Rabindranath Tagore is not a relic of nostalgia; he is the living pulse of Bengal. Generations have come to perceive the region’s beauty, contradictions, and heritage through his poetry, songs, and stories.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

DOWEL BISWAS

Tagore’s works are vessels of memory, imagination, and ethical reflection—anchoring identity and culture while inspiring continual renewal. To celebrate him is to engage directly with these roots, whether through quiet introspection or vibrant, shared performance.

The engagement unfolded with both reverence and vitality on Monday, December 1, at *Aloker Ei Jhorna-Dharay (The Eternal Illumination)*, a collaborative tribute by the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka and HSBC Bangladesh. Held in the grand ballroom of the Sheraton Dhaka, the evening

framed Tagore not merely as “Bishwakabi” but as a philosopher of everyday life, whose works interrogate love, loss, identity, and the sacred in ordinary moments. Curated by cultural personality and theatre director Tropa Majumder, the programme eschewed the didactic, letting music, poetry, and movement speak where words alone would fall short.

Acclaimed Rabindra Sangeet exponent Adity Mohsin commanded the stage with effortless scholarship and emotive

depth. From the ethereal strains of “Anandadhara bohiche bhubone” to the nuanced cadences of “Tumi ektu kebol boshite dio”, every note became a living encounter. Dahlia Ahmed’s rich, resonant recitations followed, pairing clarity with spiritual weight and grace, reflecting both courage and devotion embedded in Tagore’s vision.

The tribute crescendoed with Warda Rihab and her troupe performing “Akaash bhora surjo tara”, “Aloker ei jhorna dharay”, and other luminous numbers. Their movements and musicality a d d e d

our history and the legacy of the Poet of the World, whose vision shaped the very soul of Bengal. This evening, through the artistry of Adity Mohsin and the powerful recitations of Dahlia Ahmed and Warda Rihab, we celebrate a universality that continues to guide and uplift us—a legacy as urgent as ever.”

Sweden’s Ambassador to Bangladesh, Nicolas Weeks, highlighted Tagore’s international resonance and the cross-cultural bridge he created: “His poetry and philosophy transcend time and borders, inspiring fresh perspectives and new ways of thinking. Celebrating Tagore is also celebrating the dynamic partnership between Sweden and Bangladesh—a shared commitment to knowledge, innovation, and culture that has flourished over five decades.”

Aloker Ei Jhorna-Dharay did not place him behind glass. It let him breathe. It let his words move through the room like weather—settling on some, stirring others, unsettling a few in the best possible way. And in a country learning to balance its fractures with its hopes, the evening felt like a hand on the shoulder: steady, luminous, insistent.

In that glow, Tagore was not an icon but a pulse—steady, familiar, impossible to mute. A reminder that art, when shared and sung and held collectively, becomes a kind of shelter. A place to return to. A place that returns to you.



emotional and visual texture, creating a meditative celebration that was both jubilant and reflective.

HSBC CEO Md Mahbub ur Rahman underscored Tagore’s enduring moral force, saying, “We do not take this moment—or your presence—for granted. You are here because of your deep affinity for culture, heritage, music, and Tagore himself. Today, we honour

Nasir Uddin Khan, widely recognised for his breakout performance in *Myself Allen Swapan*, has joined the cast of Shakib Khan-starrer upcoming Eid release *Prince*, producer Shirin Sultana confirmed.

This is his first major on-screen collaboration with Shakib, following an earlier appearance together in a TV commercial. Directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud and produced by

Creative Land Films, *Prince* is being developed as a full-scale action film.

Principal photography is set to begin on December 15, when the team will also unveil the film’s first look and poster. Alongside Shakib Khan, the project features Tasnia Farin and Kolkata actress Jyotirmoyee Kundu, with the makers aiming to generate early buzz as promotional activities roll out.

WHAT’S THE HAPS

‘Wavefest Season 01’

Wavefest Season 01 gathers

K a a v i s h and leading

Bangladeshi

acts for a rare winter-night convergence of music and mood. The event promises a sensory swell—intimate, atmospheric, and culturally resonant—offering Dhaka audiences a chance to witness artistry that lingers long after the final note.

Date: Friday | Dec 5, 2025

Time: 10am-8pm

Venue: Courtside, Madani Avenue



Cannes-winning director Jafar Panahi receives prison sentence, travel ban



Iran has sentenced Palme d’Or-winning filmmaker Jafar Panahi to one year in prison and imposed a two-year travel ban, convicting him in absentia for “propaganda activities” against the state, his lawyer said on Monday, December 1. Panahi, 65, is currently outside Iran.

The ruling follows his Cannes win for *It Was Just an Accident*, a drama about former inmates confronting a man they believe was their jailer.

Panahi, a prominent Iranian filmmaker, has faced longstanding state pressure, including a 2010 ban on filmmaking and travel after supporting anti-government protests.

Despite restrictions, he continued making films, including *This Is Not a Film* and *Taxi*. The verdict highlights ongoing risks for Iranian artistes critical of the government.

NEWS

Israeli forces raze Gaza buildings

FROM PAGE 12

told Israel on Monday to avoid destabilising Syria and its new leadership, days after a deadly operation by Israeli forces killed 13 people, reports AFP.

Trump spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and invited him for another White House visit, Netanyahu’s office said shortly after Trump issued the warning.

“It is very important that Israel maintain a strong and true dialogue with Syria, and that nothing takes place that will interfere with Syria’s evolution into

a prosperous State,” Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

Meanwhile, UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper yesterday called on Israel to “allow much more aid in and open all the routes and crossings immediately”.

The Foreign Office announced that more than 1,000 tents have been allowed into Gaza following months of delay.

Cooper’s announcement comes amid repeated calls from human rights groups and protesters for the government to end its alleged

complicity in Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza, as it provides vital components of F-35 jets and operates Shadow R1 surveillance flights over the enclave.

In Gaza, Hamas said it was handing over the remains of one of the two last hostage bodies still in Gaza yesterday, and Israel said it was preparing to receive “findings”.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said in a statement that forensic testing would be done after a transfer via the Red Cross to Israeli forces in Gaza.

Teachers call off strike

FROM PAGE 1

Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) instructing schools to continue examinations “under any circumstances”.

The letters also asked regional officials to identify and report teachers obstructing exams.

Despite the move, most schools did not hold examinations yesterday.

The government had toughened its stance on Monday evening, when Education Adviser CR Abrar told BSS that halting examinations violated service rules.

Calling the use of students’ exams as leverage “unacceptable”, he said the demand for grade 9 was neither part of teachers’ job terms.

Even so, the nationwide teachers’ strike continued.

All 29 government secondary schools in Noakhali, Feni and Lakshmipur suspended examinations for the second day yesterday.

Students arriving for Bangla, General Science and Mathematics papers found classrooms locked and staffrooms empty.

Sidratul Muntaha and Bibi Fatema, class-V students at Noakhali Government Girls’ High School, said their exams began on November 25 and four tests were completed.

“Today we came to sit for the Bangla exam, but we saw a lock on the

classroom door. The teachers are not here. Now we are going back home,” they said.

Guardians expressed frustration, saying repeated uncertainty had discouraged children from studying.

Several parents said they were forced to take leave from work after bringing their children to school only to find the exams were postponed again.

“Our children stop studying as soon as they hear the exam is not happening,” said Jannatul Ferdous, a guardian at the school.

After keeping private tutors all year and bearing school expenses, the children’s annual exam is not being held, she said.

“This is unacceptable. We are not willing to accept any games being played with the students’ future between the teachers and the government,” she said. Md Jahangir Alam, acting headmaster of Noakhali Government Girls’ High School, said the institution halted all exams from Monday “in line with the national programme”.

Examinations across all government secondary schools in Bandarban were suspended. At Bandarban Government Girls’ High School, class-X students who

arrived to sit for their General Science exam were sent back.

Primary schools are also affected as teachers continued their boycotts.

However, teachers there are divided in their approach. One group of government primary school teachers under the banner of the Primary Teachers’ Demand Implementation Council continued their full-day work abstention yesterday while keeping annual examinations suspended.

They began their movement with three demands, including placement in grade 10, but later suspended the programme after assurances were given that they would be placed in grade 11.

Meanwhile, another alliance has given the government time until Wednesday.

The Primary Assistant Teachers’ Organisation Unity Council warned that if demands are not met, schools across the country will be locked down from Thursday.

Their three-point demand includes raising the pay scale to grade 10, resolving complexities in obtaining higher grades after 10 and 16 years and ensuring 100 percent departmental promotion to head teacher posts.

The Directorate of Primary Education has asked all officials to ensure exams continue and warned of action against any teacher failing to conduct tests properly.

Imran Khan ‘perfectly fine’

FROM PAGE 12

Uzma said the meeting lasted around 30 minutes.

The development comes amid the PTT’s protests outside the Islamabad High Court and the Adiala jail yesterday against restrictions on the former prime minister’s visitation rights. The party had claimed that the ex-premier’s

family and party leaders had been denied access to him for the last several weeks.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, no one had been allowed to meet Imran or his wife, Bushra Bibi, since October 27.

Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code was imposed in

Islamabad and Rawalpindi ahead of PTT’s protests. It is a legal provision that empowers district administrations to prohibit an assembly of four or more people in an area for a limited period.

Earlier in the day, Minister of State for Interior Tahir Chaudhry said that compliance with Section 144 would be ensured in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Healthcare workers’ demo

FROM PAGE 12

On November 25, they, under the banner of the Medical Technologist and Pharmacist 10th Grade Implementation Council, announced a series of programmes to raise their entry post to grade 10 instead of grade 11.

They observed a two-hour work abstention on Sunday, leaving many patients without services. Medical technologists conduct laboratory tests that help doctors diagnose and treat patients, while pharmacists supply prescribed medicines at hospitals.

Ripon Shikdar, coordinator of the council, said around 13,000 medical technologists work at government medical facilities.

The health ministry has, on several occasions, assured them that their demand would be met, but it has yet to be implemented, he said.

Referendum

FROM PAGE 1

“We are considering doubling the chambers in some cases if possible. We will finalise it in the meeting on the 7th,” he added.

Currently, voting in the national elections takes place from 8:00am to 4:00pm without a break.

For the election planned in February, the EC has designated 42,761 polling centres and 244,739 booths nationwide: one centre for every 3,000 voters, with one booth for every 500 male voters and 400 female voters.

EC officials noted that these calculations apply only to the parliamentary election. Since both the election and referendum will be held simultaneously, the number of booths will need to be increased, even if the number of centres remains the same, since casting two ballots will take longer.

Anwarul hinted that the election schedule is likely to be announced sometime between December 8 and 14 this year and that the national polls and referendum are likely to take place between February 8 and 14 next year.

EC officials explained that voting days are usually chosen with weekly holidays in mind—either the first working day of the week (Sunday) or the last (Thursday). Based on past practice, the EC Secretariat will propose multiple dates, from which the commission will select one.

“We will go for a full-day complete shutdown at all government and private hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres, and health education institutions on Thursdays unless our demand is met.”

Ripon added that they held separate meetings with secretaries of health and public administration ministries yesterday, and both assured them that their demand would be met. “But we are not convinced and will therefore move forward with tomorrow’s [today’s] programme,” he told this newspaper last night.

At a rally on November 23, Bangladesh Nurses Association and Bangladesh Midwifery Society announced programmes to press home their eight-point demand, including scrapping the reported plan to abolish the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery.

They staged two-hour demonstrations on November 26, 27, and 30 at medical facilities across the country, hampering healthcare services.

They were supposed to go for a “complete shutdown” at all medical facilities yesterday, but it was postponed after the health ministry called a meeting over their demand, said Asaduzzaman Jewel, secretary general of the Bangladesh Nurses Association.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Shariful Islam, president of the association, said they had a fruitful meeting with the health secretary. “We will set our next course of action after holding a meeting tonight [last night].”

The Daily Star could not reach Health Secretary Saidur Rahman for comments, as he did not respond to our phone calls.

FRAUD PROBE

3 arrested as EU diplomatic arm raided

AFP, Brussels

Police arrested three people yesterday following raids on EU offices and a prestigious graduate school in a probe into suspected fraud linked to the training of future diplomats, prosecutors said.

The European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) said searches were carried out at the College of Europe in the Belgian city of Bruges, and the Brussels premises of the European External Action Service – the EU’s diplomatic wing.

The raids were “part of a probe into suspected fraud related to EU-funded training for junior diplomats”, said an EPPO statement, adding that “three suspects were detained.”

Chiefs of 3 services

FROM PAGE 1

A medical board of local and foreign specialists is overseeing her treatment. Two specialist medical teams from the UK and China are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka this morning to assist the medical board. Security has been tightened around the hospital amid Khaleda’s treatment.

On Monday, the government declared Khaleda a “very important person” and provided her with the protection of the Special Security Force.