



HBO's 'THE WHITE LOTUS' tops IMDb's 2025 series rankings

HBO's acclaimed anthology series *The White Lotus* has secured the number one position on IMDb's list of the most popular series of 2025, surpassing global hits including *Squid Game*, *Wednesday*, and *The Last of Us*. Created by Mike White, the satirical drama first premiered on HBO in 2021 and has since captivated audiences with its sharp social commentary, dark humor, and visually stunning cinematography. IMDb's rankings placed *The Last of Us* and *Severance* in second and third.

The show has earned major Emmy recognition, with Jennifer Coolidge winning for both seasons, and features Cristobal Tapia de Veer's acclaimed score across all three seasons.

BFDC officially steps into the digital era with digitised services

DOWEL BISWAS

Bangladesh Film Development Corporation opened a new chapter on Tuesday evening, December 10, as it unveiled a fully digitised Business Automation Service alongside an upgraded Cine-Archive, a renovated sound recording studio and the restored Jharna Spot. The inauguration drew artists, technicians and policymakers from across generations, turning the BFDC premises into a rare meeting ground of hope, frustration and long-awaited reform.

Presiding over the event, Information and Broadcasting Secretary Mahbuba Farzana welcomed guests before inviting the chief guest, Mahfuj Alam, former information and broadcasting adviser to the Government. The atmosphere was part celebration, part reckoning: the industry knows this transformation has been delayed for years, and many in attendance wanted assurances that it would not stop halfway.

In his address, Mahfuj Alam did not shy away from the struggle behind the upgrades. "It was very, very difficult to come to this stage of development," he said, underscoring the challenge of allocating budget in a sector long overshadowed by competing priorities. "Automation has begun, but the governing body must ensure equal access so that no syndicate or group benefits alone."

The new Business Automation Service is designed to digitise BFDC's entire workflow — a shift that could finally move filmmakers away from the notorious paper-based delays that have slowed productions for decades. BFDC director (Technical) Mamunur Rashid explained the urgency, stating, "BFDC simply didn't have the capacity with its old labs and facilities to support today's filmmakers. This 360-degree automation system is

vital for the country's production environment." The older analogue cameras and lenses have now been placed in a small museum on the premises, signalling a symbolic break from the past.

The Cine-Archive, built on the foundation of the old Zahir Raihan Colour Lab, has been upgraded to preserve films that risked disappearing through neglect, while the renovated sound studio brings long-needed improvements for post-production.

Managing director Masuma

policymakers to ensure the reforms survive political transitions: "Please make sure development continues even after your term. The next government must carry this forward."

In response, Mahfuj Alam outlined a longer-term vision that extends beyond infrastructure. He wants BFDC to evolve into a centre for research, training and development, while large-scale shooting is shifted to a proposed Film City under a public-private partnership. "My dream is an ecosystem where any creative person is supported — from script and



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Rahman Tani described the modernisation as deeply personal. "This feels like a child to me. BFDC is the birthplace of Bengali cinema, and we thank the former Adviser and the Ministry for protecting and preserving it. BFDC must become an easy home for filmmakers, actors, technicians and creative people — and we need the capacity to support them."

Yet several speakers reminded the government that upgrades alone cannot rescue the industry. Shaheen Sumon of the Chalachitra Kalyan Samity voiced a sentiment widely shared in the audience. "We have been neglected for a long time. Automation is only the first step — the sector must be strengthened further." Actor Bapparaj urged

production to distribution," he said. He also plans to revise government grant policies so that emerging directors, not established names, receive priority. "More regional films like *Shaaticup* and *Delupi* should be made. They speak to people across the country in their own language."

The evening closed with cultural performances — patriotic songs, modern music, comedy, acting and dance — echoing the many eras of Bengali cinema that shaped the crowd gathered under the winter sky. Before the programme ended, the trailer of Ahmed Hasan Sunny's upcoming feature *Ekti Rajnaitik Alap Joruri* was unveiled, drawing attention from younger filmmakers present.

WHAT'S THE HAPS

২৪তম নবীন শিল্পী চারুকলা প্রদর্শনী ২০২৫

24th Young Artist Art Exhibition 2025

১১ থেকে ২২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫, প্রতিদিন সকাল ১১টা থেকে রাত ৮টা

অভিনব বোলা ওটা থেকে রাত ৮টা, গ্যালারি : ২, ৩, ৪, ৬ ও ৭, জাতীয় চিত্রশালা

১১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫, বুধসন্ধ্যায়
সময় : বিকাল ৪.০০ টা
স্থান: জাতীয় চিত্রশালা, তিলদাঘাট

চারুকলা বিভাগ
বাংলাদেশ শিল্পকলা একাডেমি

'24th Young Artist Art Exhibition 2025'

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy brings together the country's most promising emerging artists in a vibrant showcase of new ideas, bold experimentation, and contemporary visual language. This annual exhibition offers a window into the future of Bangladeshi art, celebrating fresh talent shaped by the country's shifting cultural landscape.

Date: Today | December 11, 2025

Time: 4pm onwards

Venue: National Art Gallery Auditorium, BSA

NEWS

Suspect domestic worker held

FROM PAGE 12
As her daughter Nafisa Nawal Binte Aziz attempted to save her mother, Ayesha also stabbed her.

Ayesha said these during primary interrogation after Mohammadpur police arrested her from her grandfather-in-law's house in Nalchity upazila of Jhalakathi yesterday morning, said officials involved in the investigation of the sensational double murder case.

"However, we are not fully convinced by her statement. She will be interrogated thoroughly to determine whether there was any other motive behind the gruesome murders and whether anyone else was involved," said an official, preferring anonymity.

Apart from Ayesha, Mohammadpur police also took her husband Rabbi in custody to interrogate him, said Jewel Rana, additional deputy commissioner of Mohammadpur Zone.

Laila, 48, and Nafisa, 15, wife and daughter of an English-medium schoolteacher AZM Azizul Islam, respectively, were murdered inside their home on Shahjahan Road on Tuesday morning when Azizul was at

work in Uttara.

Azizul filed a case making Ayesha the sole accused.

She allegedly made away with a mobile phone, a laptop, gold ornaments and cash after the killings. The gold ornaments include a chain and earrings of slain Laila, whom the suspected killer stabbed at least 30 times. Nafisa suffered at least six stab wounds.

A relative of the victims said they suspected that Ayesha took the chain and earrings from Laila's body after the killings as she wore those most of the time.

The footage of the building shows Ayesha entering the flat around 7:51am wearing a burqa and leaving at about 9:36am dressed in a school uniform of Nafisa, with a bag slung over her shoulder.

Talking to The Daily Star, a police official said the woman lived with her husband and their one-and-a-half-year-old son in Hemayetpur and used to commute to Dhaka daily to work as a house help.

He said her claim to the employers — that she lived with her uncle and aunt in the Mohammadpur Geneva Camp —

was completely false.

After the killings, she went straight to her home in Hemayetpur and stayed there for the whole day, fearing arrest.

As darkness fell on Tuesday, she, along with her husband, came out of the house and went to Sadarghat, where they boarded a launch to reach Jhalakathi in the morning.

Mohammadpur police arrested her hours later. Tejgaon Division Police will hold a press briefing today to divulge details about the killings, motive and other details.

Talking to The Daily Star, Azizul yesterday said his wife talked to the house help before employing her after the security guard sent her to the flat. The woman told her that she had marks of burn injuries, for which she was not getting jobs.

"We sought the NID and phone number, but she said she had neither. As she said she lived with her uncle and aunt in Geneva camp, we sought their phone numbers. But she did not provide us with those either," he said.

The family demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the murders.

Gazette out on the police commission

FROM PAGE 12
The selection committee will include a Supreme Court judge nominated by the chief justice; the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission; the cabinet and home secretaries; one government and one opposition lawmaker from the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry; and the chairman of the Public Service Commission.

The home ministry will provide administrative support, and the committee is expected to complete the selection within 30 days of its initiation.

The gazette states that the commission will regularly monitor police operations and recommend improvements to discipline, accountability, and performance, while ensuring that police actions

adhere to national and international human rights standards.

A core responsibility will be to scrutinise arrests, interrogations, and the use of force. The commission will guide training and technological upgrades to protect human rights, and recommend action against misconduct or undue influence on policing.

It will also handle public complaints against police. A Citizen Complaint Management Committee will be created to ensure complaints are addressed swiftly and securely, with strong privacy protections for complainants.

Beyond accountability, the commission will focus on police welfare, proposing improvements to working conditions, housing, healthcare, and career development. It will advise on modernising training

to ensure officers are equipped for the demands of contemporary policing.

The body will also support the drafting of new policies and reforms to strengthen the force and improve public safety, offering guidance on laws and regulations governing police activities. It will assist in enacting a comprehensive, modern police law aligned with global best practices.

Reacting to the gazette, a senior police officer involved in the process told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, "Basically, the power to formulate regulations rests with the commission, while the power to draft rules lies with the government."

"However, in this case, the government has both the powers, which could be an obstacle to the normal functioning of the commission," the officer added.

BNP will ensure rights, reconcile

FROM PAGE 12
Speaking virtually at a session on the fourth day of BNP's "Plan to Build the Country" programme yesterday, Tarique said if the "paddy sheaf" wins the upcoming election, the "country will be saved".

"We must ensure the victory of the paddy sheaf... There is no alternative. With that victory, we must implement the people's plan and the plan for the people.

"Your [our] party has presented a

straight-cut plan. Show me any other political party in Bangladesh that has given such a plan."

He added, "...Now is not the time to sit back. You must join the battle... What battle? For the people, for the country, for the people's rights."

The BNP leader also stressed that in tomorrow's Bangladesh, people from all walks of life, regardless of their political affiliations, should be able to express their views freely, and that human

rights violations must come to an end.

"I have the right to present my political views to the people... And when another party or individual presents their beliefs, they should be able to do so safely. As a citizen and political worker, it is my responsibility to ensure that."

He said that every BNP leader and worker who has faced hardship and torture wants to ensure that such incidents do not happen again to anyone, whether involved in politics or not.

Nothing to do

FROM PAGE 12
circumstances that led her to the country.

Asked if Hasina was welcome in India for as long as she wanted, Jaishankar said, "That is something in which she has to make up her mind."

Hasina fled to India in August last year following the mass uprising that led to the end of her 15-year rule.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal sentenced her to death in absentia for crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

Bangladesh government wrote to India seeking the extradition of Hasina — once in December last year and then after the verdict last month. India said it would consider the request.

Responding to a query about whether there is any possibility of Hasina's third country resettlement,

Touhid said he heard something like that, but has no information about it.

The foreign adviser said Rab's performance has improved significantly since August 5 last year. He made the comment when asked about the UN's recommendation to disband Rapid Action Battalion, which is accused of several hundred extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances during the Awami League regime.

He said there might be some complaints but compared to the work Rab has been doing for the last 15 years, there have definitely been a lot of improvements.

"Not everything is resolved in a day. However, this government is not lacking in effort to ensure that no one's human rights are violated in this manner, that no one is harassed, and that no one is unjustly prosecuted."

Natural disasters

FROM PAGE 12
toward improving the implementation of the National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management, which calls for systematic data collection on displaced populations.

The event featured a presentation on methodology, the official unveiling of the report and a panel discussion on how to integrate IDP estimation into government data systems.

The new estimate will help guide policies on disaster preparedness, relocation planning, social protection, climate adaptation and long-term development, Bonneau said.

"This is a critical step to ensure that the government and partners can better plan and respond to the needs of displaced communities."

Make the polls fair, historic

FROM PAGE 12
"If we can use it properly, we will be able to build a new Bangladesh. If we fail, the nation will collapse," he said.

Referring to past polls, he said elections held under the previous regime lacked credibility.

"Any sensible person will say that what took place then was not an election but a deception," he said.

Yunus said the forthcoming election carried a responsibility unlike any other. He told the UNOs that the government's success in conducting the election depended largely on how they

performed their duties on the ground.

Calling both the election and the referendum crucial for the nation, the chief adviser said the election would shape the country for the next five years, while the referendum could influence its future for decades.

"Through the referendum, we can permanently change Bangladesh and lay the foundation for the country we want to build," he said.

Addressing the newly-appointed UNOs, he said their primary responsibility was to ensure a peaceful, festive, and participatory election. He advised them

to visit polling centres, consult political parties, local residents and colleagues, and complete preparations accordingly.

He also stressed the importance of voter awareness regarding the referendum, saying voters should decide in advance whether they would vote "yes" or "no".

Chief Adviser's Principal Secretary M Siraj Uddin Miah, Cabinet Secretary Dr Sheikh Abdur Rashid, Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, and Secretary of the Public Administration Ministry Md Eshsanul Haque, among other senior officials, were present at the meeting.

Rescue ongoing since 2yr-old fell into shaft

FROM PAGE 12
suddenly sank into the ground around noon. Curious to see the situation, the child's mother Runa Khatun went to the field with her son.

As they walked, Sazid cried "Ma!" before slipping into the shaft. Seconds later, faint cries of "Ma, ma" were heard from underground. Runa said they did not notice the shaft's

opening as it had been covered with straw.

Tanore Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahinuzzaman said firefighters rushed to the spot upon receiving the information and began digging with the help of locals.

According to locals, groundwater levels in Koel Hat had fallen significantly. A shaft dug earlier to measure the water level had been

filled, but monsoon rains caused the soil to settle, reopening the hole.

Hundreds of people from nearby areas gathered at the scene, anxiously watching the rescue attempt and offering prayers for the child's survival. Police cordoned off the area with ropes to control the crowd, OC Shahinuzzaman said.

Rescue efforts were ongoing at the time of filing this report at 11:45pm.