

Busy 'lights, camera, action' days for Dhallywood stars



VISUAL: ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

At the beginning of the new year, Dhallywood stars are spending a very busy time in front of the camera. Top actors and actresses are taking part in back-to-back film shootings at different locations in Bangladesh and abroad. From Shakib Khan to Apu Biswas, Siam Ahmed, Arifin Shuvo, and Bidya Sinha Saha Mim—everyone is busy with their work. Let's find out which star is shooting for which film and where the work is going on.

The news of Shakib Khan acting in the film *Prince* is not new. The latest update is that he is now in Sri Lanka for the shooting of the film. The movie is being directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud, and the shooting is currently taking place there.

On the other hand, Siam Ahmed is shooting for the film *Rakkhosh*, directed by Mehedi Hassan Hridoy. The shooting is also going on in Sri Lanka. Siam said that the shooting is going very well and he hopes this film will bring something new to his career.

Apu Biswas and Shajal are acting together for the first time in the film *Durbar*, directed by Kamrul Hasan Fuad. Apu Biswas said that the work of *Durbar* is moving forward at a fast pace and the film will have many surprises.

Shajal said that *Durbar* has a different story and a different kind of character. He believes the audience will like his pairing with Apu Biswas.

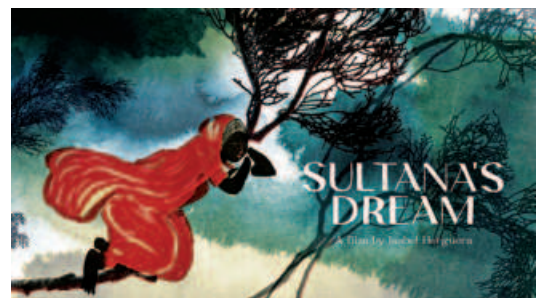
Six-time National Film Award-winning actor Fazlur Rahman Babu is acting in a new film titled *Pressure Cooker*, directed by Raihan Rafi. He said that he is starting the year with a very good film that has a strong story and that he is enjoying the work.

Puja Chery is currently shooting for the film *Dom* in Pabna. The film is being directed by Redoan Rony. Veteran actress Dolly Zahur is also in Pabna for the shooting. Besides, Chanchal Chowdhury has recently completed shooting there.

Mosharrif Karim is acting in a new film titled *Bonolota Express*, directed by Tanim Noor. The film is based on the short novel *Kichukkhon* by renowned writer Humayun Ahmed. Chanchal Chowdhury is also acting in this film.

Chanchal Chowdhury said that he is working on two new films at the same time, and the audience will see him in two very different characters.

Azmeri Haque Badhan has also started the year with a new film. The name of her film is *Bonolota Express*. She said that she is acting in a very good story and a strong character, and she believes the audience will really like it.



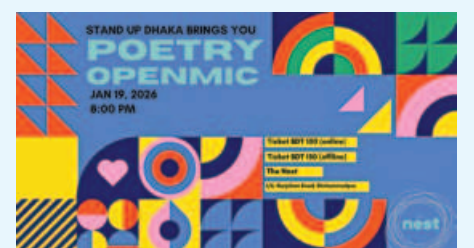
'Sultana's Dream' to premiere at STAR Cineplex today

The internationally acclaimed animated feature *Sultana's Dream*, directed by Spanish filmmaker Isabel Herguera, will be released in Bangladesh today at STAR Cineplex.

The film draws from Begum Rokeya's feminist short story of the same name. It reimagines early 20th-century *Ladyland*, a utopia where women lead society through knowledge, science, and compassion.

The film has premiered at major international festivals. Critics praised its visual craft and political voice. It blends hand-drawn animation with a lyrical narrative that links past and present feminist thought.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



Poetry Open Mic

A new open-mic stage opens in Mohammadpur as poets and storytellers gather to share raw words and lived truths. From first-time voices to seasoned performers, the night invites language to breathe, stumble, and soar—turning a quiet corner of the city into a living page of sound and feeling.

DATE: MONDAY | JANUARY 19, 2026
TIME: 8 PM ONWARDS
VENUE: THE NEST, 1/6 NURJAHAN ROAD, MOHAMMADPUR

BTS announces massive world tour across 34 cities

BTS has announced a massive world tour, their first full global run in nearly four years, after a long global break.

The tour begins April 9 at Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, following the release of their new album on March 20. The official poster dropped Tuesday night on Weverse.

So far, 79 shows across 34 cities in North America, Europe, South America and Asia are confirmed.

BTS last toured in 2022, ending *Permission to Dance on Stage* in Las Vegas. Since then, the group has stayed off the road. This tour marks a return for the group.

North America starts April 25 in Florida. Europe follows in June-July. South America includes São Paulo and Buenos Aires.



NEWS

'Over 3,400 dead in Iran'

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has constituted the greatest threat to the Islamic republic since its inception in 1979.

Rights groups say the crackdown by authorities, who exercise zero tolerance for dissent, has left at least 3,428 people dead. They also accuse the country's theocratic leaders of using an internet blackout to cover up the brutality of their crackdown.

In telephone talks yesterday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Saudi Arabian counterpart Faisal bin Farhan of the importance of "global condemnation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of regional countries".

He also reiterated that Iran would defend itself "against any foreign threat".

The developments came hours ahead of a UN Security Council meeting on Iran later yesterday, which was requested by the US.

On Wednesday, Saudi Arabia informed Iran it would not allow its airspace or territory to be used to attack it, two sources close to the kingdom's government told AFP.

Up until Wednesday, the United States was threatening military action against Iran should it carry out the death penalty against people arrested over the protests.

In an announcement at the White House, Trump said he had now received assurances from "very important sources on the other side" that executions would not go ahead.

"They've said the killing has stopped

and the executions won't take place -- there were supposed to be a lot of executions today and that the executions won't take place -- and we're going to find out," Trump said.

Asked by an AFP reporter in the Oval Office if US military action was now off the table, Trump, however, did not rule out possible US military action. "We're going to watch it and see what the process is."

In separate comments, Trump told Reuters in an exclusive interview that Iranian opposition figure Reza Pahlavi "seems very nice" but expressed uncertainty over whether Pahlavi would be able to muster support within Iran to eventually take over.

All eyes were on protester Erfan Soltani, 26, in prison in Karaj outside Tehran since his arrest, who is facing charges of propaganda against Iran's Islamic system and acting against national security.

Yesterday, the Iranian judiciary said Soltani has "not been sentenced to death" and if he is convicted, "the punishment, according to the law, will be imprisonment, as the death penalty does not exist for such charges".

Iran's judiciary chief had vowed fast-track trials for those arrested, and prosecutors have said some detainees will face capital charges of "waging war against God".

State media reported hundreds of arrests and the detention of a foreign national for espionage, without giving details.

In an interview with US network Fox News, Araghchi said there would be

"no hanging today or tomorrow", while accusing US ally Israel of orchestrating violence in Iran, without providing evidence.

Araghchi contends the protests devolved into widespread violence between January 7 and 10 because they were infiltrated by external "elements who had a plan to create a big number of killings in order to provoke President Trump to enter into this conflict and start a new war against Iran".

He said the Iranian government was "in full control" and reported an atmosphere of "calm" after what he called three days of "terrorist operation".

Tarique, family call

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Airport, he spoke with Prof Yunus over the phone while waiting at the VIP lounge.

The two also briefly interacted on December 31 during the namaz-e-janaza of former prime minister Khaleda Zia at the Jatiya Sangsad complex, following her death a day earlier.

Tarique Rahman was elected BNP chairman on January 9 through a unanimous decision of the party's highest policymaking body, the National Standing Committee.

Khalilur, Taiyeb

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This development, which came less than a month ahead of the February 12 national election, raised questions in the aviation industry.

On August 26 last year, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin was made chairman of Biman board while serving as adviser to the civil aviation ministry.

At the time, many raised questions about his appointment as chairman of a company under his own ministry while holding the rank of a minister as an adviser, as it is tantamount to conflict of interest.

The allegations, however, were rejected by the adviser.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam told The Daily Star that he is surprised as the government included Khalilur, Taiyeb, and Akhtar as directors of the Biman board at the lag end of the interim government's tenure.

"It's really very surprising why they were made directors. In my view, there might be several agenda of the interim government, including strengthening relations with Boeing, from which Biman is going to buy aircraft."

He also questioned how rational the appointment of EC Secretary Akhtar was at a time when he is busy with election-related activities.

BNP flags bulk deliveries of postal ballots

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to the designated voters by the Bahrain postal service.

The commission stressed that ballot secrecy was not compromised.

Meanwhile, BNP spokesperson Mahdi Amin alleged that hundreds of ballots in Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia were delivered to workers linked to a particular party, reminding that organised voting is illegal.

He also claimed that ballots are not being delivered to the designated voters.

Mahdi also criticised the ballot design, noting that the BNP's symbol was placed at the bottom, while rival symbols appeared in more easily identifiable positions.

Election Commissioner Abdur Rahman Masud told The Daily Star that the commission had taken note of the BNP's complaints. He said the symbols on the ballot were arranged alphabetically and that the matter would be reviewed.

Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad called the complaints "lame excuses."

He also denied allegations that party activists abroad were collecting ballots, noting that Bahraini and Bangladeshi law prohibit party branches overseas.

POSTAL BALLOTING

On November 18, the EC launched

the "Postal Vote BD" app, allowing non-resident Bangladeshis in around 140 countries to register and vote.

The CEC said about 1.3 crore Bangladeshis live abroad and described the initiative as a step toward ending their disenfranchisement.

Between November 19 and January 5, a total of 767,141 expatriates from 121 countries registered digitally, including 204,836 women.

Saudi Arabia recorded the highest number of registrations with 239,186 voters, followed by Malaysia (84,293) and Qatar (76,139).

At the constituency level, Feni-3 topped the list with 16,124 registered expatriate voters, followed by Chattogram-15 (14,316) and Cumilla-10 (14,007).

Postal ballots for the national election and constitutional referendum were dispatched by January 8.

Ballot papers contain 118 symbols representing registered political parties and independent candidates. The Awami League's boat symbol does not appear, as the party's registration remains suspended. A "No" vote option is also included.

Expatriate voters will be able to mark their choice after symbol allocation on January 21.

Ballots must reach returning

officers by 4:30pm on polling day to be counted. EC officials said the process of dispatching and returning ballots takes between 16 and 28 days, depending on the country.

On January 4, the EC warned voters against sharing photos or videos of postal ballots on social media, saying violators could face legal action, including the blocking of their National Identity Cards.

The commission said ballot secrecy is both a constitutional right and a voter's responsibility.

While speaking to reporters, EC Secretary Abul Fazal Md Sanullah yesterday insisted that no irregularities had occurred regarding the distribution of postal ballots.

He said the EC has communicated with all Bangladeshi embassies and warned that "if even the slightest irregularity occurs with postal ballots, no one will be spared."

To tighten oversight, Sanullah said Bahrain's postal authorities will now hand over ballots only after checking the recipient's CPR (Bahrain's identity card), while in Oman, ballots will be delivered only after verifying the recipient's passport.

He also noted that in the Middle East and Malaysia, many expatriate voters live at the same address.

Jayasree Kabir passes away

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Jayasree's son, who lives and works in Singapore, was unreachable at the time and has consistently avoided media attention, in keeping with his mother's long-standing preference for privacy.

Born on June 22, 1952, Jayasree Kabir rose to prominence after winning the Miss Calcutta title in 1968.

She made her film debut under acclaimed director Satyajit Ray in "Pratidwandi" (1969), a role widely regarded as an early milestone in her career and one that placed her firmly within the parallel cinema movement of the time.

She went on to perform in more than 40 films in Kolkata, including "Picnic", "Sabyasachi" and "Ashadharan", working with leading actors of the era such as Uttam Kumar.

Known for her restrained performances and elegant screen presence, she moved with ease between commercial cinema and more artistically driven films, earning sustained critical respect rather than mass stardom.

She later moved to Bangladesh, where she formed a close personal and professional relationship with filmmaker Alamgir Kabir, one of

the country's most prominent post-independence directors. She later married him, though the marriage eventually ended in divorce.

Alamgir Kabir died in 1989.

Jayasree's filmography in Bangladesh includes "Shurjokonya", "Shimana Periy", "Rupali Shoikotey", "Mohona" and "Puroshkar".

Her appearance in the song "Bimruto Ei Ratri Amar" from "Shimana Periy" remains one of her most recognisable screen moments.

During this period, she frequently worked opposite actor Bulbul Ahmed, forming a notable on-screen pairing.

After leaving Bangladesh, she returned briefly to Kolkata and subsequently settled in London with her son. There, she largely withdrew from public life.

She made occasional appearances at international film festivals, taught English at a school, undertook voice-over work for the BBC and Channel 4, and participated in cinema workshops. She also represented the films of Satyajit Ray at international events.

Despite her reclusive lifestyle, she remained attentive to developments in cinema in both Dhaka and Kolkata.

With Jayasree Kabir's passing, Bangla cinema loses an actor from one of its formative eras, remembered for her composure, quiet subtlety, and a highly selective body of work, as well as for her rare position straddling the cinematic traditions of Kolkata and Dhaka.

WEF report

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AS POSING the most severe threat to individual countries over the next two years.

The report said the global outlook remains uncertain, with half of experts expecting a turbulent or stormy global outlook, while only 1 percent anticipate calm, it said, adding that geoeconomic confrontation has emerged as the top global risk for 2026.

Geoeconomic confrontation, the report said, is already spreading beyond tariffs. Governments appear to be losing confidence in the legal framework underpinning global trade.

The World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement system, critical for resolving trade disputes, has become increasingly marginalised. The number of cases brought to the WTO has fallen to around one-third of pre-2019 levels after its Appellate Body was disabled, the WEF report said.