

Minus temperatures, challenging set, CHANCHAL PERSEVERES

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National Film Award-winning actor Chanchal Chowdhury is currently working on three new films – *Dommm*, directed by Redoan Rony; *Bonolota Express*, directed by Tanim Noor; and *Shasti*, to be directed by Leesa Gazi.

Among the three, shooting for *Shasti*, which is based on Rabindranath Tagore's short story of the same name, is set to begin soon. While the actor has already completed most of the shooting for the other two projects.

Shasti, the recently announced film will cast Pori Moni, opposite Chanchal, marking the first collaboration between the two actors. Speaking about his co-star, he said, "Pori Moni is a good actress. She gave wonderful performances in *Swapnajaal* and *Gunin*, both directed by Giasuddin Selim. At the same time, she looks beautiful on screen, and we all know that audiences have always adored her."

He added that Pori Moni needs more meaningful roles and strong directors to truly showcase her potential. "If she gets good projects with good filmmakers, I believe that she can do exceptionally well."

This will be my first film with her. I truly hope it turns out to be something special," he said.

Adding to this the *Monnpura* actor suggested, "We need more literature-based films."

While the shooting for *Dommm* took place abroad, and recalling his shooting experience in Kazakhstan, Chowdhury said, "I had never shot in minus two or minus three degrees before. The hardship was incredible – everyone in the team suffered. At night, the cold became unbearable. And we



couldn't always wear winter clothes in every scene. After finishing each shot, we would rush back to the car to sit near the heater. We went through all this hardship for *Dommm*."

Talking further about the film, the actor described the film as a story rooted in intense struggle. "Afran Nisho has delivered an outstanding performance. Everyone has done their best in their own space."

He further noted that *Dommm* was made by a highly professional team. "Both Bangladeshi and Kazakh technicians worked together. The cinematographer was from Kazakhstan. Acting in such a story gave me immense satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment."

As the conversation moves to *Bonolota Express*, Chanchal informs that the film adapted from Humayun Ahmed's novel *Kichukhon* was filmed largely inside a train, adding a unique visual and narrative texture to the project.

"Besides the train we also had to use a helicopter. Essentially, it's a journey-based story, and it's going to be quite interesting to watch!"

On working with Humayun Ahmed's stories, he said, "His work pulls you in like a magnet. He was a true magician of storytelling. A wonderful screenplay has been developed from his novel. We shot with a large team, and actors like Mosharraf Karim and Badhan are also part of the film."

In addition to these projects, Chowdhury completed shooting for Raihan Rafi's *Andhar* quite some time ago, and the film is now awaiting release. "I believe it's going to be another strong piece of work," he said.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nidra Neha wraps up shooting for upcoming period film 'Kalo Biral'

Actress Nidra Neha has wrapped up shooting for her new film *Kalo Biral*, marking her latest screen appearance after a turbulent period in her career. Earlier, she was dropped from Raihan

Rafi's *Taandob* after sharing the project news ahead of an official announcement, an episode that led her to publicly express frustration over industry practices before clarifying that she would continue acting selectively.

Directed and written by Sohrab Hossain Ullash, *Kalo Biral* is set against the backdrop of the 1980s and centres on a story of love, romance and emotion.

The cast also includes Arifin Jilani, Magfurul Islam Bidyut and Rahim, among others. Neha plays a character named Debi. The film is currently in the editing stage and is expected to be released in theatres later this year.



'Minoti' showcases energetic chemistry between Dola and Muza

Singer Dola Rahman has teamed up with musician Muza for the new song *Minoti*, released on January 18, which is already drawing attention from music lovers. Rooted in Bangladeshi folk sensibilities and inspired by the depth of Raag Darbari, the song blends tradition with a contemporary soundscape. Dola's emotive and soulful vocals convey the yearning of a lover with sensitivity, while Muza's modern arrangement keeps the track accessible and engaging.

Minoti is written by Badhon, Muza and Dola Rahman, composed by Muza and Dola, mixed and mastered by R Cha, with sarangi by Shounak Debnath Wreck.

NEWS

645 incidents against minorities

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committed to confronting crimes with transparency, accuracy, and resolve.

A yearlong review of official police records for January to December 2025 documented 645 incidents involving members of minority communities, compiled from verified first information reports, general diaries, charge sheets, and investigation updates nationwide.

"While every incident is a matter of concern, the data presents a clear and evidence-based picture: the overwhelming majority of cases were criminal in nature rather than communal, underscoring the complexity of law and order challenges and the importance of grounding public discussion in facts rather than fear or misinformation."

The further mentioned communal incidents primarily involved vandalism or desecration of religious sites and idols, along with a small number of other offences. In contrast, the majority of incidents affecting minority individuals or properties arose from criminal activity unrelated to religion, including neighbourhood disputes, land conflicts, political rivalries, theft, sexual violence, and

cases linked to prior personal enmity.

"This distinction is important. While all crimes are serious and demand accountability, the data demonstrates that most incidents involving minority victims were not driven by communal hostility but by broader criminal and social factors that affect citizens across religious and ethnic lines."

"Accurate classification helps prevent misinformation and supports more effective law enforcement responses," it added.

The report also documents significant police engagement. Hundreds of cases were formally registered, arrests were made in many incidents, and investigations are ongoing in others.

This reflects an institutional commitment to addressing crime and maintaining public order, particularly in sensitive cases involving religious sites or communal concerns, it added.

At the national level, Bangladesh continues to face serious law-and-order challenges. Each year, an estimated 3,000-3,500 people lose their lives to violent crime nationwide.

"This is not a number to be proud of. Every life lost is a tragedy, and

no society should be complacent in the face of such statistics. At the same time, these figures must be understood in context. Violent crime affects all communities, cutting across religion, ethnicity, and geography," the statement said.

Importantly, available indicators show that law and order in Bangladesh is improving steadily. Enhanced policing, better intelligence coordination, faster response times, and increased accountability have contributed to gradual but meaningful progress. The government and law-enforcement agencies remain committed to reducing crime further and ensuring equal protection under the law, it added.

"Bangladesh is a country of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and people of other beliefs, all of whom are citizens with equal rights. Ensuring safety and justice for every community is not only a constitutional obligation but a moral one. Protecting places of worship, preventing incitement, responding quickly to criminal acts, and distinguishing facts from rumour are essential to preserving social harmony," the statement said.

2024, by Firoz Khan, former general secretary of BNP's Mohora ward, accusing Chinmoy and others of disrespecting the national flag during a Hindu community rally in the city's New Market area on October 25.

After Chinmoy was sent to jail, his supporters blocked a prison van and staged protests demanding his release. Police action to disperse the crowd led to clashes involving Chinmoy's supporters, police, and a group of lawyers.

Police lodged three cases over vandalism, attacks on police, and obstruction of official duties, naming 79 individuals and around 1,400 unidentified persons.

Alif's father filed a murder case against 31 people, while his brother Khan-e-Alam lodged another case accusing 115 individuals, including 70 lawyers.

In the charge sheet, police said the killing occurred following instigation and provocation by Chinmoy.

ICT verdict

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Police commissioner Habibur Rahman; joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty; former additional deputy commissioner Sha Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam and former assistant commissioner of Ramna zone Mohammad Imrul; former Shahbagh Police Station inspector (operations) Arshad Hossain; and constables Sujon Hossain, Imaz Hossain and Nasirul Islam. Of them, Arshad, Sujon, Imaz and Nasirul are in custody, while the rest are absconding.

According to the prosecution, Habibur, along with Sudip, Akhtarul, Imrul and Arshad, bore command responsibility and they were involved in a joint criminal enterprise, accused of incitement, abetment, and complicity.

Constables Sujon, Imaz, and Nasirul allegedly used rifles to shoot protesters in Chankharpu and adjacent areas, causing deaths to the six people on August 5, 2024. The victims were Shahriar Khan Anas, Sheikh Mahdi Hasan Junayed, Mohammad Yakub, Rakib Hawlader, Ismamul Haque, and Manik Mia.

On December 24 last year, the ICT-1 set January 20 for delivering the judgment in the Chankharpu murder case.

The investigation agency submitted its probe report to the Chief Prosecutor's Office on April 20 last year, and the tribunal took cognisance of the charges on May 25. On July 14, charges were framed, and the trial began on August 10 with the prosecution's opening statements.

Rab member killed

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spread across the area following the attack. Debunking the rumour, Chattogram Range Deputy Inspector General Ahsan Habib Palash said, "We don't know anything about shooting. As far as we know, the Rab team was beaten by local thugs."

A Facebook video showed people attacking two minibuses, with the vehicles attempting to flee the scene.

Due to its remote, hilly terrain, Jungle Salimpur has become a safe haven for criminals.

The area spans about 3,100 acres on the northern side of the Link Road, opposite Asian University for Women, around two kilometres west of Bayezid Bostami in Chattogram city. Although administratively under Sitakunda, it lies largely within the city limits, bordered by Hathazari upazila to the east and Bayezid thana to the south.

8,780 polling centres

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25,000 body-worn cameras at the "most important" and "important" centres.

The decisions were taken at a law and order advisory council meeting held at the home ministry yesterday.

"We are working in an integrated manner to prioritise maximum security to hold the election in a free, fair, neutral, peaceful, acceptable and festive manner," said the adviser.

Addressing the media, he said CCTV cameras would be installed at every polling centre and necessary preparations are underway.

Drones will also be deployed, with a total of 418 drones to be used by different agencies: 200 by the army, 16 by the navy, 100 by the Border Guard Bangladesh, 50 by the Bangladesh Police, 20 by the Coast Guard, 16 by Rab and 16 by the Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Force.

Dog squads will be used by various forces to support security and protection measures, he added.

An election law and order coordination cell will be formed with representatives from police, Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP), the armed forces, BGB, Coast Guard and Rab.

A special team under the emergency service number 999 will also be formed and linked to the coordination cell.

The team will forward election-related complaints and information directly to the home ministry and area-based coordination cells for swift action.

Home ministry officials described the "Election Security App-2026", developed by the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre as a key tool for maintaining law and order during the polls.

For hard-to-reach polling centres, the Bangladesh Air Force will provide helicopters to transport ballots, election materials, and officials and staff assigned to election duty.

Separate security arrangements will be ensured for polling centres in metropolitan, non-metropolitan and remote areas, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts, according to a home ministry circular.

Outside metropolitan areas, each general polling station will have two armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander. Important stations will have three armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander.

In metropolitan areas, general stations will have three armed police

members and three Ansar personnel, while important stations will have four armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other remote areas, each general station will have two armed police members and three Ansar personnel, while important stations will have three armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander. Every presiding officer in these areas will also be provided with one armed Ansar member for personal security.

In addition, every polling station nationwide will have 10 Ansar personnel – four women and six men – equipped with sticks to help maintain order.

Security deployment at centres will be calibrated to sensitivity, with police and Ansar and VDP supported by the armed forces, BGB, Coast Guard and Rab at vulnerable centres, in coordination with district- and upazila-level law and order coordination cells, Jahangir said.

Authorities also directed law enforcers to intensify the recovery of illegal arms, arrest criminals, conduct intelligence-based area operations and run checkpoint drives during the election period.

Home ministry data showed that Devil Hunt Phase-2, launched on December 13, 2025, led to the arrest of 19,854 people as of January 17, 2026.

Separately, the interim government has ordered all firearms licence holders to deposit their weapons at the nearest police station by January 31.

The directive was issued in a home ministry notification on Sunday, which said the carrying and display of firearms would be prohibited until February 15.

The restriction will not apply to firearms allocated under existing policy for politically important persons and parliamentary candidates. Law enforcers are also exempt from the directive.

For candidates, the ban will not apply where nomination papers have been lawfully submitted to the Election Commission and accepted, or for an armed retainer authorised for the candidate.

On December 14, the government issued policy guidelines on granting firearms licences and appointing retainers for politically important individuals and candidates. Under the policy, licences and retainers will be approved after scrutiny by district magistrates and intelligence agencies.