



## RICKSHAW ART FESTIVAL 2026 celebrates Bangladesh's colourful heritage

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ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

Rickshaw art is often called a moving canvas because it carries the colours, stories and imagination of Bangladesh through the streets. From birds and flowers to film stars and fantasy characters, rickshaw paintings reflect both our traditions and popular culture. This vibrant art form is now being celebrated at the Rickshaw Art Festival 2026, currently taking place at North South University. The festival was inaugurated on January 28 at 11 am, presented by Awake Coffee Roasters and jointly organised by Shei Dhaka and NSU APC.

Walking through the exhibition feels like stepping into a world of bold and lively colours. Instead of canvas, many artworks are painted on steel rickshaw backs, staying true to the original form. Bright shades of red, orange, yellow and green dominate the works. Visitors



PHOTOS: COURTESY

can see portraits of actors and actresses, colourful peacocks, birds, flowers, and scenes reflecting Bangladeshi culture and animal life.

One of the most interesting aspects of the exhibition is how rickshaw art blends tradition with global pop culture. Characters like Michael Jackson, Mr Bean, Jack Sparrow and Harry Potter appear in rickshaw-paint avatars. Alongside these are rickshaw-style versions of old Bangladeshi cinema posters and modern series such as *Sherlock Holmes*, *The Office*, *Breaking Bad* and *Stranger Things*. The juxtaposition reflects rickshaw art's ability to evolve while preserving its distinctive identity.

The festival showcases works by renowned rickshaw artists Mohammad Hanif Pappu, Dilip Kumar, Syed Ahmad Hossain, Rafiqul Islam, and Monir Hossain (Monir). The inauguration ceremony was attended by photojournalist Shahidul Alam, Adviser to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, a representative from the Embassy of Kosovo, and Dr Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of North South University. Their presence highlighted the importance of preserving Bangladesh's visual

and cinematic heritage.

Alongside the art exhibition, the festival features a cinematic showcase of modern Bengali classics such as *Aynabaji*, *Monpura*, and *Rickshaw Girl*. These screenings celebrate culturally rooted storytelling. The festival also includes workshops and live art sessions. On January 28, university students received training, while school students will learn live rickshaw painting on the upcoming days. A panel discussion titled *How Can We Preserve & Promote Rickshaw & Cinema Art Globally? A Heritage at Risk of Fading* will be held on January 31. The discussion will feature prominent cultural figures, including representatives from UNESCO and leading cultural institutions.

Rickshaw Art Festival 2026 is more than just an exhibition. It is a cultural platform that connects heritage with contemporary audiences. By bringing together rickshaw art, cinema and storytelling, the festival celebrates Bangladesh's vibrant identity and encourages future generations to value and protect this colourful tradition. The festival is open to the visitors until January 31, from 10 am to 6 pm daily.

## 'Tagar' makes OTT debut on iScreen

After its theatrical run during last Eid-ul-Azha, the action romance film *Tagar* made its OTT debut yesterday (January 29). Directed by Alok Hasan, the film stars Ador Azad opposite Puja Chery and is now streaming on iScreen.

The film blends romance and action with themes of love, struggle, complicated relationships, life's conflicts, politics and revenge—elements that were hinted at in its teaser and trailer. Alongside Ador Azad and Puja Chery, the cast includes Sumon Anwar, Azad Abul Kalam and Rosey Siddique in key roles.

With its OTT release, *Tagar* is expected to reach a wider audience beyond cinemas, adding another notable title to iScreen's growing catalogue.



## 'Lutfar Pradeep' returns to Shilpakala in February

Theatre troupe Samata will stage its production *Lutfar Pradeep* at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on February 7 and 8, with performances scheduled for 7 pm at the Experimental Theatre Hall.

Written by Tanvir Mokammel and directed by Sagir Mostafa, the play premiered in Dhaka last month. Its opening show was held on January 3 at Bangladesh Mohila Samity, marking Samata's formal entry into the capital's theatre circuit.

*Lutfar Pradeep* is a solo performance by veteran actor Chitralekha Guha, marking her first one-woman stage act in over four decades. The play revisits a poignant chapter of colonial Bengal, centred on Lutfunnesa, wife of Nawab Siraj al-Dawlah, who lit a lamp at his grave every evening until her death.

By centring a single woman within a decisive historical rupture, *Lutfar Pradeep* revisits political loss through endurance, memory, and the quiet power of ritual—asking who keeps history alive when empires fall.



## Springsteen's 'Streets of Minneapolis' protests ICE violence

Bruce Springsteen has released a new protest song condemning US immigration enforcement amid an intensified federal crackdown.

Titled *Streets of Minneapolis*, the four-and-a-half-minute track was released on January 28 and responds to what Springsteen called "the state terror being visited on the city of Minneapolis". He said he wrote, recorded, and released the song within days of the fatal shootings of Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse, and Renee Good, whom he says were killed by a federal ICE agent during protests in the city.



In a statement, Springsteen said the song was for Minneapolis and "our immigrant neighbors", and dedicated it to Pretti and Good. The lyrics directly attack federal enforcement, referring to "King Trump's private army" and "Trump's federal thugs".

Springsteen has long positioned himself as a vocal critic of Trump and his policies, using interviews, stage remarks, and music to challenge the administration. He has previously called the US president a "threat to our democracy" and has repeatedly warned about what he sees as the erosion of civil liberties.

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### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## 'Chhayachhanda: Gaan-e Gaan-e Nostalgia'

Organised by Dhaka University Film Society, this evocative evening honours the timeless lyricists, composers, and singers who shaped Bengali cinema. Through songs, memories, and tributes, the programme reconnects language, film, and cultural resistance—reviving the golden melodies that once defined collective imagination and continue to shape Bengali artistic identity.

DATE: TODAY | JANUARY 30, 2026  
TIME: 5 PM ONWARDS  
VENUE: TSC, DHAKA UNIVERSITY



## Badhan going to Rotterdam Film Festival with 'Master'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Rezwan Shahriar Sumit's *Master*, starring Azmeri Haque Badhan, is set to make its international debut even before its theatrical release. The film has been selected for the 55th edition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), where it will have its world premiere.

*Master* has been chosen for screening in the festival's prestigious Big Screen Competition section. Badhan plays a significant role in the film.

Badhan is scheduled to depart for the Netherlands today (January 30), while director Rezwan Shahriar Sumit has already arrived in Rotterdam.

Reacting to the selection, Badhan said, "It is a great joy for me that *Master*, a film I acted in, is competing in the Big Screen Competition section of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. At the same time, it feels wonderful as a Bangladeshi film. It is truly a big achievement and

very happy news for me."

She added, "Since a Bangladeshi film and a film I acted in are competing there, I am also going. Actors Nasir Uddin Khan and Zakia Bari Mamo will also be attending."

Speaking about the film's world premiere, Badhan said, "Alongside competing, *Master* will also have its world premiere. The premiere will take place on February 2. I will be present and will be able to understand the audience's reactions."

Sharing details about her role, Badhan said she has appeared in a completely new kind of character in *Master*. "Audiences may view my character somewhat negatively. I play the role of a UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer), which has been a new experience for me."

Describing the film, she said, "*Master* is a political thriller and a very timely film. Viewers will be able to relate to many realities of our country. The story reflects how leadership changes over time and how moral decay can gradually set in."

Badhan also praised the director, saying, "Rezwan Shahriar Sumit is a wonderful person. He has narrated the story beautifully and worked with great care."

She further lauded her co-actors, adding, "My fellow actors have performed brilliantly. I truly enjoyed working with them. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to work with a very strong and dedicated team."

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED