



Moushumi-starrer 'Ordhangini' to premiere on YouTube

Veteran actress Moushumi's latest film *Ordhangini* will be released directly on YouTube after plans for a theatrical run in Bangladesh and the United States failed to materialise. Directed by Syed R Saeed (Emon), the film could not secure support from theatre owners in either country, while political instability in Bangladesh and the approaching Ramadan further complicated its release plans.

Explaining the decision, the director said promotional costs and the lack of distributor backing made a cinema release unfeasible. The film is now set to premiere before Eid on the YouTube channel BDFilms USA.

Shot in New York and New Jersey under harsh winter conditions, *Ordhangini* is a social, family-oriented film reflecting on changing human struggles and social indifference.



'KPop Demon Hunters' set for sequel after global success

A sequel to Netflix's hit animation *KPop Demon Hunters* is currently in process, according to the film's songwriter Mark Sonnenblick, capping a remarkable year for the composer marked by major international recognition.

In 2026, Sonnenblick won a Golden Globe and a Grammy and earned an Oscar nomination for co-writing *Golden*, the film's most popular song and the first K-pop track to win a Grammy. He thanked fans for the song's global success. Creator Maggie Kang has also hinted at more story to explore, with Sonnenblick saying any sequel will be fully developed before new music is created.

DOCUMENTARY SCREENINGS

Molla Sagar's films on resistance and lived realities

FAIZA RAMIM

A special screening of four documentary films by filmmaker Molla Sagar was held on February 7 at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi. The event brought together narratives rooted in people's movements, labour struggles, ecological relationships and lived histories, offering a rare opportunity to engage with documentary cinema in a filmmaking landscape where the form remains underrepresented.



PHOTOS: COURTESY



The selected films, *Dudh Koyla*, *Siren*, *Gangaburi* and *Dadu*—span different regions and social realities of Bangladesh. Together, they document how communities negotiate survival under pressures created by state policies, industrial expansion and economic restructuring. From the coal-rich lands of Phulbari to the shuttered jute mills of Khulna, from river-based rituals to the life of a centenarian model at the

University of Dhaka's Faculty of Fine Arts, the films trace stories often marginalised in mainstream visual culture.

Molla Sagar's engagement with documentary filmmaking began in 2002 with *O Pakhi*, a film examining the killing of migratory birds in southern Bangladesh. Trained in graphic design at the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka, Sagar's early involvement with photography shaped his visual sensibility and later informed his approach to non-fiction filmmaking. Over the years, his work has consistently focused on social movements and cultural practices shaped by structural inequality.

Produced between 2006 and 2007, *Dudh Koyla* documents the Phulbari

coal movement in Dinajpur and centres on the Santal community whose land was acquired for open-cast mining. The film captures the transformation of agrarian life into organised resistance, highlighting how land, livelihood and identity remain inseparable for indigenous communities. Sagar spent several months in Phulbari researching the movement and building relationships with local residents, allowing the camera to enter domestic and communal spaces with trust.

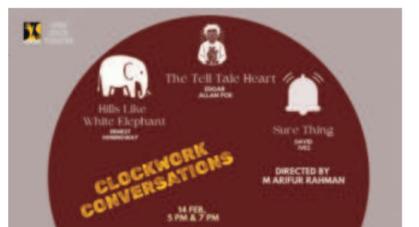
Siren focuses on the closure of jute mills in Khalishpur, Khulna, and the economic uncertainty faced by workers and their families. The film documents hunger, unemployment and the erosion

of industrial labour communities once sustained by state-owned mills. Rather than relying on commentary, it allows lived experience, ambient sound and daily routines to shape its narrative.

In *Gangaburi*, Sagar turns to the ritual of Ganga Puja and the spiritual relationship between people and the river. The documentary reflects on water as sustenance, belief and cultural continuity, while acknowledging the vulnerabilities faced by river-dependent communities. *Dadu* portrays the life of Momin Ali Mridha, a long-time model at the Faculty of Fine Arts, whose personal history intersects with broader social and artistic histories of the country.

A recurring feature across Sagar's films is the use of folk songs and soundscapes as narrative elements. Music functions not as background, but as a carrier of collective memory. Influenced by the cinematic ideology of Ritwik Ghatak, Sagar's practice emphasises time spent with communities and a slow, observational process. His films refuse sensationalism, prioritising credibility and emotional proximity. At a time when documentary filmmaking receives limited institutional and commercial support, the screening reaffirmed the form's capacity to record social histories and amplify voices often excluded from dominant narratives.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?



'Clockwork Conversations'

Open Space Theatre presents *Clockwork Conversations*, an evening of three striking dramatic pieces directed by M Arifur Rahman. The production brings together Ernest Hemingway's *Hills Like White Elephants*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and David Ives's *Sure Thing*—each exploring silence, guilt, love, and the fragile turns of human connection. From unspoken truths and haunting guilt to playful romance, the performance offers an intimate and thought-provoking theatrical experience.

Date: Saturday | Feb 14
Time: 5:00pm & 7:00pm
Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

Civil aviation ministry's clarification, our reply

FROM PAGE 1
of their portfolio, ensuring uniform application of standards. CAAB did not alter/modify any of its procedure to facilitate any specific applicant. The ongoing evaluation of Akij Bashir Aviation Limited's application is being conducted in accordance with the same regulatory framework that governs every other applicant. This demonstrates CAAB's commitment to transparency, fairness, and equal treatment in the licensing and certification process.

In addition to that, the advisor does not hold the position of the chairman or a member of the civil aviation authority of Bangladesh. Being a shareholder in a company does not, by itself, imply that the shareholder holds any office of profit. Accordingly, such shareholding should not be regarded as a conflict of interest.

BASHIR UDDIN Sits On The Biman Board

The Honorable Adviser has been appointed as Chairman of Biman by the Honorable Chief Adviser in full compliance with the relevant laws and policies governing appointments to Biman. No deviation from, or violation of, the law has occurred in this regard.

The Advisor is serving as the Adviser to three ministries and, in that capacity, is also performing the role of Chairman of various institutions under those ministries. If such arrangements do not constitute a conflict of interest in those cases, then there is no reason why they should be considered a conflict of interest in the case of Biman.

On the other hand, the advisor's appointment has facilitated easy transformations to be incorporated within Biman in several aspects such as ticketing issue which was long been without proper monitoring mechanism. Recent visible downward trend in ticket pricing is the resultant of that monitoring mechanism. Ultimately the additional appointment as the chairman of Biman is for the national interest.

A \$3.7 Billion Boeing Rush:

The line mentioned in the report "the administration is exhibiting a frantic urgency to lock the state into long-term obligations before the first ballot is cast" misrepresented the Boeing procurement issue.

Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism as well as Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited wish to clarify that the ongoing aircraft procurement initiative is being undertaken strictly in accordance with approved government

policy, Board-approved long-term planning, and established public procurement framework. The ongoing initiative was undertaken in 2024 and still ongoing.

The procurement process originated from a duly approved long-term Network and Fleet Plan, which identified future fleet and capacity requirements based on comprehensive operational, financial, and strategic assessments. In line with this plan, proposals were received from two leading aircraft manufacturers and evaluated through a structured, competitive, and transparent techno-financial assessment process.

An independent Techno-Financial Evaluation Committee, supported by specialized sub-committees comprising relevant expertise, carried out a detailed evaluation of all proposals using uniform and pre-defined criteria. These criteria included technical capability, lifecycle cost, financing arrangements, operational suitability, and commercial terms. The evaluation process involved multiple layers of review.

Following completion of the evaluation process, negotiation committee headed by the honorable advisor to ministry of planning, formed by the honorable chief advisor are currently conducting negotiations with the primarily selected bidder with the objective of securing the most economically and operationally advantageous outcome for the national flag carrier. These negotiations remain ongoing, and no final procurement contract has been executed to date.

The ministry reiterates that aircraft acquisition is an inherently complex, multi-stage process that requires extensive technical evaluation, financial modelling, legal scrutiny, and regulatory oversight. Any suggestion that decisions are being taken arbitrarily or without adherence to due process does not reflect the procedural safeguards and governance mechanisms in place.

The ministry and Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited remains committed to transparency, accountability, and protection of national interest. Relevant information will be shared in accordance with applicable regulatory and governance requirements once the procurement process reaches its formal conclusion.

OUR REPLY

We have carefully reviewed the clarification sent by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism regarding our report "Lord of the Wings". While we

appreciate its response, the explanation provided fails to resolve the serious concerns of conflict of interest raised in our report. We stand firmly by our findings and offer the following points from our side:

Akij Bashir Aviation licence

The civil aviation ministry defends the application for the issuance of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) and Letter of Intent (LOI) to Akij Bashir Aviation Ltd by citing adherence to due process and ICAO regulations. However, this defence side-steps the core issue of conflict of interest. We maintain that an application for a commercial aviation licence that involves a sitting adviser creates an ethical conflict. The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) operates directly under the ministry's jurisdiction. It is implausible to suggest that a regulator can exercise full objectivity or comfortably reject an application when the applicant is, effectively, their boss. A decision-maker should not be a party to any venture that benefits him, regardless of whether technical procedures were followed. Article 147(3) of the Constitution that deals with a conflict of interest creates two main restrictions: A person holding such a public office cannot hold any other position that provides a financial benefit or profit, and that person cannot be involved in the management or operation of any company or organisation that is run for profit.

The adviser on the Biman board

The ministry argues that the adviser's role as chairman of Biman is consistent with his duties in other state institutions. We strongly disagree with this comparison. Biman Bangladesh Airlines was converted into a public limited company (PLC) in 2007 specifically to ensure that it operates with commercial autonomy, distinct from a government department. According to Biman officials, since the airline became a PLC, only one adviser and a special assistant to the chief adviser have served as chairman of the board, and that was solely during the initial transition period. Abandoning the separation of policy-making from commercial operations undermines Biman's corporate governance. If the appointment was approved by the chief adviser, we believe the decision was ill-advised, and that does not make it legal and ethical.

Board composition and independence

The ministry's clarification omits significant details regarding the current composition of the Biman board,

which we believe renders the concept of an "independent board" impossible. Of the 12 current members, nine are high-ranking government officials. They are Khalilur Rahman, national security adviser; Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser; Akhtar Ahmed, senior secretary of the Election Commission; Nasreen Jahan, civil aviation secretary; Khairuzzaman Mozumder, finance secretary; Abdur Rahman Khan, NBR chairman; Saifullah Panna, secretary, Office of the Chief Adviser; Air Vice Marshal Javed Tanveer Khan of Bangladesh Air Force; and Humaira Sultana, managing director & CEO of Biman.

In the administrative hierarchy of Bangladesh, secretaries are bound by protocol to follow the minister. When the minister—or in this case, the adviser—sits as the chairman, the board loses its independence and becomes a command structure. It is unrealistic to expect a secretary to vote against, critique or oppose the decisions of their own minister.

Boeing procurement contradictions

Finally, the ministry claims that the aircraft procurement is merely an "ongoing evaluation" and that "no final procurement contract has been executed." This statement contradicts the specific details already made public by the adviser and Biman officials. At a press briefing on February 8, the adviser himself stated the government is moving to purchase 14 Boeing aircraft valued between Tk 30,000 crore and Tk 35,000 crore, with a repayment schedule stretching over 20 years. At its annual general meeting on December 30, Biman decided in principle to purchase those aircraft to expand its fleet and modernise operations. The meeting was chaired by Adviser Bashir Uddin, who also serves as the national carrier's chairman. The trade deal signed with the US on February 9 includes the aircraft purchase.

The question is why an adviser, whose term ends in a few days, should sign contracts for 20 years and burden the incoming elected government with such a huge liability.

Speaking at a press conference on February 8, Bashir accused The Daily Star of running a smear campaign against him, claiming himself to be a victim of misinformation. The accusation was unfounded, indicating a lack of understanding on his part about what legally or ethically amounts to a conflict of interest.

Rice trader

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The body was sent to the MMCH morgue for autopsy, said the additional SP.

Police have started an investigation into the killing. The victim's son, Sujon Sarker, said, "We have no enmity with anyone. After brutally killing my father, the criminals looted several lakh taka from the shop. We demand exemplary punishment of the killers."

According to police, no case has been filed yet, and no one has been arrested as of filing this report around 5:00pm yesterday.

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddho Christian Oikya Parishad, in a statement, strongly condemned and protested the incident.

The parishad demanded that the government immediately arrest those responsible and ensure exemplary punishment.

Interim govt

FROM PAGE 1
Former information adviser Mahfuj Alam's assets grew from Tk 4.2 lakh before taking office to Tk 12.8 lakh by the end of 2025. Former sports adviser Asif Mahmud, who had no taxpayer identification number prior to joining the cabinet, left office with Tk 15.3 lakh.

Local government, rural development, industries, and housing adviser Adilur Rahman Khan reported his assets more than doubling, attributing the increase to inherited residences and land. His wife, Dr Saira Rahman Khan, recorded a 12 percent rise.

Primary and mass education adviser Dr Bidhan Ranjan Roy and religious affairs adviser Dr AFM Khalid Hossain both saw their wealth grow by one third.

Dr Roy's increase amounted to Tk 1.36 crore, while Dr Hossain gained Tk 25 lakh in financial assets. Hossain's wife, Kamrunnessa Hasina, reported a 40 percent rise after her non-financial assets grew by Tk 3.5 lakh.

Commerce and aviation adviser Sk Bashir Uddin's wealth remained largely unchanged, though the business magnate, worth Tk 92 crore, added Tk 54 lakh.

Culture adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's wife, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, saw her assets jump from Tk 1.4 crore to nearly Tk 3 crore.

Bashir remains the wealthiest member of the cabinet, followed by planning adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud and Dr Yunus. Dr Wahiduddin said his increase was due to a developer contract.

Among the advisers, excluding the two youth advisers, fisheries adviser Farida Akhtar is the least wealthy, with a net worth of Tk 1 crore.

BNP unveils

FROM PAGE 2
Each polling agent must carry 40 to 50 complaint forms, while Tk 100-150 will be provided per centre.

"If someone is unable to vote or if it is found that another person has voted in place of a voter, a complaint must be filed, and the BNP will support voters in submitting complaints," said a source who attended the meeting.

The party has instructed polling agents to vote first to assess whether the voting process is transparent and to ensure the indelible ink is functioning properly.

The chief polling agent will calculate the number of votes cast every hour and send the figures to the central monitoring cell.

During voting, the BNP's internal count must be matched with the centre's result, and it must also be verified whether the hourly vote figures align with those recorded by the assistant presiding officer. Party leaders said polling centre results must also match those announced by the returning officer.

To ensure voter turnout, the BNP has planned transport support, including rickshaws and vans, to bring voters from distant and nearby areas. One party leader will be assigned as a local coordinator in each area to oversee the transport arrangements.

Leaders and activists have been instructed to stand in voter lines early after Fajr prayers, coordinate with law enforcers, and raise objections and alert election officials if voting proceeds unusually slowly.

"Jamaat will try to go early and stand in the voter line first. They may try to slow down the voting. Leaders and activists must stay alert so that this cannot happen and must protest if needed," said a BNP leader assigned to polling duties.

The BNP warned that local leaders would face expulsion and organisational punitive action if voter turnout is low in party stronghold centres.

The party has also instructed that if anyone arrives to vote wearing a burqa or niqab, their identity must be carefully verified and their face seen to confirm eligibility.

Leaders and activists have also been instructed to remain vigilant to prevent fake ballots from being inserted into ballot boxes and to inform on duty election officials immediately if any irregularities are detected.

Meanwhile, the BNP has set up a call centre at the party's Election Steering Office in Gulshan to receive complaints and information throughout polling day.