

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'INTO MY LUNGS'

An unflinching visual inquiry into the hidden toll of Bangladesh's garment industry, this exhibition traces how cotton dust settles deep in workers' lungs while global fashion thrives. Through intimate, documentary-driven storytelling, it restores dignity and urgency to lives too often reduced to statistics.

DATE: FRIDAY-FRIDAY | JANUARY 23-FEBRUARY 20, 2026

TIME: 11:00AM-8:00PM

VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, GULSHAN

INTO MY LUNGS



Armeen Musa's 'Bengali Baul vocal pack' makes headway in Splice

Singer, composer and producer Armeen Musa has released Bengali Folk Vocals (Baul) — a new vocal sample pack now available globally on Splice, one of the world's leading music production platforms.

Created in collaboration with the label Aaroh, curated by Indian composer Dhruv Goel, the collection introduces the expressive depth of Baul music, which is Bengal's centuries-old mystic folk tradition, into contemporary global production spaces.

Designed to be genre-agnostic, the pack features raw tonal vocal motifs and improvised textures that can be used across electronic music, film scoring, sound design, and cross-cultural fusion projects. By placing Baul vocals within a royalty-free, globally accessible production ecosystem, the initiative opens new possibilities for producers and composers worldwide to engage with Bengali folk traditions.

Splice, used by millions of producers, composers, and DJs internationally, offers royalty-free sounds that are widely integrated into modern electronic, pop, film and experimental music workflows. Bengali Folk Vocals (Baul) marks only the second Bangladeshi-origin sample pack on the platform. The first, Contemporary Bengali Choir, was also produced by Armeen Musa, introducing modern Bengali choral textures to the global production community.

The Baul pack features performances by acclaimed vocalists Baby Akhter and Lokman Siddiqi, whose voices carry the spiritual, poetic and improvisational essence of the tradition. Baby Akhter has



previously been featured in global projects by British-Bangladeshi composer and producer Kishon Khan, helping bring Baul influences into contemporary jazz and world music spaces. Lokman Siddiqi, a practising Baul singer, remains deeply rooted in oral tradition and devotional

performance.

The collection is produced by Armeen, who was the first Bangladeshi to be part of a Grammy-nominated album, *Shuruaat*. Her work consistently bridges South Asian musical traditions with contemporary global sound practices.



Richie and Mamo to host special Ramadan shows on Deepto TV

With Ramadan approaching, Deepto TV has announced a special lineup of daily culinary programmes for the holy month. Actress Zakiya Bari Mamo will host *Mojar Ramna*, airing every day at 3:50pm, featuring recipes for iftar, dinner and sheri. Richie Solaiman will present *Shorbot Shomahar* at 5:15pm, offering a variety of refreshing beverages ideal for iftar.

The channel will also broadcast *Kazi Farms Kitchen Shohoj Iftar* at 2:20pm, hosted by Shababa Islam, focusing on simple iftar dishes. Another programme, *Digital Kitchen*, will air daily at 4:05pm, highlighting traditional regional cuisine prepared by six chefs and hosted by Mahmuda Maha.

Saudi Film Festival 2026 spotlights Korean cinema



The 12th Saudi Film Festival will run from April 23 to 29, 2026, at the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture (Ithra) in Dhahran, spotlighting Korean cinema under the theme Cinema of the Journey.

Organised by the Cinema Association in partnership with Ithra and backed by the Saudi Film Commission, the festival has operated since 2008 as a platform for Saudi and Gulf filmmakers. Founder Ahmed Al-Mulla said creators remain central to its mission.

The programme will feature Arab and international films exploring transformation through travel and migration. The Korean focus follows a 2025 cooperation agreement between the Saudi Film Commission and the Korean Film Council.

Pravina Deshpande passes away at 60



Actor Pravina Deshpande, known for her roles in Hindi and Marathi films and television, died on February 17 after a prolonged battle with cancer. She was 60.

Her family confirmed the news in a statement posted on her official Instagram account, saying she "left for her heavenly abode" on Tuesday, February 17. Her cremation was held the same day at the Hindu Crematorium in Chakala

Parsiwada, Andheri East, Mumbai.

The Cine & TV Artists' Association, of which she had been a member since 2008, expressed condolences.

Deshpande appeared in films including *Ready, Ek Villain* and *Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran*, and in television dramas such as *Kumkum* and *Kulfi Kumar Bajewala*. Her final screen appearance was in the web series *Taskare*.

NEWS

'Strongly opposed Ziaul's promotion'

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was promoted from lieutenant colonel to colonel, despite his firm objection.

"I summoned the then quartermaster general Major General Momin and told him clearly, 'Ziaul Ahsan is a serial killer. I am against his promotion. You must raise this objection exactly in this manner at the promotion board meeting'."

Although Momin conveyed the objection, most members of the promotion board still endorsed the promotion, branding him a "good officer", he said, adding that many acted out of concern for their own future interests rather than professional merit. "Ziaul was never a good officer," Iqbal asserted.

Ziaul stands accused of orchestrating the enforced disappearance and murder of 104 people between 2010 and 2013.

During the hearing, defence counsel Aminul Ghani Titto asked how many promotions Ziaul received during Iqbal's tenure. Iqbal replied that there was only one.

He said it was highly unusual in the army to promote an officer to lieutenant colonel without completion of the Staff College course — a key prerequisite for higher command. "Ziaul never achieved the qualification to attend Staff College, nor did he complete the course. He also never commanded a battalion as a lieutenant colonel. On these grounds alone, he was not fit to be promoted to colonel."

The former army chief further alleged that a few days after the promotion board meeting, Major General Momin

was removed from the army and posted as Bangladesh's ambassador to Bahrain for opposing Ziaul's promotion.

"This was a deputation posting, commonly known in service parlance as a 'dumping post'," he said, suggesting punitive intent.

Asked by the defence counsel how many officers were promoted after he became a promotion board member following his elevation to major general in 2003, Iqbal said he could not recall.

"In many cases, I approved lists of officers proposed by the government despite my unwillingness. In some cases, officers were included in the list by Maj Gen [ret'd] Tarique Ahmed Siddique, which he informed the then prime minister."

Iqbal added that he did not always comply with orders from Siddique, whom he informally described as the army's "super chief" in practice. Pressed to specify instances, he said he could not submit written evidence. The hearing took place before a two-member bench of the tribunal led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, with Justice Md Mohitul Haque Enam Chowdhury as the other member.

The tribunal fixed February 23 as the next date of cross-examination after the defence sought time.

Earlier in the day, Ziaul was produced before the tribunal under heavy security in a prison van.

TRIAL BEGINS AGAINST JOY, PALAK
Meanwhile, the formal trial against Sajeb Wazed Joy, son of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and Zunaïd Ahmed Palak, former state minister for

ICT, began yesterday at the ICT-1 over allegations of crimes against humanity during the 2024 uprising.

In his opening statement, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that the case seeks justice for a "planned, systematic and widespread" campaign of violence unleashed by the state against unarmed protesters.

He said more than 1,500 people were killed and over 25,000 injured during the July-August period. Many were left permanently disabled or blinded, as security forces and ruling party cadres carried out coordinated attacks to suppress a nationwide student-led movement.

The prosecution alleged that Joy, as then ICT adviser, and Palak, as state minister, played key roles in orchestrating internet shutdowns, blocking social media platforms, and facilitating the use of lethal force, including "shoot at sight" orders, to crush the uprising and conceal the atrocities.

Investigators found that decisions to cut mobile and broadband internet originated from Joy, in consultation with Hasina, and were implemented by Palak.

The tribunal framed three charges against both accused on January 21 and yesterday set February 25 for recording deposition of the first prosecution witness following the prosecution's plea.

The prosecution plans to produce 32 witnesses, including victims, relatives of the dead, telecom officials, and forensic and IT experts.

Woman files case alleging rape in Hatia

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100 unnamed people.

Earlier in the day, she was released from Noakhali General Hospital.

The victim's lawyer, Noman Siddiqui, said the court has taken the complaint into cognisance.

After the hearing, it ordered Officer-in-Charge of Hatia Police Station Md Saiful Alam to record the complaint as a regular case and submit an investigation report. It also directed Noakhali's Superintendent of Police TM Mosharraf Hossain to ensure the woman's security.

OC Saiful confirmed the filing of the case, while Additional SP Abu Tayyub Md Arif Hossain said necessary security measures will be taken for the victim's family.

According to the case statement, the woman was raped and tortured

for voting for her preferred candidate in the national election. It added that the prime accused, Abdur Rahman, 32, a resident of the Dhansiri Shelter Project in Ward No 9 of Chanandi Union and son of Abul Kashem, led a group, including Emran Hossain alias Kala Emran, 35, and Belal Majhi, 38, into the woman's home around 11:00pm on Friday, following the polls on Thursday.

They then tied her husband's hands, taped his mouth shut, and confined him. Rahman raped her while Emran and Belal stood guard, and the others reportedly "celebrated outside", the statement added.

Speaking to this correspondent last night, she said, "I don't have the courage to return to my home. After being released from the hospital this afternoon, I filed the case in court. My

husband and I are currently staying at a relative's house."

All the accused are currently in hiding, she added.

Earlier on Tuesday, she told The Daily Star that on the night of the incident, Rahman, Emran and Belal entered her house, saying, "You supported the NCP? Today we will show you the consequences."

The following morning, they returned, dragged the couple out of their house, and physically assaulted them.

The victim was subsequently admitted to the 250-bed general hospital later that afternoon.

On Sunday, police filed a General Diary with Hatia Police Station in this connection and ordered the forensic examination of the victim.

Coordinate to achieve goals

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In his first meeting with the council of ministers, he unveiled a 180-day action plan with sector-wise targets, timelines, and responsibilities to ensure progress.

While meeting secretaries during his around seven-hour stay at the Secretariat, from 12:30pm, he sought the administration's full support in implementing the BNP's election pledges.

In a break with tradition, the meetings were held at the Secretariat instead of the Prime Minister's Office.

The PM, who was sworn in on Tuesday, began his first working day by paying homage to the martyrs of the War of Liberation at the National Memorial in Savar, accompanied later by cabinet members.

Around noon, he visited the graves of his late father, BNP founder and president Ziaur Rahman, and former prime minister Khaleda Zia at Zia Uddin and offered prayers before heading to the Secretariat.

Tarique rode in his own vehicle and used his own driver and fuel instead of a government-provided car, PMO sources said, adding that he has decided to continue the practice. He

has also ordered a reduction in the size of his motorcade to ease congestion.

During the more than one-hour cabinet meeting, Tarique asked ministers to submit ministry-wise action plans, after which further steps would be taken in line with his instructions. He stressed taking a "strong stance" against corruption and directed measures to keep prices stable during Ramadan, an immediate challenge for the government.

Ministers were asked to monitor the market closely to prevent price hikes of essentials. Meeting sources said stable prices would help the government earn public confidence from the outset.

Referring to the strong public mandate, he reminded ministers that people expect good governance and accountability. Sources said law and order must be ensured in the coming days, as the public anticipates immediate stability and security from the new government.

The government's election pledges, including family, farmers, and health cards, were also discussed. Tarique asked ministers to identify visible steps that could be implemented quickly.

The BNP has highlighted at least

35 priority issues in its 180-day plan, including education, law and order, women's empowerment, employment generation, environmental protection, ICT-based development, and loan management. Ministerial sources said the PM instructed them to review the list and prepare detailed ministry-wise implementation plans.

About an hour after the cabinet meeting, Tarique held a nearly 15-minute meeting with secretaries. He assured them that affiliation or background would not influence official matters and sought their cooperation in delivering the government's commitments.

A festive mood prevailed at the Secretariat, where ministers and state ministers were welcomed with flowers by officials. Several ministers exchanged greetings with officers and employees. Security was tightened.

PMO sources said the prime minister has decided to hold future cabinet meetings at the Secretariat to reduce traffic disruption caused by ministers travelling to the PMO. He has also instructed authorities to stop the roadside deployment of uniformed police during his movements in the capital.

Govt must act on July reforms

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the "Clean Dhaka, Green Dhaka" programme in his constituency in the Mirpur and Kafrul areas.

He said not taking the oath as a member of the Constitution Reform Council amounts to insulting July.

"It was the July uprising that made this election possible. Because of that election, Tarique Rahman became prime minister, and I became opposition leader. Without July, could we have reached these

positions? Could we have gained this chance to serve?" Shafiqur asked.

He said the July uprising must be formally recognised and honoured, and that all reform proposals arising from the aspirations of the uprising should be implemented as a "sacred responsibility" of parliament.

"You know that yesterday we took two oaths, one as members of parliament and another as members of the Constitution Reform Council.

We want to go to parliament and do something good for the country, In Sha Allah. And through reforms, we want to remove the garbage of society, from garbage on the streets, in drains and scattered waste, to the garbage in people's minds," he added.

The Jamaat ameer said his participation in yesterday's cleanliness drive means giving a message to the people that the party will build a clean society.

Govt closes schools for Ramadan

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and staffers will also get the weekend (Friday and Saturday), extending their break until March 28. This change revises the previously announced 2026 holiday list.

The government decision came after the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on February 16 stayed a High Court order that had directed

the government to keep all secondary schools closed throughout Ramadan.

Justice Farah Mahbub, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order following a petition filed by the government.

On February 15, the HC made the order after a preliminary hearing of a writ petition. Supreme Court lawyer Elyas Ali Mondal filed the petition,

challenging the legality of keeping secondary schools open for the first 18 days of Ramadan.

With the stay order, the government's decision to keep schools open until the 18th of Ramadan remained in effect at that time. The latest revision now brings the closure into effect from today, the first day of Ramadan.