

Warfaze's EKUSHEY PADAK belongs to the fans: Tipu

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Yesterday marked an exceptionally beautiful moment for Warfaze, the band that shaped the childhood of an entire generation, as it received the Ekushey Padak, the country's second-highest civilian honour, for its contribution to music.



The recognition also marked a historic first for Bangladeshi band music. Adding to the significance of the occasion, the award was received by the band's founding member, Sheikh Monirul Alam Tipu, who has remained associated with Warfaze since its inception, guiding it through multiple phases and line-up changes.



Speaking about the moment, Tipu recalled that the nomination had been announced earlier this month, with the award ceremony initially scheduled for the 20th. "It was postponed and finally held yesterday. All of us in the band were eagerly waiting for this moment. When we finally went together and received it, the feeling was truly extraordinary. It's hard to put into words. It felt surreal and deeply fulfilling," he said.

The drummer also shared a light-hearted moment from the ceremony, recalling his interaction with Tarique Rahman, who handed over the award. "It was quite surreal to realise that he already knew me as a musician. He greeted me warmly, congratulated me, and said he was looking forward to hearing more songs from us. I told

him we would be bringing new music very soon," Tipu said with a laugh.

Reflecting on how the band members reacted to the recognition, Tipu said emotions ran high. "Everyone was completely overwhelmed. At first, it was hard to believe. After making music for so many years, receiving an official recognition from the state is a massive achievement for us. But this honour is not ours alone—it belongs to every band in the music industry. More importantly, it belongs to our listeners, fans, and families who have supported us throughout this journey."

Recently, social media has been flooded with photos of Warfaze members celebrating a small reunion. Tipu shared that as the ceremony scheduled for the 20th was postponed, the band decided not to cancel their pre-arranged plans. "We came together for prayers and an iftar gathering. Later, we played some light acoustic Ekushey-style songs. Former members, current members, family, friends, and well-wishers were all present. It was a beautiful evening filled with memories and shared stories after so many years," he said.

This achievement belongs to our audience, listeners, and fans. Their love, trust, belief, and commitment have kept us going all these years.

A lighter moment from the day also caught public attention when band members shared photos of their rickshaw ride after the ceremony. Tipu explained that due to security arrangements, their vehicles were parked near the High Court shrine. "Calling the cars would have taken over 45 minutes because of traffic. So, we walked a bit, took rickshaws, and then got into our cars. That ended up being the fun part of the day," he said.

Looking ahead, Tipu revealed that Warfaze has new music on the way. "A new song will be released during this Ramadan. Another track from *Pothchola 2* is also coming. We are working on two releases and have already begun organising and planning for a full-fledged album," he shared.

Addressing the band's fans, Tipu emphasised that the Ekushey Padak is as much theirs as it is the band's. "This achievement belongs to our audience, listeners, and fans. Their love, trust, belief, and commitment have kept us going all these years. We have survived and grown because of their prayers and support. We hope their love and trust remain with us always, and we ask everyone to keep us in their prayers."

Peya Jannatul criticises animal distress as 'content'

Model, lawyer and actor Peya Jannatul has criticised brands for using the suffering of a motherless baby monkey as promotional "content". A video of the orphaned monkey from Ichikawa



City Zoo in Japan recently went viral, showing the baby clinging to a soft toy for comfort.

In a Facebook post, Peya said the footage was heartbreaking but expressed disappointment that some brands began tagging the monkey and linking its story to their products. Calling the practice "selfish", she wrote, "Even a baby animal's suffering is now content," adding that using an animal's distress for profit is wrong.

Referring to Ramadan, she urged followers to reflect on hunger and extend compassion by helping vulnerable animals during the holy month.

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'AND THEN THERE WERE NONE'

Open Space Theatre stages a licensed Bangladeshi adaptation of Agatha Christie's psychological classic, where strangers confront guilt on an isolated island. M Arifur Rahman's translation revives golden-age detective theatre for contemporary Dhaka audiences seeking intelligent, immersive drama.

Date: Saturday | February 28, 2026
Time: 3:30 pm and 7 pm onwards
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

New govt at foreign policy crossroads

FROM PAGE 16
Though the US Supreme Court on February 20 ruled that the Trump administration's sweeping global tariffs are illegal, US President Donald Trump issued an order imposing a fresh 10 percent global tariff.

Humayun said the US president may use laws such as the 1930 Tariff Act and the 1974 Trade Act to negotiate new deals and continue to put pressure on Bangladesh.

According to analysts, even though the US Supreme Court cancelled the tariffs, the conditions embedded in the Bangladesh-US agreement remain in force. For example, the US may take action if Bangladesh enters into a new bilateral free trade agreement or preferential economic agreement with a country that adheres to non-market economy.

The deal also says Bangladesh shall not purchase any nuclear reactors, fuel rods, or enriched uranium from a country that jeopardises essential US interests. The exception, however, applies in cases where there are no alternatives for such supplies and if there are prior agreements.

Humayun said that certain clauses in the deal, particularly the ones relating to "non-market economies", could complicate Bangladesh's relations with other major partners such as China and disrupt economic balance.

He further said some provisions may increase Bangladesh's reliance on US defence equipment, which traditionally comes at higher costs.

Parvez pointed out that the proposed US "Think Twice Act" will complicate things as it seeks to discourage third countries from purchasing Chinese military equipment, potentially through sanctions or trade penalties.

Since Bangladesh has historically relied on affordable Chinese defence equipment, this Act creates a potential policy dilemma, he said.

NORMALISING DHAKA-DELHI RELATIONS

Bangladesh-India relations were strained after the toppling of the Awami League government and ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's escape to India in August 2024.

Humayun said a strong public narrative emerged around the idea of "Indian domination" and public reactions to certain events demonstrated that this sentiment had deep support. Online misinformation and disinformation campaigns also

intensified negative perceptions.

He said the government must balance domestic political sentiment with diplomatic necessity as the Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party (NCP) are likely to have notable influence in parliament.

Delhi may expect continuity in security cooperation frameworks and previous projects taken up during the AI government's tenure. While some of these arrangements may be mutually beneficial, Dhaka must ensure that the engagements align with its declared policy priorities.

"The new government will need to handle these issues cautiously to avoid any instability," he said, adding that Hasina's extradition could become a thorny issue.

Both Dhaka and Delhi should tone down rhetoric and expand engagements both at government and civil society levels.

Parvez said that both sides seem willing to normalise ties. Immediate steps should be taken to address structural issues including border killings, renewal of the Ganges Water Treaty, sharing of the water of the Teesta and other transboundary rivers, transit, trade corridors, and regional connectivity involving Nepal and Bhutan.

LDC GRADUATION

Citing challenges in domestic and global trade, Bangladesh has written to the UN, seeking a deferment of its LDC graduation by three years, which was scheduled for November this year.

Humayun said LDC graduation demands structural reforms including improving productivity, enhancing competitiveness, carrying out labour reforms, strengthening governance, and modernising legal frameworks.

"Without rapid progress, the economy could face adjustment shocks," he said.

Parvez said that while the European Union has offered a three-year grace period after LDC graduation, maintaining preferential trade access under GSP+ will require compliance with strict labour, environmental, governance, and intellectual property standards.

"Failure to secure alternative Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), particularly with the EU and the UK, could result in export losses to competitors like Vietnam and India."

ROHINGYA CRISIS

There has been no headway in repatriating 1.2 million Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh, most of them since 2017. Given the prolonged conflicts in Myanmar, there is no sign of repatriation anytime soon.

Parvez said repatriation efforts have been complicated by Myanmar's internal instability, combined with the involvement of China, Russia, Japan, ASEAN states, and Western powers.

Humayun said it is important for the new government to draw up a comprehensive roadmap to address the Rohingya crisis.

It will require significant diplomatic energy to mobilise funding for Rohingyas and work with international actors that are polarised, he added.

IMPERATIVES FOR BANGLADESH

Analysts say the new government has to carefully navigate its domestic policy if Bangladesh is to assert its role on the global stage. It must boost the economy by creating jobs, attracting investment, enhancing energy security, and accelerating infrastructure development.

Parvez suggested prioritising career diplomats over political appointees, strengthening economic diplomacy, integrating military diplomacy with foreign policy, and establishing centralised strategic coordination under the Prime Minister's Office.

Humayun said that the foreign ministry and other key ministries, including commerce and finance, must have strong coordination. Otherwise, major reforms will be difficult to implement.

Issue Interpol red notice

FROM PAGE 16
adviser Sardar Mosharraf Hossain after accepting the charge sheet in the case.

The court also set March 8 for submitting a report on the execution of the arrest warrants.

On April 15 last year, the anti-graft body filed the case against Tulip, Mosharraf and Rajuk's former assistant legal adviser Shah Md Khasruzzaman.

Tulip allegedly provided undue benefits to private developer Eastern Housing Limited to illegally acquire the flat in Gulshan-2.

According to the case documents, the accused allegedly, in collusion with each other, abused their power and illegally took possession of the flat without paying any money, and later got it registered.

The ACC on January 13 this year pressed charges against Tulip and Mosharraf.

Between November 27 last year and February 2 this year, Sheikh Hasina was jailed for 36 years in six cases involving the Purbachal plot scam in Dhaka. Her elder niece, Tulip, was also sentenced to six years' imprisonment in three of the six cases.

Politicised edn not a sign of civilised society

FROM PAGE 16
accomplished people in a state and society, the more enlightened that society becomes in prosperity and moral standards."

Therefore, the state honours learned and distinguished individuals out of necessity, he said, adding that from this realisation, late president Ziaur Rahman introduced the Ekushey Padak in independent Bangladesh.

Noting that this recognition is not merely a medal, Tarique said the award commemorates Bangladesh's historical milestones, from the 1952 Language Movement to the present.

"At the same time, it introduces the general public to those distinguished individuals who have enriched themselves, the state and society through education, literature, arts, research and practice."

The prime minister arrived at the venue around 10:53am on foot from his Cabinet Division office in the Secretariat. The ceremony organised by the Cultural Affairs Ministry began with the national anthem and recitation from religious scriptures.

Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury presided over the function, while Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani conducted the award-giving ceremony and read out the citations of the awardees.

Cabinet members, members of parliament, diplomats, senior civil and military officials and dignitaries were present.

This year, the government conferred the Ekushey Padak on nine individuals and one music band for outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

The recipients are: Farida Akhtar Babita (Film), Professor Md Abdus Sattar (Fine Arts), Marina Tabassum (Architecture), Ayub Bachchu (Music) (Posthumous), Arthy Ahmed (Dance), Islam Uddin Palakar (Palagan), Shafiq Rehman (Journalism), Professor Dr Mahbul Alam Majumdar (Education), Tejosh Haldar Josh (Sculpture), and Warfaze (Music Band).

About International Mother Language Day on February 21, Tarique said, "The importance of the month

of February in our national history is immense. And February 21 is a reminder of our identity... It can be said that February 21 is the lifeblood of our cultural consciousness."

Congratulating the Ekushey Padak winners, he wished them long and fulfilling lives and later joined a photo session with them.

'CONSIDER MAKING BOOK FAIR INTERNATIONAL'

Later, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurated the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy premises in the afternoon.

Speaking at the event, he said, "The Amar Ekushey Book Fair is one of the key creative initiatives of Bangla Academy inspired by the aspirations of the language martyrs."

"However, in view of the time, I would like to request all of you to consider whether there is a scope to organise the Amar Ekushey Book Fair as the Amar Ekushey International Book Fair in the coming years."

He added, "In today's global village, it is essential to become acquainted with multiple languages in addition to the mother tongue."

"To survive with prosperity and dignity in a competitive world, there is no alternative to establishing a knowledge- and merit-based state and society. Thus, we need to enrich ourselves with knowledge, science, technology, and talent... Simultaneously, I think, we should start working to secure recognition of Bangla as an official language of the United Nations."

Tarique concluded his speech by declaring the fair open. He, his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman, along with other guests, formally inaugurated it by cutting the ribbon.

Earlier, Cultural Affairs Secretary Md Mofidur Rahman, Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers Association President Md Rezaul Karim Badsha and Bangla Academy Director General Professor Mohammad Azam delivered welcome speeches.

Tarique and his family members, cabinet members, members of parliament, foreign diplomats, senior civil and military officials and dignitaries attended the programme.

Tarique picks

FROM PAGE 16
session, will convene the informal interactive dialogues with the candidates in May 2026.

Bangladesh last held the prestigious position in 1986 (1986-87), when the then foreign minister Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury was elected as president of the 41st General Assembly.

The 81st session of the UNGA will open on September 8, 2026, with the high-level General Debate beginning on September 22, 2026.

Earlier, the interim government had nominated former foreign affairs adviser Md Touhid Hossain as Bangladesh's candidate.

Can new BB chief

FROM PAGE 16
of the election management committee of the ruling party," he said.

He also pointed out that the appointment is "a clear breach" of the BNP government's election manifesto pledge to ensure good governance and transparency in the financial sector.

TIB questioned whether the new governor will be able to rise above business interests and make independent, impartial decisions to control inflation, maintain financial sector stability, and take punitive action against weak banks that protect personal interests.

The organisation further questioned whether this appointment aligns with the public demand for an independent central bank following the 2024 mass uprising.

In another statement, the Network for People's Action also expressed deep concern over the process of replacing Ahsan H Mansur with a full-fledged businessman and politician, noting that such a highly sensitive position requires specialised technical expertise.

Demanding an end to direct government interference, the platform called for the formation of a search committee to appoint the central bank's board, governor, and deputy governors.

It also urged the government to revoke its power to arbitrarily dismiss the governor, proposing that this authority be transferred to parliament and exercised only based on specific allegations.

The NPA also demanded a mechanism for the governor to provide regular accountability to parliament.