

Perfect 10 for PRIYONTEE URBEE

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

Priyontee Urbee is clear about what she wants from her career: credibility. Not hype, not headlines — but work that speaks for itself. As her OTT presence steadily grows, the actor says her focus is on strong scripts, complex characters and consistency.

"I always wanted to be an actress," she says when asked if she would have done anything differently. "No matter what I participated in, I always thought about becoming an actress. Nothing would have stopped me or made me choose differently."

Urbee opens up about her academic struggles while speaking to The Daily Star. She recalls being labelled the "less intelligent one" in her family after a disappointing HSC result and being compared to her higher-achieving siblings.

That pressure pushed her towards extreme discipline. "I used to study 20 hours a day for my DU admission test. It was frantic," she says.

Studying International Relations at the University of Dhaka helped her regain confidence. "It gave me a voice to counter when someone makes a wrong political statement," she

explains. Exposure to cultural diversity on campus, she adds, broadened her outlook — something she believes benefits her as an actor.

Urbee worked in *NeelChokro* last year and says she enjoyed the experience. Still, she remains selective about film offers.

"I don't necessarily like love stories with a typical hero and heroine," she says. "I like stories that have depth and are a bit unique."

If a script offers that complexity, she says she would be open to more film projects.

Urbee is also drawn to morally layered roles. In *Apolap*, she played an actress with a dark secret — a role that challenged the idea of the "pure" heroine.

"I don't like it when an actress is portrayed as morally perfect. A person is grey, not black and white," she says, adding that she would like to play a negative lead if the character is well-written.

When asked about a role that stayed with her after filming ended, she pointed to her debut project, *Kothay Palabe Bolo Rupban*. Cast at the last minute after initially assisting with rehearsals, she found herself deeply

immersed in the role of a mother to an eight-day-old child.

"After shooting, I felt empty," she says. "I started to feel sad about missing a child that wasn't even mine."

The experience, she adds, made her realise how emotionally consuming acting can be.

This Eid, Urbee expects to appear in eight to 10 OTT projects, including a seven-episode drama series.

She declined to share further details but emphasised that each role differs from the other.

Her career goal remains straightforward. "I'm not aiming to be something great," she says. "But I want to build a body of work where someone can say that if Urbee is in this project, then it is worth watching."

For now, she is focused on consistency, variety and strong scripts — letting the work speak for itself.



PHOTOS: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED



'Prince' teaser out, Shakib Khan in gangster avatar

The teaser of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr film *Prince*, starring Shakib Khan, has been unveiled, offering audiences a first glimpse of the actor in a gangster avatar. Directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud, the trailer hints at a gritty underworld narrative, with Shakib Khan returning to his signature long-lock look and confronting enemies in intense action sequences.

The makers have described the teaser as a 'Pre-blast', suggesting more explosive moments ahead. *Prince* has been primarily shot in Sri Lanka and Kolkata, giving the production an international backdrop.

The film features an ensemble cast including Tasnia Farin, Jyotirmoyee Kundu, Loknath Dey, Paeen Sarkar and Mrityunjoy Bhattacharya. It is scheduled for release this Eid-ul-Fitr.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'UNLEARNING THE BOOK'

Books unravel and reform as art in *Unlearning the Book*, a group exhibition exploring textile-based book forms. Contemporary artists reimagine the page through fabric, stitching, and sculptural experimentation, turning reading into a tactile encounter. The result is a quiet yet radical meditation on material, memory, and the evolving language of books.



DATE: MONDAY-SATURDAY
MARCH 10-20, 2026

TIME: 11 AM - 8 PM
(OPENING: 5 PM, MARCH 10)

VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA

SABINA YASMIN re-records 'Ei Mon Tomake Dilam'



Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin has re-recorded the iconic song *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam* for the upcoming film *Domm*, 44 years after she first sang it for the 1982 film *Manoshi*.

The timeless track, with lyrics by Gazi Mazharul Anwar and music by Anwar Pervez, remains a favorite among Bangladeshi music lovers. The new version features additional lyrics by Tonmoy Pervez and music arranged by Arafat

Mohsin Nidhi.

The song was recorded on March 11 at a studio in Dhaka. In the new version, Sabina Yasmin is joined by singer Momin Biswas. Speaking about the session, she said she loved the fresh composition and enjoyed working with younger artistes.

Domm, produced by SVF Alpha-i Entertainment and Chorki, will release during Eid-ul-Fitr.

NEWS

One woman's fight for the children

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In Korail, many schools operate under project-based funding. When those projects end, the schools often shut down.

Farzana recalls one BRAC school that closed abruptly in the middle of an academic year. Many students had already enrolled, but admissions elsewhere had closed.

"There was nowhere for them to go," she says.

Through the library, she and other committee members tried to support the displaced students.

But the broader pattern remained unchanged: once projects end, many children are left without structured learning opportunities. Some drift into child labour — cleaning jobs, domestic work, or other informal employment.

"Up to SSC, parents somehow try," Farzana explains. "But once a child passes SSC, many families feel their children have been educated enough. Even if a child wants to continue studying, he or she is expected to work and support the family financially instead."

For girls, the dropout rate is even higher. Financial hardship and early marriage often end their education long before they can complete it.

Beyond economic barriers, there are quieter humiliations that push students away from school.

"When students cannot pay fees on time, some are made to stand in class as punishment," Farzana says. "That embarrassment drives many of them away."

Alongside conventional education, Farzana believes awareness about "good touch" and "bad touch" must begin early — both at home and in schools.

"When I first introduced the topic in class, many parents objected. Some even scolded their children for talking about sexual harassment."

The children themselves were initially uncomfortable discussing the issue.

"But slowly they began sharing what was happening in their own schools and surroundings."

Among the many students she has taught, one story remains particularly close to her heart.

Sumaiya Islam was in second grade when Farzana taught her at Surabhi School.

"She was very attached to me," Farzana recalls.

When Farzana later moved to another school, Sumaiya followed her there. Even after her parents relocated

to Savar, the girl refused to change schools and travelled to Korail every day so she could continue studying with Farzana.

"This year she will sit for her SSC exam," Farzana says with a quiet smile. "She is one of the most remarkable chapters of my life."

But not every story ends with hope. Around 2012, Farzana learned that another student, Tamannah, was being raped by her father. After the girl's mother died, she had nowhere safe to turn.

Tamannah was eventually married off, but when her husband learned of the abuse, the marriage collapsed. She was later forced into sex work.

"It still causes me deep pain," Farzana says softly. "I wanted all my girl students to have a good life."

Experiences like this pushed her work beyond teaching. She began accompanying families to police stations and courtyards, helping them seek justice and protection.

In another case in 2018, two sisters aged four and six were raped by a 60-year-old man. After learning of the incident, Farzana and others filed a case, despite pressure to withdraw it.

They refused.

The case is still ongoing. Recently, the accused side reportedly tried to settle the matter by offering Tk 3 lakh. The victims' family eventually left the area after facing harassment.

"We have evidence against the accused," Farzana says. "And we will continue fighting."

Another former student, Lima, was sent to work as a domestic helper. One night around 100am, Farzana received a call for help — the girl's employers had been physically abusing her.

Farzana and her husband went to the police station, but she alleges the authorities initially did not take the complaint seriously. Her persistence eventually led to a raid on the employer's house and the girl's rescue.

Incidents like these gradually strengthened Farzana's standing in Korail.

Today, she is often invited to help mediate local disputes — something she says would have been unimaginable for a woman in the community years ago.

Still, the journey has not been easy. In 2018, Farzana helped organise a torch procession as part of the anti-rapement movement.

"Afterwards, Banani Police Station warned us not to hold further programmes and recorded our names and addresses," she says. "Political leaders also pressured us to stop."

"Continuing this fight is not easy," she adds. "But stopping has never crossed my mind."

For Farzana, success is not measured by awards or recognition.

Calling for legal reforms, equal treatment under the law, and genuine political commitment to women's rights, she says justice must become faster and more certain.

"I will be at peace when legal complexities no longer delay justice," she says. "Even with evidence, rapists often go unpunished. That must change."

She adds, "We celebrate Women's Day like a festival. But it is meant to protest injustice. Women still do not enjoy full freedom."

For Farzana, the real measure of success lies closer to home.

"The day I see hundreds more people in Korail standing up against injustice," she says, "I will consider myself successful."

Curb corruption

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He said the guiding principle of the foreign policy in a "fascism-free Bangladesh" is "Bangladesh before all".

The Annual Development Programme for 2025-26 prioritises sustaining economic growth, reducing unemployment, creating jobs, alleviating poverty, advancing agriculture and industry, developing human resources, and improving quality of life.

Shahabuddin also highlighted the financial burden caused by "unprecedented corruption" in the energy sector under the "previous fascist government."

Public confidence in institutions, particularly the Election Commission, had fallen to near zero during the "fascist regime," but has begun to improve since the 13th National Election.

The government, he said, will ensure national institutions function in accordance with the law.

He remembered those subjected to enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and repression during "one and a half decades of the fascist regime".

Law enforcement agencies, he said, had been used as partisan forces under the ousted regime, but the present government is committed to making them professional and efficient.

Recalling the July-August 2024 mass uprising, he said it began as a quota reform protest but evolved into a nationwide movement against authoritarianism, joined by people from all walks of life and pro-democracy parties.

Jamaat made inroads into AL, BNP bastions

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candidate Mahbubur Rahman Belal got 54.78 percent of the votes cast in the latest polls. In the constituency, the party got only 4.62 and 5.21 percent votes in 1991 and 1996, respectively. They did not field candidates in the next two elections.

Again, in Patuakhali 2, Jamaat polled a mere 2.03 percent in 1991 and 1.70 percent in 1996. In this constituency, the party did not nominate candidates in the next two polls. However, in the 2026 general election, its nominee Shafiqul Islam secured this seat with a vote share of 52.23 percent.

A similar turnaround occurred in Dhaka-12. Jamaat secured only negligible shares of the vote there in 1991 and 1996 (3.62 percent and 2.80 percent, respectively). Yet, the constituency was won by Jamaat candidate Md Saiful Islam with a vote share of 42.74 percent.

The average winning margin for Jamaat candidates in the nine seats was approximately 22,439 votes. The highest margin was 92,566 in Rangpur-3, and the lowest was 2,920 in Dhaka-4.

BREAKTHROUGH
A Daily Star analysis shows that Jamaat captured 14 seats in BNP bastions and 12 in AL bastions in this year's polls.

Strongholds are defined as constituencies where either party won at least three seats in the four elections held between 1991 and 2008. By this measure, the AL had 78 strongholds and the BNP 85.

In the February 12 polls, Jamaat won Joypurhat-1 and Khulna-2, both of which the BNP had secured in all four previous elections.

Jamaat also claimed 12 constituencies where the BNP had won three of the four elections. These include Chapainawabganj-1 and 2, Dhaka-12, Jhenaidah 2, 3, and 4, Kushitia 2 and 3, Chattogram-15, Meherpur-2, Rajshahi-1, and Chuadanga-1.

In these BNP strongholds, Jamaat's average victory margin was about 28,375 votes. The largest winning margin came in Chuadanga-1 with 57,848 votes, while the smallest was in Rajshahi-1 with just 1,884 votes.

Some of these wins were aided by divisions within the BNP. In Dhaka-12, for instance, BNP's alliance partner, the Biplobi Workers' Party, fielded a candidate, while a BNP rebel also contested. Combined, the BNP-backed and rebel votes would have surpassed Jamaat's winning tally. Similar situations unfolded in Jhenaidah 4 and Dhaka-12, where rebel candidates from

BNP benefited Jamaat.

Jamaat also made notable gains in the AL strongholds, winning 12 such seats. In these constituencies, Jamaat's average victory margin was approximately 27,311 votes. The largest margin came in Jashore-5 with 47,831 votes, while the smallest was in Bagerhat-1 with 3,204 votes.

Three of the seats — Bagerhat-1, Narail 2, and Faridpur-1 — had been won by the AL in all four elections between 1991 and 2008.

The remaining nine had been secured by the AL in three of those four contests. These include Gazipur-4, Jashore-1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, Pabna-4, Patuakhali 2, and Sherpur-1.

DEBUT IN 55 SEATS
Among the 68 seats won by Jamaat in the 2026 general election, nearly 81 percent (55 constituencies) were ones the party had not won in any of the four elections held between 1991 and 2008.

Jamaat secured victory in the remaining 13 seats at least once during the same period. In the seats, which had a history of Jamaat's success, the average winning margin was 47,988 votes, almost 80 percent higher than that of the newly secured seats. The average margin was boosted by landslide victories in seats such as Sattkhira-2 (150,666 votes margin), Gaibandha-1 (102,729 votes margin), Sattkhira 3 (78,854 votes margin).

By contrast, in the 55 constituencies that Jamaat won for the first time this year, the average winning margin was 26,952 votes.

Dhaka University Development Studies Prof Asif Shahan, also a political analyst, said, "One possible explanation behind Jamaat's improved electoral performance is the return of 'shy voters' to their original party preference. In previous elections, a segment of voters who ideologically preferred Jamaat may have voted strategically for the BNP to defeat the AL."

"As the political context changed, such strategic voters may have reverted to supporting Jamaat directly."

He said that another factor may relate to perceptions of BNP's involvement in criminal activities or extortion, which could have also influenced some voters to vote for Jamaat as an alternative.

Prof Asif added that candidate-level dynamics may also have mattered. "In several constituencies, rebel candidates associated with the BNP appear to have split the vote."

JAMAAT STAYS STEADY
Jamaat also won 21 constituencies in which the party finished second in 2008. Of these, striking reversals occurred

in Rangpur-1 and 2, where the party overturned its 2008 defeat margins of 140,719 and 129,685 votes, respectively, to secure its first victories in the seats.

The party had been historically most successful in Sattkhira-2, where it won in 1991, 1996, and 2001. The party's largest victory by number of votes this year came in this seat (150,066 votes).

Six other seats won this year had also been secured by Jamaat twice in the four elections held between 1991 and 2008: Sattkhira-3, Bagerhat-4, Pabna-1, and Khulna-6 (1991 and 2001), and Nilphamari-3 and Pirojpur-1 (1996 and 2001).

Jamaat also reclaimed constituencies such as Sattkhira-1, Jashore-6, Chuadanga-2, and Chapainawabganj-3, which it had not won since the 1991 election.

Contacted, Maulana Abdul Halim, Jamaat assistant secretary general, said, "Despite severe oppression faced by the party since 2009, the organisation's leaders and activists remained steadfast in their ideological stance, which has had an impact on voters. Even in highly adverse circumstances, we tried to stand by the people."

SC clears govt

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executive high-handedness, arbitrariness, and malafide exercise of power" by the respondents, referring to the government.

On January 29, Justice Md Rezaul Haque, a chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed "no order" on the petition.

Earlier in the day, the HC rejected a writ petition filed by the organisation challenging the legality of the government's move to award the contract to DP World for container handling.

Lawyers Ahsanul Karim, Syed Mamun Mahbub, and Md Anwar Hossen appeared for Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibid Forum, while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state.

The ousted Awami League government initiated the move to appoint the DP World for the operation of the port's most modern, well-equipped, and functional container terminal.

After the fall of the AL regime on August 5, 2024, the interim government continued with the move and progressed much aiming to sign a concession agreement with the DP World to operate NCT by December last year. The initiative slowed down following a pending writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the dead procedure by the interim government.