

All credit goes to Tanim Noor: MAMO ON 'BONOLOTA EXPRESS' SUCCESS



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Zakia Bari Mamo returns this Eid with *Bonolota Express*, stepping back into cinemas with a performance that is drawing a distinctly emotional response from audiences.

The National Film Award-winning actor, who first broke through with *Daruchini Dwip*, says the reception to her latest film has been immediate and deeply felt—something she has not witnessed in years.

"There has been so much excitement, so much joy, so much emotion around *Bonolota Express*—it's beyond words," she said. "Audiences are watching the film with deep interest.

They are embracing it with immense love and praising the entire film. I'm truly grateful to them."

In the film, Mamo plays Afia—a character she says has resonated on a personal level with viewers. The reactions, she notes, have gone beyond routine appreciation.

"I've seen audience members come up to me and break down in tears," she said. "They've shared how much the character moved them. Some are crying, some are smiling. I haven't witnessed such reactions in a long time. This kind of love is unforgettable. Ultimately, the audience is the soul of cinema."

She credits much of that impact to the strength of the ensemble cast and the collaborative process behind the film.

"My co-artists are all major stars—exceptionally talented performers," she said. "It was a wonderful experience working with them. I've worked with most of them before, except Sariful Razz.

Every single person gave their hundred per cent, with sincerity and dedication."

Mamo is unequivocal when it comes to the film's director, placing the weight of its success firmly on his shoulders.

"Tanim Noor is an incredibly talented director," she said. "He has made this film based on Humayun Ahmed's novel *Kichukkhon*. It's a very well-crafted film. The writers who worked on the script have also shown great skill. Honestly, all the credit for *Bonolota Express* goes to Tanim Noor."

For Mamo, the response also reflects a broader shift in audience expectations.

"Viewers want strong stories—and *Bonolota Express* has that," she said.



She also points to her academic grounding in theatre as formative.

"I studied at Jahangirnagar University, where Selim Al Deen sir was my teacher," she said. "I had the chance to learn so much from him as well."

Looking beyond Eid, Mamo questions the industry's reliance on festive release windows.

"Why should films only be released during Eid?" she said. "They should be released throughout the year. We have other festivals—Pahela Baishakh, among many others. If films are released around those occasions, it would be very positive. The key is to have releases year round."

Her next project, *Master*, is already building momentum ahead of its local release.

"*Master* is a powerful story," she said. "It recently won an award in the Netherlands and received strong appreciation. I hope it will be released very soon."



CÉLINE DION announces comeback with Paris shows

Céline Dion has announced her return to the stage, four years after being diagnosed with Stiff Person Syndrome that affected her voice and mobility.

The singer will perform a 10-night residency at the Paris La Défense Arena in September and October, marking her first live shows since 2020. The announcement coincided with her 58th birthday.

"I'm so ready to do this," she told fans. "I'm feeling good, I'm strong, I'm feeling excited, and of course, a little nervous."

Dion, known for hits such as *My Heart Will Go On* and *Because You Loved Me*. Tickets for the shows will go on sale from April 7, with high demand expected. Registration has been started on her official website since March 31.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Café de Volte'



In Kalikotha, civility fractures as a gifted chef orchestrates a quiet reckoning. *Café de Volte*, a Hunt Inc production directed by Diana Merline, unfolds as a dark, psychological fable—where morality blurs, power shifts, and a single evening spirals into a haunting meditation on guilt, conscience, and the cost of truth.

Date: Friday | April 3, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm onwards

Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

Italy miss out on WC again

FROM PAGE 12 Elsewhere, Turkey qualified as Kerem Akturkoglu's 53rd-minute goal secured a 1-0 win in Kosovo, shattering their hosts' dream of appearing at the tournament for the first time. It will be Turkey's first appearance at a World Cup since reaching the semi-finals in 2002.

Meanwhile, Sweden recovered from a desperate performance in the group stage of qualifying to secure

their place at the finals in dramatic fashion.

Having beaten Ukraine 3-1 in last week's semifinal, they edged Poland 3-2 in Stockholm, with Arsenal's Viktor Gyokeres scoring an 88th-minute winner.

The Czech Republic matched Bosnia's achievement by qualifying thanks to back-to-back shoot-out victories, as they followed their success against Ireland last week by

defeating Denmark 3-1 on penalties in Prague.

Meanwhile, The Democratic Republic of Congo defeated Jamaica 1-0 after extra time in an intercontinental playoff on Tuesday to seal their first World Cup appearance in 52 years while Iraq grabbed the last available place by beating Bolivia 2-1 in their inter-confederation playoff, sealing their return to the finals after a 40-year absence.

Opposition walks out, plans street protests

FROM PAGE 1 He did not pay close attention to my statement. I do not believe he said it intentionally, but he went beyond the subject and made some personal remarks about me. Our notice was mainly about the referendum and the convening of the council that was supposed to be formed on the basis of that referendum," he said.

Responding to a proposal from the home minister, Shafiqur said, "Since the discussion was centred on the convening of the Constitution Reform Council, if a special committee were to be formed around it, we would consider it positively. That is why we called upon you to make a decision. But I could not understand whether any decision was made. I would like to hear a clear explanation from you."

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad explained that the proposal was an adjournment motion adopted in his absence. He noted that in Bangladesh's 53-year parliamentary history, only three adjournment motions had been passed. "You know very well that an adjournment motion cannot be brought on an issue that can only be resolved through legislation. Even so, it was accepted generously to give the opposition a chance to speak," he said.

He added that another adjournment motion would be considered, giving the opposition further opportunity to raise points. Shafiqur responded, "The issue we had all agreed on before the election—both the ruling party and the opposition—was one we supported and campaigned for. Yet, we did not receive the remedy we expected. This is not just about us; it reflects that the verdict of the people was neither honoured nor valued. As the opposition, we cannot accept this disregard. Therefore, in protest, we

are staging a walkout." The Speaker urged him to stay and listen, but Shafiqur said: "That notice has already come to our attention, and we believe it has been brought forward to overshadow the main notice. For this reason, we are walking out of the parliament in protest."

As the opposition left, the Speaker remarked, "You can walk out as tradition of the House." Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed later said: "The Leader of the Opposition chose to walk out, and under parliamentary practice that is their right." He noted that Shafiqur had already objected to the adjournment motion adopted earlier. "Issues which can only be resolved through legislation cannot be discussed under an adjournment motion. Out of generosity, the Speaker allowed it to be raised as a matter of national importance, and two hours were allocated for discussion. But once debate has taken place, parliamentary practice is that 'It's talked out.' There is no provision for a vote on the resolution itself," Salahuddin said.

Drone debris kills

FROM PAGE 12 A strike in Saudi Arabia's Al Kharj area. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun was critically injured in the attack and later died in Riyadh on March 18 while undergoing treatment.

The conflict has also heavily disrupted air travel to and from Bangladesh. At least 18 flights were cancelled yesterday, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh. A total of 894 flights to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport have been cancelled since the beginning of the war.

2 arrested over rape of schoolgirl

FROM PAGE 12 According to the case statement, around 8:00pm of March 26, the 15-year-old victim went to meet her friend Raju near her house. At that time, Ali and Shaon beat the victim's friend and took her to a nearby field where Nayan and Amin were waiting. There, Ali, Shaon and Nayan raped her while Amin recorded the video on his phone.

They threatened to publish the video online and kill her if she told anyone about the incident and left her there, according to the case statement. When the victim returned home

the next day, she informed her paternal aunt about the matter. When the aunt confronted the accused, they threatened her too with murder, added the case details.

After consulting with family and locals, the aunt filed a case with Maheshpur Police Station on Tuesday night.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the victim said she was scared after the incident and did not want anyone to find out. Although she revealed the matter to her aunt, she forbade her from telling anyone else. Later, the matter came to light after the suspects showed the video to several people

and then they decided to go for legal action.

Maheshpur Police Station OC Mehedi Hasan told The Daily Star, "The victim has been sent to a local hospital for medical check-up. One accused in the case, along with another suspect in the investigation, have been arrested. The operation to arrest the other accused is underway."

He said Hazrat Ali, who was arrested early yesterday, was sent to jail after he was produced before a court. Meanwhile, Raju, arrested in the afternoon, will be produced before a magistrate tomorrow.

India hikes jet fuel

FROM PAGE 12 The price rose to 7,500 riel (\$1.88) per litre as of midnight yesterday, up from 7,200 the previous day and 3,750 in late February, the commerce ministry said in a statement. A litre of regular gasoline in Cambodia now costs 5,450 riel, up from around 3,750 in late February, the commerce ministry said.

As conflict in the Middle East disrupts trade, India will allow factories in export-focused zones to sell goods domestically at lower import duties, according to a government order.

The measure was announced in the February budget to shield exporters from higher US tariffs, but analysts say it has gained urgency as the war threatens energy supplies and pushes up freight and oil costs, reports Reuters.

The relief applies to factories in Special Economic Zones (SEZs),

which are primarily set up for exports and allow companies to import raw materials duty free.

Under the order, SEZ businesses can sell a capped share of products including chemicals, engineering goods, heavy machinery, textiles, footwear, pharmaceuticals, electronics and consumer items in the domestic market while paying reduced customs duties, instead of the full import tax applied to foreign goods.

The reduced duties vary by product, with customs rates of about 5 percent to 12.5 percent, rather than the higher levies applied to comparable imports, the order showed.

The relief will apply from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 and will be available to businesses that began production on or before March 31, 2025.

Initial probe finds

FROM PAGE 12 already been reported to the tribunal's fact-finding committee formed to investigate a series of allegations involving members of the prosecutors.

Questions over the tribunal's CCTV system first surfaced after ICT Prosecutor Sultan alleged in a Facebook post on February 23 that Abzalul's wife entered the chamber of a powerful prosecutor carrying a heavy bag.

In the post, he also claimed that Abzalul was later made a prosecution witness in exchange for money and was eventually acquitted.

Following the allegation and other claims of unethical conduct within the prosecution team, ICT Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam formed a fact-finding committee on March 10 to probe the matter.

US open to Dhaka's waiver request

FROM PAGE 12 Bangladesh had earlier sent a letter making a similar request to the US.

Khalilur made the request in view of the upcoming planting season in Bangladesh so that farmers are not adversely affected and harvests and food security are not hampered, the statement said.

He explained that Bangladesh could not take advantage of the earlier limited worldwide waiver by the US on Russian oil shipments at sea, as none of the tankers was bound for Bangladesh at that time.

The two sides also discussed

options for purchasing more refined oil produced from Russian crude in third countries to meet immediate needs.

Secretary Wright acknowledged the energy challenges Bangladesh is facing and expressed his country's commitment to support Bangladesh during these difficult times to help ensure its energy security, the statement added.

He assured that he and his team would work closely with the relevant departments of the US government to this end.

The two sides also discussed longer-term cooperation on

sustainable energy solutions for Bangladesh and the prospects of increasing procurement of US energy products.

Wright also congratulated Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on his election victory and said he looked forward to strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries in the coming days.

Tareq Md Ariful Islam, Bangladesh ambassador to the US; DM Salahuddin Mahmud, deputy chief of mission; and Fazle Rabbi, economic minister at the Bangladesh embassy in the US, were also present at the meeting.