

A film is the outcome of everyone's collective effort: Tanim Noor

First, it's a story about a train journey. Plenty of films have been made globally about train journeys, and countless movies have shot portions on trains. Through a train story, a picture of the whole of Bangladesh emerges, as everyone from common people to ministers are passengers on a train.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Tanim Noor is a name currently echoing throughout the film industry. His directed film, *Bonolota Express*, is at the peak of audience demand. As of April 14, ticket sales have crossed seven crore BDT, and many are still struggling to find tickets. The film is also drawing significant interest from audiences abroad. Previously, he garnered acclaim for his film *Utshob*. The successful director spoke with The Daily Star.

Bonolota Express is a success in every aspect. What is the main secret behind such massive success?

I have always felt that a film doesn't belong to just one person; it is the outcome of everyone's collective effort.

I give credit to everyone who was with me during the making, including the artists, scriptwriters, cinematographers, and the entire team who gave 100% of their labour and love. They did the work out of passion. The credit isn't mine alone; it belongs to everyone. Because everyone worked with such care, the audience is showing this much interest.

Why did you choose Humayun Ahmed's novel *Kichukkhon*?

I liked the novel *Kichukkhon* after reading it. There were two main reasons behind choosing it. First, it's a story about a train journey. Plenty of films have been made globally about train journeys, and countless movies have shot portions on trains. Through a train story,



picture of the whole of Bangladesh emerges, as everyone from common people to ministers are passengers on a train. One day after *Utshob*, Shadhin suggested I work with *Kichukkhon*. I read the book afterward; perhaps I hadn't read it before. Upon reading, I realized this novel has a lot of depth. That's how, I started working on it.

Most of the artistes in *Bonolota Express* said it would surpass *Utshob*. What is your comment?

This happened because of the audience. It was possible for *Bonolota Express* to surpass *Utshob* only because of them. When a good film is made, the audience encourages us and comes to the theaters. The viewers of this country are eager for good stories and good cinema. They watched *Utshob* with interest, but they are watching *Bonolota Express* with even more enthusiasm. That is why this film has surpassed *Utshob*. We are grateful to the audience.

Countless people are watching *Bonolota*

Express. Is there a particular memory that has left an impression on you?

There are many wonderful memories that have left a mark on my heart and will stay with me. Seeing audiences go to the halls in groups is a joy. It is a great achievement that 70-80-year-old viewers have come to the halls to see *Bonolota Express*. I am amazed to see everyone from 9-year-old children to elderly citizens in the theaters.

Have you thought about your next film?

I haven't thought about it yet. Let more time pass, then I can say. However, I plan to move into production for a project that another director will helm.

Bonolota Express has been released abroad. What kind of response is it getting?

It's getting a very good response abroad. It has been released in several countries, including North America and Australia. International audiences are watching with great interest. In North America, ticket sales have reached \$322,000 so far. In Australia, it's \$100,000. These numbers will rise.

What is the gross collection of *Bonolota Express* in Bangladesh so far?

As of yesterday, it has crossed seven crore BDT. This is the gross collection. People are still not getting tickets. This is certainly happy news for us, and I hope it continues. I'd like to add one piece of information: if tickets worth ten crore BDT are sold in Bangladesh, we have to pay two crore 30 lakh BDT in taxes.

Shows are closed after evening. What do you think about this?

Night shows are closed, and we are suffering immensely because of it. Audiences can't watch the film either. Theater plays and other cultural events are happening at night, but cinema shows are closed. This is putting us at a loss.

Two new web films release on OTT



Two Bangladeshi web films were released on local OTT platforms during Pahela Baishakh, offering contrasting narratives and new on-screen pairings.

Tumi Ami Shudhu, released on Binge, marked the first collaboration between Pritom Hasan and Xeler Rahman. Directed by Shihab Shaheen, the project brought together actors who had previously worked with him separately.

Meanwhile, *Cha Gorom*, released

on Chorki on April 14, took a socially grounded approach. Directed by Shankha Dasgupta, the film stars Safa Kabir and Partho Sheikh, among others.

The film examines the lives of tea plantation workers, moving beyond scenic portrayals to focus on labour, rights, and lived realities.

Together, the releases reflect a widening thematic and creative range in Bangladesh's OTT landscape.



Taylor Swift leads 2026 AMA nominations

Taylor Swift led nominations for the 2026 American Music Awards with eight nods, driven by her album *The Life of a Showgirl*. She was shortlisted for Artiste of the Year, Album of the Year and Song of the Year for *The Fate of Ophelia*, along with Best Pop Album, Best Pop Song, Best Female Pop Artiste, Best Music Video and Song of the Summer.

She already holds the record for most AMA wins and could extend it this year.

The ceremony is set for May 25 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, airing live on CBS and Paramount+.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Anandaloke Mangalaloke'

A Baishakh celebration unfolds through colour, craft, and community in *Anandaloke Mangalaloke*. From mask-making and sora painting to live art and folk music, the programme reimagines festive tradition as participatory culture—where heritage is not displayed but lived, inviting audiences into a textured, evolving canvas of Bangla identity.

Date: April 12-25, 2026

Time: 11 am - 7 pm

Venue: Centrepoint, Ground Floor, Uttara



NEWS

BNP to go tough

FROM PAGE 12 the party's credibility and weaken public trust.

Meanwhile, the leadership is also concerned about outsiders using the party's name to influence local disputes, pursue personal interests, or engage in misconduct.

Local leaders have been urged to stay alert in this regard and take action if the BNP's name is used for intimidation, extortion, factional feuds, or other abuses.

Syed Emran Saleh Prince said, "There are many who are not members but are using the party's name to engage in unethical acts -- we are taking immediate action against them too."

Additionally, internal clashes within the BNP and its affiliated bodies have emerged as another major concern, as party leaders said repeated factional confrontations are weakening grassroots discipline and risking long-term damage to public confidence in the party.

Human rights data cited by party sources illustrate the scale of the problem.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, 28 incidents of BNP infighting in February left 186 people injured and three dead. The organisation also recorded one clash involving Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal that left one person dead.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights

Support Society reported 88 internal clashes in March.

Party leaders said such figures have reinforced the high command's view that the problem can no longer be ignored. They warned that if factional conflict continues unchecked, it could damage both the party organisation and the government's standing.

A senior BNP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the party aims to reorganise itself ahead of the local government polls to restore organisational discipline and strengthen it at all levels.

Among the steps taken against misconduct was the expulsion of a father and son on April 14 over their alleged involvement in a political dispute that led to a clash in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila.

A central BNP press release identified them as upazila BNP convening committee member Khoka Mia and union BNP activist Tofayel Ahmed Rana, and said both were stripped of their primary membership and all party posts over allegations of involvement in violence, clashes, and bloodshed within the party.

On April 9, two BNP groups clashed over the jhute trade, leaving two pedestrians with bullet injuries, after which the party expelled Fatullah thana Jubo Dal convener Masudur Rahman.

However, the party has yet to take action over a clash between two groups of BNP leaders and activists in Natore

on March 19 over dominance, which left a police officer injured.

On April 1, a Narayanganj metropolitan Swachhchhasebak Dal president was named in a case over a kidnapping followed by murder, but the party has yet to act on the incident.

On March 24, three people were killed in post-polls violence in Brahmanbaria, but the party has not taken action against its leaders and activists.

Jamaat men

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Daulatpur upazila unit President Asaduzzaman Asad; and Safi, a madrasa teacher from Abeder Ghat. Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, yesterday said, "Those involved in the attack and murder went into hiding after the incident."

Police are trying to trace and arrest them, he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of Jamaat's Kushtia town unit held a press conference at a restaurant yesterday afternoon and claimed that their party activists have been framed as part of a conspiracy.

On Tuesday, locals and Shamim's followers staged a demonstration and formed a human chain in Daulatpur's Darogar Mor area, demanding immediate arrest of the killers and their trial.

'We don't know what happened to them'

FROM PAGE 12 Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) said they were deeply saddened by the capsizing, adding that at least 250 people remained missing. The agencies described the incident as a stark reminder of the risks faced by Rohingya refugees and other vulnerable groups undertaking perilous sea journeys.

The boat, which departed from Teknaf and was bound for Malaysia, sank in the second week of April amid rough seas, the UN said. Survivors said nearly 300 people were packed onboard, including women, children, crew members and suspected traffickers.

Rafiqul Islam, one of the survivors, said passengers endured four days and nights at sea as conditions rapidly deteriorated. In an attempt to avoid patrols, traffickers forced passengers into cramped storage compartments meant for fish and nets.

"There was hardly any oxygen," he told Reuters, adding that at least 30

people died from suffocation before the boat capsized.

When the boat overturned, hundreds were thrown into the sea, he said.

Relatives of the missing victims expressed frustration, alleging that there has been no visible action from Bangladeshi authorities so far.

Zainal Abedin, a fisherman from Shah Porir Dwip in Teknaf, left home on April 4 without informing his family. Later, relatives learned that he had planned to travel to Malaysia through brokers.

"We still don't know what has happened to him," said his mother, Hasina Begum.

Two others from the same area, Hasan and Farid, also went missing after travelling to Malaysia, their families said. In Cox's Bazar town's Samitipara area, several young people, including Ibrahim, Harun Noor, and Shafigue, have also been reported missing.

Posts seeking information about missing persons have been circulating on Rohingya-run social media groups.

Rohingya rights activist Khin Maung, in a Facebook post, said one of his acquaintances, Md Ullah, is believed to be among the missing.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Coast Guard said a Bangladeshi flagged vessel, MT Meghna Pride, rescued nine people from the Andaman Sea on April 9. The survivors were later handed over to a Coast Guard patrol vessel.

They are Md Imran, Rahela Begum, Hriday, Sohan Uddin, Md Akbar, Rafiqul Islam, Tofayel, Sayad Alam, and Md Hamid.

A case has been filed with the Teknaf Police Station over the incident.

A rescued victim confirmed to this correspondent that the people accused in the case were traffickers.

Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said the investigation was underway.

"We are working to identify those involved," he said, adding that there is no confirmed data yet on the total number of missing persons.

Tarique seeks \$2b from dev partners

FROM PAGE 12 He stressed that Asia requires a coordinated and forward-looking response to strengthen energy security, address immediate supply disruptions, and support the most vulnerable nations.

Tarique said the crisis has already disrupted Bangladesh's economy. "In response, we have taken a range of short-term measures to contain the impact," he said.

These measures include demand-side management through the rationing of government office and market hours; stabilising fuel supplies through emergency imports and diversified sourcing; and consumption controls, including fuel rationing and limits on retail sales to prevent hoarding and panic buying

Interim govt

FROM PAGE 12

the Kushtia episode to prevent a recurrence.

"This is being seen very seriously. We will take action. Zero tolerance means zero tolerance," he said, adding that he had spoken to the home minister about the matter.

No one is allowed to take the law into their own hands regardless of the allegations against any individual.

"The power to enforce the law belongs to the state alone."

People can question a pir or feel angry about someone's remarks, but they cannot punish a person on their own even if they believe the government has failed to act, he said.

Drawing a broader comparison, he said the public has no right to assault a thief, pickpocket, or robber even if they are caught red handed.

"Even if you catch a robber red-handed, they cannot be beaten to death. Leave aside killing, they should not even be beaten."

The tendency towards mob violence did not emerge overnight.

"Rather, such incidents had been encouraged during the interim period, creating a dangerous perception that people can punish others themselves."

Asked whether action against incidents during the interim government period could have helped prevent present-day mob attacks, Zahed said many such incidents were not spontaneous acts but planned actions carried out in the name of

through initiatives such as the 'Fuel App'.

He warned that the scale and consequences of the crisis could exceed those of the 1970s oil shock, which triggered a decade of stalled development in the 1980s.

Since independence in 1971, he said, Bangladesh has worked relentlessly to drive economic growth, lift millions out of poverty, and improve living standards.

"Today, these hard-earned gains are in danger of being reversed," he added.

Tarique Rahman said Bangladesh is not alone in facing this risk, nor can it overcome the challenge through national efforts alone.

"This moment calls for decisive and coordinated global action to

contain the impact of the ongoing energy crisis, particularly to protect vulnerable countries, including the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), from severe economic and social consequences," he said.

He also thanked Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who delivered the concluding remarks, for convening the timely summit.

Leaders from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Japan, and other countries took part in the online meeting.

The prime minister delivered his speech from his Sangsad Bhaban office on the day. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and Foreign Affairs Adviser M Humayun Kabir were also present.

INTERNET CRACKDOWN Russia toughens restrictions on VPNs

AFP, Moscow

Russia has hardened its restrictions on the use of VPNs to access a host of online services, state and independent media outlets reported yesterday, as the authorities seek to exert more control over online communications.

Virtual private networks (VPNs) allow users to mask the websites they visit, enhancing security by making it more difficult for telecoms networks or security services to access data.

PM to meet

FROM PAGE 2 Monzur Al Murshed Chowdhury, president of the UHFPO Forum of Bangladesh, said officers face multiple challenges, including staff shortages and a lack of security.

"During a meeting with the health minister, we expressed our desire to meet the prime minister to present these issues so that services can be improved," he told The Daily Star.

"The prime minister agreed, and this will be the first such meeting between a prime minister and UHFPOs," he added.

mobs.

A mob is usually a spontaneous and unstructured reaction. But in recent times, there has been a tendency to organise gatherings to attack or surround particular places.

There had been cases where people were told to surround a newspaper office or someone's house and described those as planned acts.

"The Kushtia incident was also planned. Criminal offences do not become time-barred and remain offences even after 15, 20, 25 or 30 years."

He, however, said that during and after a mass uprising, situations remain fluid and there can be debate in society over how certain incidents should be viewed.

A panel of lawyers is being formed under the information ministry to examine how action could be taken against misinformation and disinformation.

"Spreading fake news is a crime," he said, adding that presenting misinformation or disinformation as news, or making fake photo cards using the logos of well-known channels, cannot be accepted.

The government will move step by step.

"First, we will warn those involved. If they still do not stop, legal action will be taken," he said.

Chief Information Officer Yeakub Ali and other senior officials were present.