

Meghdol, Chandrabindoo set for Kolkata concert debut

Bangladeshi band Meghdol will perform alongside Indian group Chandrabindoo for the first time at a joint concert in Kolkata on September 5. The event, announced on Meghdol's official social media pages, has been teased as "Megh meets the Moon" and is being organised by Talent Wall. Venue details are yet to be confirmed.

Meghdol frontman Shibu Kumar Shil said the collaboration reflects shared musical roots in Bengali traditions. He said the joint performance marks an honour for the band. He also indicated further concerts in West Bengal during an upcoming tour.

Meghdol has recorded a new track for the film *Roid* by member Mejbaur Rahman Sumon, expected next month. The band is also preparing to release three songs from its third album *Aluminium er Dana*.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Falling in love with acting XEFER RAHMAN

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Imagine two popular singers coming together for a romantic web film—directed by Shihab Shaheen, a filmmaker known for weaving heartfelt love stories in projects like *Tumi Ami Shudhu*. Audiences are loving their chemistry, but what makes it even more interesting is that Xefer Rahman shares a close friendship with Pritom Hasan.

"Pritom and his wife, Shahtaj Monira Hashem, are among my closest friends. We've always shared a different dynamic. We've worked together on songs before, but acting together was a first. Moving beyond that comfort and making the relationship feel real on screen—that was the real journey for me," Xefer



Screengrab of Xefer's from 'Tumi Ami Shudhu'

reflects.

That sense of ownership carries into the film's music as well. With *Tor Chaya*, Xefer doesn't just lend her voice—she shapes the song entirely, composing and singing it herself, alongside lyrics written with

Badhon. "People gave so much love to *Niye Jabi Ki* from *Daagi* film, directed by Shihab *bhai*. But this time, being seen and heard at the same time—it made *Tor Chaya* feel even more special to me," she says.

Though music has always been her primary space, Xefer's acting journey—beginning with Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's *Last Defenders of Monogamy* and continuing with *Myself Allen Swapan 2*—finds a deeper emotional anchor in this project.

"Both of us come from music, but Shihab *bhai*'s way of working made everything feel so intentional. The way audiences are connecting with this layered love story—it's honestly made me fall in love with acting," she adds.



Jafar Panahi enters TIME 100 as a voice of cinematic resistance

Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi has been included in the 2026 TIME 100 list in the "Artistes" category, recognised for his long-standing defiance of censorship and politically charged filmmaking.

TIME cited Panahi as a director who has turned restriction into resistance, continuing to make films despite bans, arrests, and state-imposed limitations. His work is noted for portraying life under political repression and its human consequences.

Panahi's career has been marked by repeated clashes with Iranian authorities, including imprisonment and travel restrictions. His latest film, *It Was Just an Accident*, reportedly shot covertly in Iran, won the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2025 and received two Academy Award nominations.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Buddhijibir Bashay Shoytan'

Anuswar Theatre presents a stark new production, *Buddhijibir Bashay Shoytan*,



where a midnight encounter between an intellectual and the devil becomes a moral reckoning. Set against the disquiet of global war, the play probes collapsing ethics, exhausted humanity, and the fragile boundary between thought, fear, and survival.

Date: Today | April 17, 2026

Time: 5 pm & 7:30 pm onwards

Venue: Anuswar Studio, 67/4 Pioneer Road, Segunbagicha

NEWS

Expansion of higher medical education

FROM PAGE 12 about their problems and make recommendations on how the ministry can help address them, health ministry sources said.

Prof Liaquat Ali, a member of the now-defunct Health Sector Reform Commission, said the authorities should expedite the projects to make the universities fully functional.

"Once that happens, it will help produce skilled manpower and decentralise health services," Liaquat, also a former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Health Sciences, told The Daily Star.

At present, BMU, formerly known as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), is the only full-fledged public medical institution offering a wide range of postgraduate courses, including MPhil programmes, alongside research and training since 1998. It also runs a large tertiary-care hospital in the capital.

Around 2,500 doctors are enrolled in these courses under BMU every year. Of the 1,56,750 registered doctors across the country, 22,460 hold postgraduate degrees, according to the Health Bulletin 2024 published early last month.

Apart from BMU, Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons, an autonomous professional body, offers postgraduate courses.

CTG MEDICAL UNIVERSITY Since 2016, Chattogram Medical University (CMU), the country's second medical university, has been operating from two floors in the main building of the Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases. From there, it oversees 51 public and private medical colleges, as well as nursing colleges and institutes in Chattogram division.

A Tk 1,859 crore project was approved in September 2023 to construct 27 buildings, including a 1,200-bed hospital on 24 acres of land at Fouzdarhat. But construction has not yet begun.

Farhad Rashid, executive engineer of CMU, said consultants have been hired, and the design drawing is now at the final stage.

The deadline for completing the project is June 2027, but it is likely to be missed, he told this correspondent, adding that a contractor will be hired soon.

Seeking anonymity, another CMU official said only 73 employees have been recruited so far, and the service

rules and regulations are yet to be enacted.

RAJSHAHI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY RMU runs its activities from two old buildings of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and the first floor of the Regional Nursing and Midwifery Training Institute.

A project to build infrastructure for RMU and a hospital was approved in June 2022, around six years after its establishment as the country's third medical university.

The proposed location of the university was changed a couple of years ago, and 68 acres of land were acquired in the Cityhut area.

Meanwhile, the project cost rose to Tk 2,258 crore from Tk 1,867 crore, and the deadline for its completion was extended by a year to June 2027.

When contacted, RMU Vice Chancellor Jawadul Haque said the tender process for constructing the administrative building has been completed, while that of other segments is underway.

He said a draft of the service rules and regulations has been sent to the health ministry for approval.

Replying to a question, the VC said that given the project's progress, it may not be possible to introduce postgraduate courses within the next four years.

Jawadul said they have been conducting examinations for 72 public and private medical colleges, and nursing colleges and institutes in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions.

He also mentioned that they sent a proposal to the health ministry, seeking authorisation to conduct postgraduate courses in RMU-affiliated medical colleges.

SYLHET MEDICAL UNIVERSITY The country's fourth medical university in Sylhet has been carrying out its activities from Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College since its inception in 2018.

Though the university has been able to formulate the necessary rules and regulations, its organogram has not yet been finalised. Apart from the VC and the treasurer, all other staffers are working on a contractual basis.

Following the approval of a Tk 2,036 crore project in July 2023, 68 acres of land were acquired in the South Surma area. The project deadline is June 2027.

SMU Vice Chancellor Ismail Patwary said the appointment of consultants is now at the final stage, and it will require at least three years to develop

the structures.

Referring to the pending recruitment of employees at various levels, he said, "It may not be possible to start postgraduate courses within the next four to five years."

KHULNA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY Established in 2021 as the country's fifth medical university, Sheikh Hasina Medical University was renamed Khulna Medical University (KMU) during the tenure of the interim government.

Currently, KMU operates from a rented house in Khulna city and regulates undergraduate courses of medical colleges and nursing institutes in Khulna division.

Talking to this newspaper last month, Ruhul Amin, the then vice-chancellor of KMU, said a Tk 1,874 crore project was approved in 2024, and June 2027 was set as the deadline for developing infrastructure and constructing a 1,200-bed hospital.

Replying to a query, he said it was not possible to say when the university will be able to launch postgraduate courses, as it would take several years to complete the project.

He also suggested that the university should be authorised to offer postgraduate courses in medical colleges affiliated with it.

Govt eyes

FROM PAGE 12 The cabinet also discussed expanding other renewable sources, including wind and biogas.

In the briefing, the cabinet secretary also said efforts are underway to modernise solar systems and promote domestic manufacturing to overcome existing limitations. He said the government aims to keep solar power tariffs between Tk 4 and Tk 8 per unit.

The cabinet also decided to observe November 7 as a public holiday to mark National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

The BNP has long observed the day, commemorating the civil-military uprising of November 7, 1975, which led to the release of then army chief Ziaur Rahman and his rise to national leadership.

In addition, June 6 will be observed annually as "National Rural Development Day", but it will not be a public holiday.

Dato Amin not behind

FROM PAGE 2 and Expatriates' Welfare Minister Ariful Haque Choudhury and Malaysian Human Resources Minister Ramanan Ramakrishnan in Putrajaya, the Malaysian side introduced a technology-driven labour recruitment system for all source countries, including Bangladesh.

According to a joint statement, the system would ensure that employers bear the full cost of recruitment, resulting in zero cost to workers, in line with the Employer Pays Principle under the guidelines of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

However, Bloomberg reported that the foreign worker recruitment system that Malaysia is planning to adopt is developed by Bestinet Sdn Bhd.

Quoting six people familiar with the matter, it reports the software is marketed as allowing companies

to hire workers directly, rather than using middlemen who charge them excessive fees.

The system known as the Universal Recruitment Advanced Platform, or Turap, will have a digital portal where employers can sign up and find employees, they said.

In January, Bloomberg published an investigation into endemic corruption in Malaysia's recruitment of migrant workers from Bangladesh.

Aminul, popularly known as Dato Amin, has denied contributing to migrant workers being charged high recruitment fees and said he has devoted his life to helping them.

Representatives for Ramanan, Malaysia's Prime Minister's Office and Bestinet did not respond to Bloomberg's requests for comment.

Bloomberg reports that Bestinet already operates a software system called the Foreign Workers

Centralised Management System, or FWCMS, which Malaysia uses to manage parts of its recruitment, especially from Bangladesh.

That system consists of various modules, such as worker health checks and insurance, and also involves recruitment agents.

In an interview with Bloomberg in July last year, Aminul said he was not responsible for the people who use it, referring to officials who approve bogus applications or agents who overcharge workers.

In 2024, Bangladesh's police asked Malaysia to stop using FWCMS and for Aminul to be extradited, alleging he played a key role in a system that "fraudulently extorted" workers, the report said.

Home minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said in October last year that Malaysia's police were in touch with their Bangladeshi counterparts. Aminul has not been extradited or charged.

College student dies after hurled

FROM PAGE 12 construction building, locking the gate. The attackers chased him, and the building's security guard, Enamul Haque, later opened the lock as the assailants tagged Ashfaq as a thief. They then went upstairs and began beating him.

At one point, the college student was pushed from the eighth floor into the lift shaft, leaving him critically injured. He was pronounced dead

after being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, according to the case statement.

Sources at Chawkbazar Police Station said the killing may have been linked to a rivalry between juvenile gangs.

They said the incident might have stemmed from a dispute over a mobile phone theft, although it remains unclear whether the victim was involved in any gang.

Chawkbazar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Babul Azad said police have collected CCTV footage and are trying to arrest the remaining suspects.

"The motive is still unclear, but we are investigating," he added.

The victim's father said, "My son was not involved in politics. We sent him to Chattogram for better education, but now he is dead. I want justice."

Rooppur gets licence for uranium loading

FROM PAGE 12 completed all necessary technical tests and preparatory activities. "These were evaluated against both national regulations and international standards to ensure maximum safety."

The exact date of the fuel loading ceremony will be finalised following a meeting with the Russian authorities, he said.

"Fuel loading is a critical phase in the commissioning of a nuclear power plant. Once the fuel is placed in the reactor, a series of step-by-step

tests will be conducted to prepare for power generation," said Zahedul Hasan, managing director of Nuclear Power Plant Company Bangladesh Ltd.

He added that within three months of starting fuel loading, a percentage of electricity from the first unit will be added to the national grid. Full-scale electricity production is expected within 10 to 11 months.

On April 7 this year, the fuel loading schedule faced a brief delay due to minor issues identified in the fire extinguishing system. However, after

a high-level delegation inspected the site and expressed satisfaction with the updated fire safety measures, the regulatory body proceeded with the issuance of licence.

The nuclear power plant in Pabna is being implemented at a cost of approximately \$12.65 billion, featuring two VVER-1200 reactors. The plant is viewed as a "game-changer" for Bangladesh's energy sector, marking a historic shift towards sustainable, high-capacity power production to ensure long-term energy security.