

## Shakib Khan-starrer 'Rockstar' unveils first animated teaser

The makers of *Rockstar* have unveiled an animated promotional project and announced that the film's teaser will be released on May 5.

Sharing the announcement, the team captioned the project: "One story that will change everything." The animated video features a cheering crowd celebrating a rockstar, who is introduced with "Mega Star" written across his sunglasses. The sequence shows his character in high-energy moments labelled "Warm up", culminating in a shot of him standing on a car with the caption, "Don't blink, it's just a warm up."

The film is directed by Azman Rusho and produced by Sun Motions Pictures Limited. It stars Shakib Khan in the lead role as the Rockstar, alongside Sabila Nur and Tangia Zaman Methila.



# 'Becoming stale kills careers'

Pritom Hasan discusses break from playback



SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

After a string of successful film scores that brought Pritom Hasan fame beyond his years, the artiste recently announced that he would step back from playback singing for the time being. Now, fresh off the release of *2nd Nayok*, a collaboration with Nuhash Humayun, the indomitable composer-turned-actor looks to return to his roots as the poster boy of Bangla independent hits.

**You were arguably at the peak of your popularity when you stepped back from making music for films. What led to that?**

I was oscillating back and forth about it for a while, especially since independent work has always been at the core of my musicianship. Many of the fans who have supported me from the onset voiced that they miss the style of my 2023 EP (Extended Play).



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**Was there a specific moment that made you step back?**

Not a specific moment per se. However, I knew that being cornered into one specific niche can get stale and even kill careers. I wouldn't say that I was typecast, but I didn't want to be "instructed" to do a particular kind of music. That's just not my jam.

**'2nd Nayok' really comes into its own with its music video. How did you and Nuhash conceive this idea?**

If you really look into it, the concept is about being sidelined—a feeling that I'm sure a lot of people are familiar with. The relationship between Nuhash and me is that of close friends, so whenever we are supposed to casually hang out, we end up talking about work. This song came out of one of those meetings.

**The casting was also inspired.**

It was! We wanted a fresh face for the video, and Malaika fit the bill perfectly. I am a huge fan of Mir Rabby and his on-screen presence, so it was a no-brainer for us to cast him in the video.

**A vacuum will be felt because of your absence in films. Who can take up your mantle?**

(Laughs) There's more than enough talent in our industry! G M Ashraf is already doing an amazing job. Jahid Nirob has been prodigal for a long time. Ankon Kumar and his mellifluous voice are assets for Bangladesh, and we need to look after him. Personally, I want more indie musicians to come forward and show their mettle.



## Ashes releases long-awaited track 'Feriwala'

After nearly a decade of anticipation, Bangladeshi band Ashes has released its new track *Feriwala*, the fourth song from its album *Bivrom*. Written and composed by frontman Zunayed Evan, the song dropped Thursday night alongside a music video shot in Canada and at Kaptai Lake in Rangamati.

The track has a long history, first teased in 2016 and later shared as a demo in 2019, sparking years of fan curiosity. Evan said the band did not expect such a delay, noting the overwhelming response from listeners.

With its official release, fans' long wait has finally ended. Ashes' current lineup features Evan, Sultan Rafsan Khan, Wahid Uz Zaman Turjo, Adnan Bin Zaman and Tawfiq Ahmed Bijoy.

## Princess Diana docuseries to feature unheard recordings



A new documentary series centred on the life of Princess Diana is in development, with producers promising an intimate portrait told largely in her own voice.

Titled *Diana: The Unheard Truth*, the three-part series is scheduled for release in 2027, marking 30 years since Diana's death in a Paris car crash. The project is based on previously unreleased audio recordings of conversations between Diana and her confidante, surgeon James Colthurst. The tapes were originally used as source material for *Diana: Her True Story* by Andrew Morton. The series will explore her life, marriage to King Charles III, and legacy, offering fresh insight into one of the most scrutinised figures in modern history.

# NEWS

## Mothers left to choose

FROM PAGE 12 performed nearly 7.3 times more unpaid care work than men.

For mothers of children with disabilities, the strain can be overwhelming. Sazia Jainab (not her real name), a former employee of a private company, quit her job after her child was diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder. Her employers didn't offer any support.

Ashrafunnahar Mishti, executive director of the Women with Disabilities and Development Foundation (WDDF), said, "It is not just about leaving a job; in many cases, it leads to the abandonment of the mother."

"Families break apart, divorces happen, and many women return to their parental homes or live in isolation, as relatives are unwilling to share caregiving responsibilities."

She pointed out that a widespread "knowledge deficit" regarding disability care has left mothers as sole caregivers, making sustained employment physically and mentally unfeasible.

Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd, sees such exits of mid-career women as a crisis in the "professional pipeline."

"Just when a woman is ready for leadership, motherhood demands attention. With nuclear families and limited childcare, many feel forced to sacrifice their professional identities."

This systemic "leak" reinforces bias. "When employers saw mid-level women leave jobs, they became reluctant to hire women at all. They assumed that female employees would eventually quit. So, women started losing at the very first step—recruitment."

The "leak" also carries serious economic consequences, reflecting a major loss of national resources.

Sayama Haque Bidisha, pro-vice chancellor at Dhaka University, noted that women with children under five were far less likely to participate in the labour force than those without young children.

When a mid-career woman exits the workforce or faces stagnation, the state loses the return on its investment in her education, particularly in high-cost fields, she said.

"If a doctor or a professional quits because of a lack of safe childcare, society loses the value of her service."

In cases of forced stagnation, many women either downshift careers, shift to remote work, or leave field roles due to a lack of reliable childcare support, said Bidisha, a professor of economics at DU.

Referring to a recent BBS survey, she said, "This loss is reflected in leadership gaps—less than 7 percent of managerial roles in Bangladesh are currently held by women. They excelled in education, but that did not translate into leadership. We will continue losing talent at its peak unless care burdens are addressed."

To plug the leak, experts call for a radical transformation of the "care economy" which encompasses care work—paid and unpaid, direct and indirect—delivered through public and private sectors, non-profit organisations and households.

A 2024 ILO report said that allocating 3.99 percent of GDP to care sectors could generate approximately seven million new jobs in Bangladesh by 2035—91 percent of which would be

formal roles for women.

UN Women Country Representative Gitanjali Singh asserted that investing in care systems would be a "triple win" for women, society, and the economy.

"As women's time poverty reduces, more women enter and stay in the labour market, while investments in the care sector generate long-term dividends for human development, health, reduced poverty, and well-being of societies," she noted.

Rupali proposes turning caregiving into a small business sector.

"Every office cannot afford a daycare. We need community-based, certified daycare centres for people with different budgets. If these services become available in hubs like Motijheel or Gulshan, middle-class professionals could afford quality care that fits their income."

Bidisha echoed the same view and urged the introduction of regulated domestic caregiving services to replace the current expensive, informal, and unreliable system.

Ashrafunnahar suggested government support for mothers whose children require specialised care.

"The state is depriving both the mother and the child of their rights by failing to provide inclusive childcare," she said.

When contacted, Women and Children Affairs Minister Abu Zafar Md Zahid Hossain said the government plans to gradually expand childcare and caregiving services across the country to support working parents.

The initiative will initially target Dhaka and divisional headquarters, focusing on institutional facilities.

## Interim govt ignored

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"It was very frustrating," Unicef Representative to Bangladesh Rana Flowers told Science.org—a scientific research, technology and medical news site of the eponymous journal.

"For God's sake... don't do this," she recalled telling the interim government's health adviser Nurjahan Begum, who did not respond to Science's questions.

The tender process became caught in bureaucratic delays, causing vaccine supplies to run out and routine immunisation to stall. A supplemental MR campaign, postponed from 2024 to 2025 because of unrest, was eventually cancelled. By late March, government data showed only 59 percent of eligible children had received measles vaccines in 2025. The figures were later removed from the website, Science reported.

The outbreak began in January in Rohingya refugee camps near the Myanmar border before spreading rapidly across Bangladesh. It has now reached 58 of the country's 64 districts and caused more than 21,000 hospitalisations. In an April 23 update, the World Health Organization warned of a considerable risk of spread to Myanmar and India.

Experts say vaccine gaps were compounded by malnutrition and a weak health system. Around 28 percent of Bangladeshi children under five are stunted, while missed vitamin A distribution campaigns since 2024 have further weakened immunity, said ASM Alamgir, former principal scientist at IEDCR.

Bangladesh reinstated vaccine procurement through Unicef in April and worked with WHO and Gavi to secure supplies, said Ziauddin Hyder, special assistant on health affairs to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

Authorities launched an emergency vaccination drive on April 5 in high-risk areas, followed by a nationwide rollout on April 20. Vitamin A distribution is also set to resume.

However, Be-nazir Ahmed, former director of disease control at DGHS, warned the emergency campaign is unlikely to stop the epidemic quickly given the speed of transmission.

Many scientists cited by Science point to the interim government's procurement decision. The matter has also drawn legal scrutiny, with Supreme Court lawyer Biplob Kumar Das filing a complaint with the Anti-

Corruption Commission on April 12 over alleged corruption and vaccine procurement failures under the interim government.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, a key health adviser to the interim government, defended the shift, saying the old system relied on an emergency clause and needed to be moved to a "regular, rule-based system going forward" to "avoid questions about transparency or lead to perceptions of bias".

He did not answer follow-up questions on what went wrong but acknowledged the toll: "The loss of children to a fully preventable disease like measles is heartbreaking. It is a human tragedy, and my deepest condolences go to every family that has suffered."

Meanwhile, following the publication of the report, Prof Sayedur made a Facebook post on Friday stating that his comments given to Science magazine had been published in fragmented form, despite his written caution that excerpts could create ambiguity and lead to misunderstandings.

He explained that since the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is a routine programme, it was considered inappropriate to rely on emergency provisions every year. An informal assessment of the international vaccine market was therefore conducted, indicating preliminary feasibility for mobilising state funds.

He added that it was important for the government to build its own capacity and reduce dependence on external sources for a long-running programme. So, the government explored procuring vaccines at competitive prices and strengthening its ability to source directly from the international market.

Given the critical importance of the matter, the interim government's health ministry sent a recommendation in November 2025 to the Advisory Council Committee on Economic Affairs. The proposal sought procurement of vaccines worth about Tk 419 crore through Unicef using the Direct Procurement Method (DPM), which was approved at the committee's scheduled meeting that month.

Prof Rahman ended the post by stressing that no vaccines under the EPI were procured using any different methods during the interim government tenure.

## Dhaka-Sylhet road

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to land acquisition problems at 11 locations where companies were to set up site offices. There are administrative issues as well, he said.

"Now the ministry has already taken initiatives to begin the construction work," he said, expressing hope the BNP government would start soon and finish within two to three years.

"People will no longer have to suffer so much once the work is completed."

Highlighting the importance of railways, the prime minister said, "The more roads we continue to widen, the more vehicles will come onto the roads. Traffic will definitely increase."

"Therefore, we will definitely improve road communication systems, but we want to develop the railway system. You will surely be interested once the railway system between Dhaka and Sylhet is improved."

## Florida police

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appeared to have been bound. Authorities recovered another body from a nearby waterway on April 26, which has now been confirmed as Bristy's.

The suspect was arrested days later by a SWAT team at his parents' home, and a court ordered him held without bond.

Hillsborough County Judge Logan Murphy barred Abugharbieh from contacting witnesses or the victims' families during a brief hearing in Tampa.

According to court records, Abugharbieh faces two counts of first-degree murder with a weapon, along with other charges. He could face the death penalty if convicted, though prosecutors have not said whether they will seek capital punishment.

Meanwhile, Limon's body is expected to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow. Morteza said the remains will reach Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 8:40am on an Emirates flight.

## Ready for talks

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possibly followed by an Israeli attack, two senior Iranian sources told Reuters. Separately, Trump told Congress he did not need approval to extend the war beyond a Friday deadline, saying the ceasefire had "terminated" hostilities.

However, he also signalled his preferred option too. "Do we want to go and just blast the hell out of them and finish them forever? Or do we want to try and make a deal?" he said, adding that "on a human basis" he did not favour military action.

## \$3b expected by June from dev partners

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he added. Bangladesh sought \$1 billion from the ADB. The Manila-based multilateral lender's board has already approved \$250 million for social safety net programmes, while the approval for \$750 million is expected in the middle of this month.

Of this, \$300 million will carry a 2 percent interest rate with a 15-year repayment period. The remaining \$450 million will be market-based, linked to the SOFR rate (currently 4.13 percent), repayable over 18 years with a three-year grace period.

Of the \$1.2 billion pledged by the WB, \$700 million will come from the Rapid Response Option (RRO), which allows countries to quickly repurpose and use up to 10 percent of their undisbursed amounts of existing loans to address emergency needs during a crisis.

As of July 1, last year, the undisbursed amount from the WB stood at \$9 billion. The interest rate for loans under RRO is less than 2 percent.

Discussions are also ongoing for an additional \$500 million subject to conditions related to revenue administration and the banking sector.

Bangladesh also sought \$500 million in budget support from JICA. The loan may carry an indicative interest rate of 3.05 percent, repayable over 30 years with a 10-year grace period.

Negotiations are underway with the AIB and the OFID for \$350 million in co-financed budget support under ADB arrangements.

Both loans are market based: AIB's carries a 5.08 percent interest rate with repayment over 35 years, including a five-year grace period, while OFID's carries 3.62 percent interest with repayment over 18 years, including a

three-year grace period.

Bangladesh has also sought emergency support from the IMF. In addition to \$1.3 billion from two instalments of its \$5.5 billion loan programme, the government has requested \$2 billion from the IMF's emergency support window for June.

The low domestic revenue mobilisation inevitably forces the government to seek foreign loans when budgetary spending pressures rise, said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

The new government inherited many accumulated problems, and on top of that, it has had to spend heavily on fuel imports since taking office.

"So, the current government's predicament is well understood," he said, while cautioning against wastage and corruption of the emergency funds as in the past.