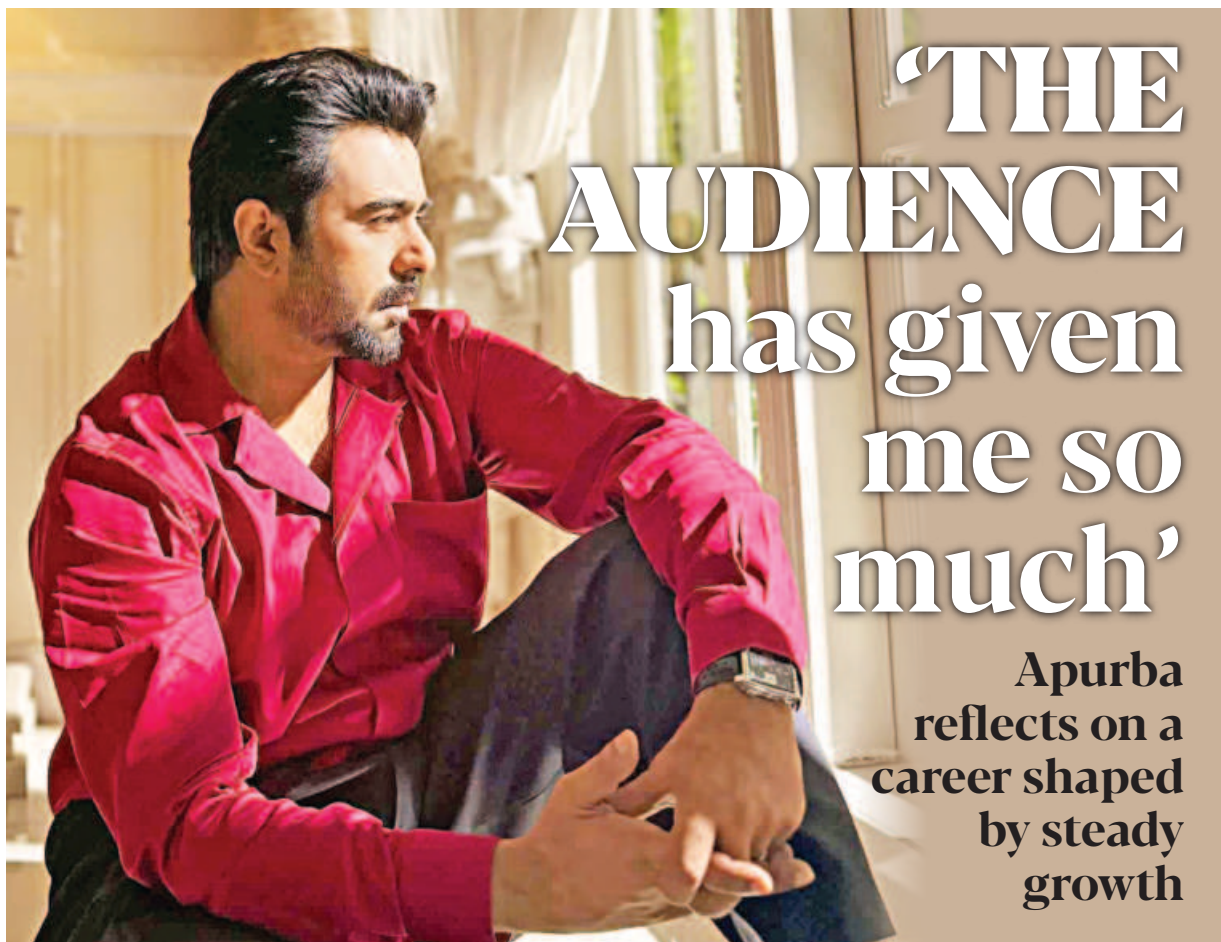


MAHTIM SHAKIB voices rock- melody track

Mahtim Shakib is set to captivate listeners with his latest track, *Tuiyo Bhisshon Eka*. The song features lyrics by *Swatta* famed director and lyricist Hashibur Reza Kallol, who is currently serving as the CEO of Channel 9. It has been composed and musically directed by Sahriar Rafat.

Belonging to the rock-melody genre, the track was recorded yesterday and has already begun generating interest due to its distinctive mood and atmosphere. Notably, the song marks a departure from Mahtim Shakib's familiar musical style. Music enthusiasts are viewing it as a bold new experiment by Sahriar Rafat, particularly for its rock-oriented arrangement.

The release date is yet to be announced.



'THE AUDIENCE has given me so much'

Apurba
reflects on a
career shaped
by steady
growth

PHOTO: COURTESY

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Ziaul Faruq Apurba remains one of the most recognisable faces in Bangladesh's television drama landscape, with a career that continues to evolve and expand. Over the years, he has built an impressive body of work, with numerous popular fictions to his name, including the record-breaking *Boro Chele*. Beyond television, he has also carved out a space for himself on OTT platforms and received appreciation for his performances in films across the border in Kolkata.

This Eid, audiences will see him in two new dramas—*Ochena Ami*, directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu, and *Maya Pakhi*, directed by Jakaria Showkhin—further adding to his already prolific presence on screen.

In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, Apurba reflected on his journey, speaking candidly about his career, collaborators, and the relationships that have shaped him

as an artiste.

When asked how fortunate he feels in his position today, Apurba's response was immediate and heartfelt. "I see myself as extremely fortunate," he said. "Among so many professions, I belong to one where we receive immense love and respect from people. The audience has given me so much, and they continue to do so—I am deeply grateful."

Among those who left a lasting impression was Gazi Rakayet. "I must begin with him," Apurba said. "Working under his direction in my early days taught me a great deal. I also learned from him as a co-actor."

He also spoke fondly of his collaborations with fellow actors. "There was a time when I acted in numerous dramas opposite Tarin, and the audience responded very positively to those works," he said. "I've also worked extensively with Aupee Karim and Mahfuz Ahmed. From each of them, I received immense support and affection."

After more than fifteen years

in the industry, Apurba now finds himself working alongside a new generation of actors, many of whom look up to him. "I have deep respect and affection for juniors, and they, in turn, respect me," he said. "My journey has been very positive. Just as I respect my seniors, I try to extend the same warmth to those who are younger."

Among his many works, *Boro Chele*, directed by Mizanur Rahman Aryan, remains a defining milestone. "People still talk about it," he said. "It's a significant achievement in my career. So many viewers came up to me and shared their feelings. One young man told me that after watching the drama, he decided he would never hurt his parents again. That's when I realised the story would stay with people."

Speaking about the widely discussed *Eta Amaderi Golpo*, Apurba added, "After watching it, I called its director, Raz and actor Irfan Sajjad. The drama moved us to tears—it felt like our own story."

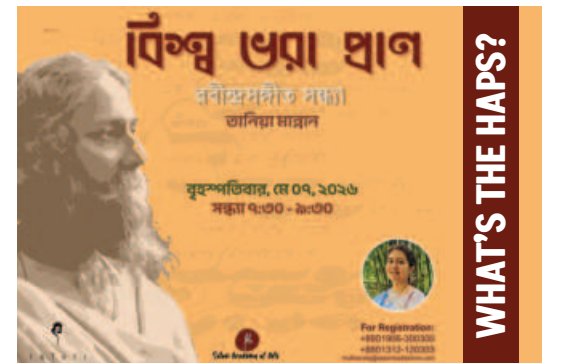


Prangonemor celebrates 24 years with two stage productions

Theatre troupe Prangonemor will mark its 24th anniversary with two productions in Dhaka, highlighting over two decades of sustained work in Bangladesh's theatre movement. Founded on May 6, 2003, the group has built a reputation for consistent practice and acclaimed productions.

The celebrations begin on May 6 with *Tiner Talowar* at 7 pm at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Written by Utpal Dutt and directed by Ananta Hira, the play reflects politically charged 19th-century Bengali theatre traditions.

On May 12, the troupe will stage *Shesher Kobita*, adapted from Rabindranath Tagore, at the Studio Theatre Hall, directed by Nuna Afroze.



'Bishwo Bhora Pran'

An evening of Rabindra Sangeet unfolds in quiet reverence to Rabindranath Tagore, as Tania Mannan interprets a curated selection of his timeless songs. Her measured, expressive voice draws out the emotional depth and philosophical cadence that continue to define Tagore's enduring musical legacy.

DATE: THURSDAY | MAY 7, 2026

TIME: 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

VENUE: HOUSE: 100, ROAD: 25, BLOCK A, BANANI

NEWS

Inability to probe disciplined forces

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be classified as an A-status human rights institution as per the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the global classification index assessing the effectiveness of human rights commissions.

"The most important aspect of A-status is ensuring that the body has been given the legislative power to be independent—politically independent, financially independent, and substantively independent, which means it gets to choose its own agenda within the broad framework of human rights," said Dr Edwards.

"There should be no political influence on this body, which also means a proper selection process for the commissioners who form the National Human Rights Commission," she said, adding, "The preference for these bodies is that they report to parliament and not to the government; it should not be the government that gets to choose who the commissioners are."

"Commissioners should also have security of tenure, knowing how long they are in their position without the worry that the government of the day may replace the head of the commission or its members with someone they prefer," continued Dr Edwards.

Beyond the NHRC, Dr Edwards pointed to the roles of parliamentarians and the law commission in upholding human rights.

"Parliamentarians themselves, for example, can and should be able to visit places of detention, meet victims and survivors, and put forward legislation. There is also the law commission, which has a role in initiating new legislative proposals that are human rights-compliant or in receiving instructions from the government."

She also backed the creation of an independent police complaints body or a police commission to investigate deaths or injuries in custody.

"There should also be an independent police complaints body. I also understand there was a proposal for a police commission, a body that, anytime there is an injury or a death in police custody or in the custody of the authorities, whether in a psychiatric hospital, a public hospital, or elsewhere, if there are unexplained deaths, there should be an automatic reporting mechanism to that body," the UN expert said.

She emphasised that the government must demonstrate a "strong backbone" and a willingness to confront the country's history of state violence.

"The government should be prepared. Once an open complaints

procedure is established, reported cases of torture will likely surge. It also needs to sensitise the public in advance to communicate that there will be an influx of old cases coming forward and that this is, in fact, a sign that society is opening up," said the UN expert.

When asked what incentive there is for a government to have autonomous human rights watchdogs, Dr Edwards responded, "If a government wants cycles of violence to continue against its own people, it is not representing those people. If it pursues revenge against its political opponents, it can be certain that revenge will come in return."

"This might sound a little unusual, but I think it comes down to a simple question: do your leaders want to be Nelson Mandela, or would they prefer to be Idi Amin?" she said, urging leaders to consider their long-term legacy.

The UN Special Rapporteur came down hard on the torture in police and judicial custody.

"One issue that has come up continuously during my visit to Bangladesh is the police practice of relying on confessional evidence, gathering confessions from suspects and witnesses as the sole or primary source of evidence. Where that is not supplemented by other investigative tools, we end up in a cycle of violence, beatings, coercion, and intimidation within the police force."

"Investigations need to happen beforehand. I have heard about shortcomings in forensic capacity and expertise in this country, and this is an area where the international community should assist," she pointed out.

"Even basic practices like fingerprinting are not always carried out. Wrongful identification, alibi checking, visiting the scene, photographing evidence—many ordinary policing methods appear to have been overtaken by the simple reliance on remand confessions. And police will tell you themselves—it is quite hard to extract a confession from someone who has not committed the crime," she continued.

Dr Edwards recommended making audio and video recording during interrogations mandatory and recommended logging all detentions in a database. In addition, she explained that this culture can only be changed if the leadership plays a role.

"It requires leadership from the very top, from parliamentarians, from leaders within the police and other uniformed services. Without that leadership, it falls on individuals to do better on their own. The national policing curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure that police are

doing their job more effectively," she recommended.

The UN special expert also pointed fingers at judges for accepting ill-investigated cases, granting repeated remands, and holding people in pre-trial detention.

"Magistrates and judges should also be demanding better investigations and pushing back on cases that are poorly investigated," noted Dr Edwards. "Judges are repeatedly approving extensions simply because the police say they need more time. Those extensions should be limited. In most other jurisdictions, extensions are capped at 48 hours, then a maximum of 72 hours. If sufficient information has not been gathered by that point, the person cannot be charged and should be released. All of this reinforces why evidence-gathering must happen before someone is brought in."

Asked about the pre-trial detention of thousands of people in cases filed over the July uprising, the UN special rapporteur said, "This clearly requires judicial oversight. The police should be non-politicised, and the investigative body should be a professional police force operating to the same standards regardless of which political party a person represents."

She continued, "What I would really like to see is a recognition that a society cannot be built on cycles of revenge. It must be built on the rule of law, the separation of powers, and human rights."

17 top cops

FROM PAGE 12
Several commandants of Police Training Centres (PTC) were also on the list. They are Md Haidar Ali Khan (Noakhali PTC), Md Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiya (Khulna PTC), and Sheikh Mohammad Rezaul Haider (Rangpur PTC).

Other officials include DIG of Tourist Police Md Ruhul Amin, DIG of River Police Md Mizanur Rahman, and DIG at Police Headquarters Kazi Zia Uddin. Two more Highway Police DIGs—Md Rafiqul Hasan Gani and Rakhfar Sultana Khanam—were also forced to retire, along with DIG of Railway Police Md Golam Rauf Khan.

In the same order, the government sent Superintendent of Police Farhat Ahmed, who served as a Supernumerary Additional DIG of Railway Police, into retirement.

This follows a similar move on April 22, when the government sent 11 DIGs and two additional DIGs on forced retirement.

Attacks, arrests mark grim

FROM PAGE 12

routine harassment, especially in district and upazila towns, where they are highly vulnerable.

Public trust in the media has hit rock bottom because it cannot operate independently, he opined. "The attack on freedom comes from two fronts. One is the government... The other factor is the media's economy and the influence of owners and corporate interests, which still persists," said Kamal, also consulting editor of The Daily Star.

"We want clear policy commitments from the government and a principled stance to ensure media freedom and protection. Until such commitments are made, I will remain skeptical."

Highlighting the financial struggles of television channels, Broadcast Journalism Centre (BJC) Chairman Fahim Ahmed said, "Out of 37 TV channels, 22 do not or cannot pay salaries of their employees regularly."

Except for one or two organisations, none offer provident fund or gratuity benefits to journalists, he alleged.

At the event, senior TV journalist Shahnaz Munni expressed frustration over poor remuneration. "Even university journalism graduates no longer want to join this profession. How can postgraduates start their careers with such incredibly low starting salaries?"

She also noted a decline in the number of female journalists, attributing it to workplace harassment, online hate campaigns, and a lack of security on the ground.

2 farmers die seeing paddy fields

FROM PAGE 2

his crop around 4:30pm and was later taken to a hospital. Doctors declared him dead in the evening, she said.

Family members said he had cultivated Boro paddy on three acres of land, much of which was inundated due to continuous rainfall. Although some paddy had been harvested, he could not transport it home due to logistical constraints.

His cousin Mansur Ali said Akhter had taken loans of about Tk 150,000 for cultivation and was under severe mental distress after the crop was damaged.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, vast low-lying haor areas in Kishoreganj have been flooded due to continuous rainfall, submerging thousands of hectares of ripe paddy and leaving farmers struggling to salvage their harvest.

Dhaka Tribune Editor Reaz Ahmad alleged that the governments are highly discriminatory in distributing state advertisements, often allocating funds to obscure newspapers.

He opined that Bangladesh has an abundance of "junk" or substandard media outlets, causing real journalism to get lost in the noise of hundreds of platforms.

Another speaker criticised the continued use of the cyber security law to file cases over political comments or social media posts. An apprentice journalist alleged that investigative reports are often dropped following phone calls from the high-ups to protect the media owners' interests.

Regarding the attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo offices, TIB Executive Director Ittekkharuzzaman described the incidents and the government's silent role as "rare, not just in Bangladesh's history, but in the world."

"The media in Bangladesh has always been under pressure, but directly attacking institutions like this, putting human lives at risk, and actively trying to destroy them is unprecedented," he said.

He alleged that the then government made no active efforts to prevent the attacks. "These incidents did not happen suddenly; they were planned." Despite knowing this, the government did not deploy police personnel or other ground forces to protect the institutions, he added.

Referring to the same incidents, BJC Chairman Fahim said, "The interim

government did not impose restrictions on the media, but it didn't protect it either. It merely stood by and watched. We saw two media offices being burned down. Did the government not see it? Surely, they did. But they will simply say they didn't do it."

Zahed Ur Rahman, adviser to the prime minister on information and broadcasting, said the current elected government would not commit the "stupidity" of engaging in conflicts with the media.

"People can now criticise the government without any censorship... we want this to continue," he said.

About the arrests of journalists on various charges, including murder, during the interim government, Zahed said the prime minister has taken the matter into "serious cognisance" and expressed hope for a swift resolution.

He added that plans are there to form a special monitoring cell at the Prime Minister's Office to prevent cyberbullying against female journalists.

At the event, Susan Vize, head of office and Unesco representative to Bangladesh, said, "Independent, pluralistic, and professional media are central to informed public discourse. Strengthening journalist safety and information integrity is critical to rebuilding trust in today's complex information environment."

German Ambassador Rüdiger Lotz, and Paola Castro Neiderstam, first secretary at the Embassy of Sweden, among others, also spoke on the occasion.

8 labourers killed

FROM PAGE 12

beside her husband, who pushed her to the side when the incident took place, and she lost consciousness.

Badrul's brother Alaur Miah said there was a concrete mixer on the pickup, which collapsed onto his brother, killing him on the spot. Badrul and Khadiza brother have four children.

Sohel Ahmed, uncle of deceased brothers Amir Uddin and Azir Uddin, said, "They moved to Sylhet city in search of work around a year ago. They have their ailing parents, and the younger

brother's wife and three children."

Hearing of their deaths, their parents fainted and are now admitted to the local upazila health complex. Their elder brother, Ala Uddin, died three years ago. Now the family has no one to support, Sohail said.

Talking to reporters, Brig Gen Umar Rashed Munir, director of MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, said, "So far, eight died in the road crash. We are doing everything to ensure the injured patients' treatment and will arrange advanced treatment if necessary."

Iran has not yet paid

FROM PAGE 12

In Iran, the military-backed Fars news agency quoted a senior official as saying a return to all-out conflict was "likely", four weeks after a ceasefire was brokered by Pakistan. Pakistani efforts to resume peace talks in Islamabad, after a first round broke up without

agreement, have failed as each side set preconditions that the other refused to fulfill.

Asked on Saturday about the possibility of renewed hostilities, Trump said it was possible, adding, "If they misbehave, if they do something bad, but right now, we'll see."