

People still call me 'Ammajan': Shabnam

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

One of the most celebrated romantic heroines of the 1960s, Shabnam remains an enduring icon of South Asian cinema. Her journey began with the Urdu-language film *Chanda*, directed by Ehtesham, where she made her debut as a leading lady. In Bangladesh, however, it was *Harano Din* that marked her breakthrough, earning immense audience appreciation and setting the stage for a career adorned with success.

Her popularity soared further with *Rajdhanir Bukey*, where she captivated audiences by lip-syncing to the memorable song *Tomare Legechhe Eto Je Bhalo, Chand Bujhi Tai Jane*. The performance cemented her place in the hearts of millions of cinema lovers.

Her acclaim was not confined to Bangladesh alone. Shabnam also enjoyed a successful career in Pakistani cinema, where she won the prestigious Nigar Award 13 times, an extraordinary achievement that speaks to her immense popularity and talent.

Widely regarded as one of the leading faces of the golden era of cinema, Shabnam delivered numerous memorable performances. However, after playing the titular role in *Ammajan* alongside Manna, she stepped away from the silver screen.

Reflecting on her career, she said, "My first film as a leading actress, *Harano Din*, received tremendous

audience appreciation. And my last film, *Ammajan*, was also a super-duper hit. So, I can say that both my first and last films have become timeless."

When asked why she did not return to acting after *Ammajan*, and whether there was any sense of regret or grievance, she responded, "Not at all. It wasn't about any disappointment. I simply did not find stories that I liked. Had I found something appealing, I would certainly have worked again."

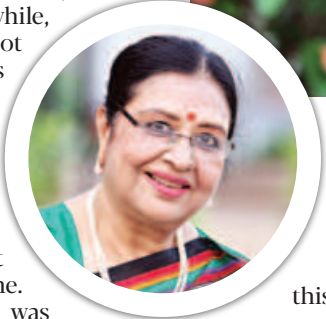
Speaking about her most recent visit to the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC), she shared, "I went to the FDC for a short while, after many years. I cannot even recall how many years it has been. Once I entered, so many memories came flooding back. I noticed many changes inside."

She added, "There were fewer people that day, perhaps it was a Friday. It made things easier for me. But I quietly cried while I was there. It felt strange. There was a kind of pain within. My eyes filled with tears."

Despite stepping away from the spotlight, Shabnam continues to lead a grounded life. "I still go to the market regularly," she said with a smile. "There is a market in Gulshan where I go. Everyone there recognises me, and they respect and love me. Even this morning, I



PHOTOS: STAR



went. As soon as I arrive, shopkeepers say, 'Make way! 'Ammajan' has come!'"

She reflected warmly on this affection. "The love and respect people show me—being called *Ammajan*, that is a great blessing. I want to live with this love and respect. Above all, it is the love of people that matters most."

On the subject of awards, she remains remarkably unfazed. "I have no regrets about awards. The love of people is far greater than any award. Awards fade with time, but people's love remains."

A native of Old Dhaka, Shabnam occasionally revisits her roots. "I still have many relatives there, so I go from time to time. It brings back so many memories. In those days, there were horse carriages—we used to ride around in them."

As for her present life, she keeps things simple and fulfilling. "I spend my time reading books, watching television, and chatting with my son. I also enjoy cooking different things for him."

When asked if she harbours any regrets, her answer is clear and content: "No. I have no regrets. I am grateful for what I have received and where I am in life. I always say—people's love is the greatest thing of all."

Odd Signature to launch debut album 'JOGOTMONCHO'

Bangladeshi band Odd Signature is set to launch its debut album *Jogotmoncho* at a solo concert in Chattogram on May 15. The event will be held at the Engineers Institute, beginning at 4:00pm, with tickets priced at Tk 500.

Formed in 2017, the band gained popularity with narrative-driven songs but faced a setback in 2024 after a road accident that led to the death of vocalist Piyal. After a hiatus, they returned with new music and live performances. At the concert, the band will perform all tracks from the album, which will be released in an NFC-enabled CD format. A comic inspired by the album has also been developed, adding a visual storytelling dimension to the project.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'A Shared Condition'

Mubtasim Alee's debut solo exhibition unfolds as a probing study of shared human fragility, where form and texture interrogate memory, identity, and collective experience. Curated by Mustafa Zaman, the show situates personal narratives within wider cultural tensions, offering a quietly unsettling, intellectually charged visual discourse.

DATE: FRIDAY-SATURDAY | MAY 8-16, 2026
TIME: 2 PM-8 PM
VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA, DHANMONDI



Dhaka to host Rabindra Sangeet festival marking Tagore's birth anniversary

A two-day national Rabindra Sangeet festival will be held in Dhaka on May 8 and 9, marking the 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. Organised by the Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha, the 37th edition will take place at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in Agargaon.

The festival will open at 4:00pm on May 8, with programmes running daily, including morning sessions from 10:00am. Around 150 performers, along with guest artistes, reciters and dancers, are set to participate. This year's edition is dedicated to several late cultural figures, while the Kalim Sharafi Padak will be awarded to Rabindra Sangeet artist Ifat Ara Dewan. Organisers say preparations are in the final stage, with rehearsals ongoing.



NEWS

HC stops GCC waste project

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During a site visit on Friday afternoon, excavation work was seen underway. About 50 feet of the park's boundary wall was demolished, and a road was being paved. Gazari trees were being felled as part of construction activities. Several people were supervising the work of around 20 workers. Site supervisor Mohammad Ifti said an STS facility was planned at the location and that he was overseeing the work on behalf of the GCC.

Workers said they were instructed to complete the job quickly.

Sabuj Mia, a worker, said they dug about four feet into the ground after breaking the boundary wall.

According to forest department sources, a contractor initially built a shed for workers on April 11. The forest department demolished it the next day during a drive. On April 13, a large group of people went there, broke the boundary wall, and resumed construction.

Ariful Islam, deputy ranger (range officer) of the national park, said they tried to stop the work. But due to the presence of around 200 people, it was not possible to resist with their limited manpower. The matter has been reported to the higher authorities, and relevant officials have already

conducted on-site inspections.

He added that under the Wildlife Conservation and Security Act, construction of any structure is prohibited within and around protected sanctuary areas.

Officials from the Department of Environment in Gazipur also inspected the site.

Deputy Director Arefin Badol told The Daily Star that environmental clearance is mandatory for constructing an STS, but the GCC has not obtained it. Their report recommended not building the STS at the location.

Ripon Ansari, general secretary of the Bhawal Garh Protection Movement, said the law was being openly violated and called for strict action against those responsible.

Talking to this newspaper, GCC Chief Executive Officer Sohel Hasan said the land where the STS is being constructed is not part of the national park. He added that the land is privately owned and has been leased by the city corporation. However, he acknowledged that the land is surrounded by the park on three sides and a highway is on the remaining side.

He said the project was undertaken due to the lack of alternative land. He also noted that the forest department

has raised objections.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Bhishmadev Chakraborty and Justice Abdur Rahman issued the injunction after a writ petition had been filed by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why the unauthorised construction of STS by GCC on reserved forest land adjacent to the park and on privately owned land and their failure to prevent the continuous dumping of waste at the main entrance and various other locations in the park should not be declared illegal, unconstitutional, and against public interest.

Secretaries at the ministries of LGRD; and environment, forest and climate change; director general of Department of Environment and deputy director of its Gazipur district office; chief conservator of forests; divisional forest officer; assistant conservator of forests of Gazipur district office; and range officer of National Park (Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division); deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Gazipur; and administrator and chief waste management officer of GCC have been made respondents to the rule.

Tears flow as Limon comes home

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The 27-year-old was laid to rest at his family graveyard after his Namaz-e-Janaza following Maghrib prayers.

Earlier in the day, his body reached Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka around 8:40am.

"I raised my son with so much care. I never imagined my son would die this way," Limon's father told reporters at the airport.

"Only the Almighty knows what pain he went through," he struggled to continue.

Limon's uncle Ziaul said the family demands justice from both the Bangladesh and US governments.

At the airport, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam received the body on behalf of the government and handed it over to Limon's family.

At the time, she said the foreign ministry has been maintaining communications with US authorities to ensure a proper investigation into the double murder.

She expressed hope that the US authorities would complete a fair and thorough investigation and ensure

punishment for those responsible.

The state minister also assured the families of the two deceased students of the government's continued support as per directives from the prime minister.

Though Limon's ancestral home is in Laldoba, he grew up in the Mawna area of Gazipur. A meritorious student, he passed SSC from Mawna Model High School and HSC from Birsreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Public College.

Completing his undergraduate studies at Khulna University, he moved to America to pursue a PhD in geography, environmental science and policy at the University of South Florida in 2024.

Limon and another Bangladeshi student, Nahida Sultana Brishti, 27, went missing in Florida on April 16. A friend later informed the university authorities.

According to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Limon's body was recovered on April 24 near the Howard Frankland Bridge area following the interrogation of a suspect. The body bore multiple stab

wounds and was found dismembered inside black garbage bags.

Two days later, on April 26, fishermen spotted a black polythene bag while kayaking in a nearby mangrove area. Police later recovered dismembered human remains from the scene. At a press conference on April 30, authorities confirmed the remains belonged to Brishti.

In connection with the killings, Limon's roommate, US citizen Hisham Abugarbeh, has been arrested.

Limon's father said they still did not know why his son was killed, adding that most of what they have learnt has come from media reports.

Before his body was flown to Bangladesh, funeral prayers were held in the Tampa Bay area, attended by students of the University of South Florida and members of the Bangladeshi community.

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to bring back Brishti's body. Officials said it is currently under the care of a funeral home, with plans to send it to Bangladesh on May 7. Her funeral prayers are slated for May 6 in Florida.

Chhatra Dal faces flak from grassroots

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institutions and district units after years of weak organisational presence.

In Rangamati, a clash occurred yesterday over a programme organised by the newly formed partial committee of the district unit, as protesting leaders and newly appointed leaders faced off, leaving at least one person injured. As tension escalated, the local administration imposed Section 144 in the area to prevent further violence.

Army and police personnel were also deployed in parts of the town after two days of protests and counter-protests raised fears of further clashes, sources said.

Asimilar protest erupted in Noakhali, Nasir's home district, where protesting leaders declared him "unwanted" following the announcement of the district committee.

After a 37-member district committee was announced, several hundred leaders and activists burned tyres and blocked roads in Majidee Town. Several crude bomb explosions were reported during the protest,

sparking panic in the area.

During the hours-long protest, commuters and students faced considerable distress.

The protesters alleged that the committee was formed without properly assessing the role of leaders who had remained active during difficult political periods. They also claimed that some leaders with weak organisational records were given posts due to lobbying and personal connections.

A faction of leaders in Kishoreganj also brought out a procession, alleging that supporters of the district party leader and a state minister were prioritised when the district committee was formed.

Protests were also seen in Cox's Bazar, Dinajpur and in front of the BNP central office in Nayapaltan, where protesting leaders gathered to demand that the central leadership review the committees before dissent spreads further among grassroots activists.

Meanwhile, at least five district-level Chhatra Dal leaders announced their resignations on their Facebook

profiles, citing dissatisfaction over the committee formation process.

Several of them said they could not accept committees where those who "were absent from the field" had been rewarded while long-serving activists were ignored.

Central Chhatra Dal leaders, however, said the protests were unacceptable and went against BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman's instruction to maintain discipline.

A central leader, preferring anonymity, said some of those protesting had failed to secure expected posts and were now trying to pressure the organisation.

"The party high command has repeatedly asked all leaders and activists to maintain discipline. Those taking to the streets against organisational decisions are defying that directive," he said, adding that the central leadership would look into specific complaints, but indiscipline, road blockades and violence would not be tolerated.

(Our correspondents from Noakhali, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, and Kishoreganj contributed to the news.)

Janata to auction Globe Janakantha assets

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The loans were disbursed in 2021 by Janata's Dilkusha Corporate Branch following a recommendation from Salman F Rahman, the private industry and investment adviser to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

In August 2020, Salman wrote to Janata chairman recommending Tk 250 crore in loans as working capital for Globe Janakantha as the company had been adversely affected during the BNP-Jamaat government.

Subsequently, the Janata board in September 2021 approved working capital loans of Tk 225 crore in favour of five entities of Globe Janakantha. Two months later, Bangladesh Bank provided a no-objection certificate (NOC).

Globe Janakantha Shilpa Paribar (GJSP) has eight entities: Globe Metal Complex, Globe Insecticides, Globe Cables, Globe Printers, Janakantha, Globe Construction, Globe Khamar Prokalpa and Globe Technologies.

Most of the companies are currently inactive. In March, Janakantha, its Bangla

daily newspaper, suspended its print publication and online operations.

The Daily Star could not reach GJSP for comment. However, its former Chief Operating Officer Afizur Rahman said the institution has many liabilities.

"It has around 350 to 400 creditors. All properties are mortgaged. It has not been paying income tax for a long time. There are bank loans. Overall, it is difficult to survive in the current situation," said Afizur, who resigned last year.

State-run Janata Bank is currently struggling with high defaulted loans of Beximco, S Alam, Thermex Group and Anontex Group.

At the end of last year, its total outstanding loans stood at Tk 97,934 crore, 74 percent of which are classified as bad loans.

Under the Artha Rin Adalat Act, efforts to recover defaulted loans are first made through auction, said Md Mazibur Rahman, managing director of Janata Bank.

"However, this does not always receive a good response. In some

cases, responses are received for smaller loans. If recovery is not possible this way, cases have to be filed in accordance with the law."

Following the fall of the previous Awami League-led government, cases have been filed against many borrowers. Besides, efforts are ongoing to recover loans through other means. Last year, the bank recovered Tk 900 crore.

Woman

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helpline on 999, after which police responded and rescued his wife.

The woman, a 27-year-old mother of one, told police that she was taken to a field and raped by two men.

Chandina Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Atikur Rahman said five individuals were allegedly involved in the incident. Among them, two allegedly raped her while the others assisted. Police detained four suspects from the scene, while another remains at large.

The victim filed the case with Chandina Police Station at 1:30pm yesterday.