

Sunidhi speaks ‘Rockstar’, future plans

SHARMIN JOYA

With ‘Rockstar’ marking a significant new chapter in her career, Sunidhi Nayak has been receiving widespread appreciation for her performance. The entertainment world also remains stunned by her beautiful Rabindra Sangeet recital after a post-film interview. We spoke to the multi-talented artiste about the film and its reception.

Did you find any personal resemblance to your character in ‘Rockstar’? A performer’s personal life doesn’t always have to match the character they play. However, while I didn’t see myself in the character, I have seen many similar interesting characters around me as a musician when I travel abroad to places where people don’t recognise me, like at parties or music venues. I tried to portray a character like that.

Being a singer, how different was the experience of working on a feature film? I have worked on my own music videos, and some of them, like *Palabe Kothay*, were very difficult to do, and the characters were hard to portray. But a major difference here was working with a megastar. Acting in front of someone like him was different, especially since I didn’t know him personally before. I realised after working with him that he is a very down-to-earth person, just like a regular human being, which is how an artiste should be. In my music videos, I control everything from writing to shooting and concepts, so there is less fear. While there is always a bit of worry about whether people will like it, I am usually more confident in my own work because I conceived it.

Have you had any memorable experiences while visiting the halls?

The beautiful responses I receive every day make me feel good. But I believe an artiste should not let success go to their head. I pray that I can keep my feet on the ground. My mother always told me that no matter how big I become or what I achieve, my goal should be to remain a good and ideal human being. That is my life’s goal, because work and public opinion will fluctuate, but being a good person is what matters.

Had you seen any of Shakib Khan’s work before working with him?

Yes, I had seen many of his works. After the movie was finalised, I intentionally watched even more. I particularly liked his action films. What I found most interesting is how, despite his vast experience, he broke himself down to portray a musician. He would often ask me how a musician feels or acts while writing or performing a song. His eagerness to learn and transform himself was very inspiring to me, and I will remember it forever.

What keeps you busy now?

I am busy with a few things that are coming out at the end of this month and next month that I can’t talk about yet. There are also more music and film-related projects coming at the end of the year. I’m sorry I can’t say more, but the audience will have to wait.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

‘Hothat Brishti’ remake set for Puja release

The classic Bangladesh-India co-production *Hothat Brishti* is returning to the big screen in a new form with the upcoming remake *Abar Hothat Brishti*, which is slated for release during Durga Puja this year.



Directed by Kamruzzaman, the film stars Arian Sarwar and Radifa in the lead roles. According to the director, shooting was completed three months ago, and the film has already received clearance from the Film Certification Board.

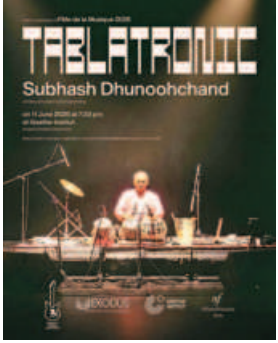
Originally directed by Basu Chatterjee and released in 1998, *Hothat Brishti* starred Ferdous and Priyanka and became one of the most successful Bangladesh-India joint productions.

Produced by Ashirbad Chalachitra and Impress Telefilm, *Abar Hothat Brishti* reimagines the beloved story for a new generation of audiences while retaining its cross-border collaborative spirit.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

‘TABLATRONIC’

French percussionist Subhash Dhunoochand from Réunion brings *TABLATRONIC* to Dhaka, blending tabla, live percussion, and electronic textures into a fluid performance. Rooted in improvisation and rhythmic experimentation, the project bridges tradition and technology, reimagining South Asian percussion through an intimate, contemporary live experience.



DATE: THURSDAY | JUNE 11, 2026

TIME: 7:30 PM ONWARDS

VENUE: GOETHE INSTITUT BANGLADESH, DHANMONDI

NEWS

Fiscal policy favours fossil fuels over

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The study titled “Fiscal Discrimination Against Renewable Energy Versus Fossil Fuels” argues that the country’s fiscal regime is simultaneously discouraging investment in renewable energy and reducing potential government revenue from fossil fuel imports, creating a policy imbalance that could undermine Bangladesh’s energy transition ambitions.

“The current fiscal structure sends contradictory signals. On one hand, Bangladesh has committed to expanding renewable energy, but on the other, technologies essential for that transition – such as batteries, grid infrastructure, and electric mobility – continue to face significantly higher tax burdens than fossil fuels,” said Khandaker Golam Moazzem, research director at CPD while unveiling the study report.

The report argues that such fiscal disparities influence investment decisions across the energy sector, affecting electricity generation choices, distributed renewable energy projects, industrial rooftop solar installations, and electric mobility adoption.

According to the study, grid and transmission equipment face some of the highest tax burdens among renewable energy-related technologies despite their importance in supporting renewable energy integration.

“Critical components, including transformers, conductors, towers, and meters, are subject to multiple layers of taxation, significantly increasing the

cost of expanding and modernising the national grid,” said Moazzem.

From this sector, the government generated Tk 1,513 crore in fiscal revenue from imports worth Tk 2,656 crore during the 2025-26 fiscal year, the study said.

The government’s estimated revenue generation for this fiscal was Tk 439 crore from Tk 1,529 crore solar products import and Tk 610 crore from Tk 985 crore storage systems import.

By contrast, LNG imports benefit from zero VAT and only a 2 percent advance income tax, resulting in one of the lowest effective tax burdens in the energy sector, with Tk 1,059 crore generated from imports valued at Tk 11,149 crore, the study said.

“This creates an uneven playing field for investment decisions,” Moazzem said.

The study estimates that the National Board of Revenue is foregoing significant revenue through the preferential treatment of LNG imports, while coal-based power generation receives additional benefits ranging between Tk 241 crore and Tk 664 crore compared with renewable alternatives.

The report also examined revenue generation from fossil fuel imports and found that oil products account for more than Tk 26,800 crore, or over 80 percent of total revenue collected from fossil fuel imports.

“Our analysis shows that the tax system is effectively making the energy transition more expensive. The technologies needed to integrate renewable energy into the grid are being

taxed heavily, which ultimately raises costs for the entire transition process,” said the CPD research director.

Beyond taxation, the report argues that public spending remains heavily tilted towards fossil fuel-based infrastructure.

According to its analysis of the revised FY2025-26 budget, fossil-fuel-based projects account for 87 percent of the total power and energy project portfolio and receive nearly 79 percent of annual allocations.

Renewable energy projects, meanwhile, represent only 3 percent of the project pipeline and receive less than 5 percent of annual budget allocations.

The study found that fossil-fuel-based projects have consistently received more than 90 percent of development allocations in the power and energy sector over the past decade despite repeated policy commitments to expand renewable energy.

“We are not arguing against energy security. Our argument is that fiscal incentives should be structured in a way that supports both energy security and the long-term energy transition instead of creating barriers to clean energy adoption,” Moazzem added.

The report recommends rationalising taxes on renewable energy technologies, energy storage systems, grid modernisation equipment, and electric vehicles, increasing budgetary support for renewable energy, and smart-grid projects, and reviewing preferential tax treatment currently enjoyed by fossil fuel imports, particularly LNG.

Zverev wins first

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Matteo Arnaldi withdrew from the tournament through illness.

Both players appeared to struggle with nerves at various points in the match, especially Cobolli during an error-strewn first set.

But Zverev’s greater experience showed in a deciding set that was far tenser than the scoreline suggested, as he managed to get over the line.

The 29-year-old was handed a golden opportunity to break his Grand Slam duck by the injury-enforced absence of reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz and surprise early exits for Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic.

The world number three was not always in control, making 54 unforced errors, but did enough to finally shed the tag of being one of the best players to have never won a major.

Zverev had previously also lost in six Slam quarterfinals and seven semi-finals, alongside his three final defeats.

‘Old practices remain despite reform pledges’

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TIB credited the government with scrapping lawmakers’ duty-free car and plot privileges, limiting the prime minister’s VIP protocol, ending DC and SP protocol for ministers, signing agreements with three countries to recover laundered money, and announcing 180-day work plans for ministries.

The anti-graft body, however, noted that no visible steps had been taken to form the Anti-Corruption Commission, National Human Rights Commission and Information Commission, putting corruption control, human rights protection and the free flow of information at long-term risk.

On lawmaking, the report said converting 97 of the 133 interim government ordinances into laws was commendable.

“But key ordinances on judicial independence, human rights protection, anti-corruption and the prevention of enforced disappearances were repealed or suspended instead of being passed with limited amendments, signalling a retreat from reform pledges.”

At the same time, laws on cyber security, personal data protection, national data management, telecommunications regulation and public audit were passed without the expected amendments, strengthening executive authority, it said.

On public administration, the report said partisan considerations continued to influence appointments, postings, transfers and promotions

despite pledges to build a merit-based administration.

“A culture of ‘now it’s our turn’ was visible among many ruling party leaders, activists and supporters, sections of the bureaucracy, business community and professionals.”

Partisan considerations also persisted in the police, public administration, state institutions, Bangladesh Bank, commercial banks, local government bodies and educational institutions, it added.

Iftekharuzzaman said political considerations in appointments could not disappear overnight.

“But appointees must have the competence and conflict-free standing needed to perform professionally,” he said, citing the appointments of the Bangladesh Bank governor and university vice-chancellors as examples.

In education, 19 university vice-chancellors were removed before completing their tenures without explanation. Their replacements were appointed on political considerations despite the existence of search committees, the report said.

On the ACC, the report noted that the commission’s activities had been almost suspended since its chairman and commissioners resigned on March 3, although the law requires the body to be reconstituted within 30 days.

“It [inaction regarding the ACC] is telling corrupt people, ‘we are protecting you’, and telling ordinary people that corruption is normal,” Iftekharuzzaman said, calling the delay

embarrassing.

On law and order, TIB said the government had declared zero tolerance for mob culture and warned against extortion.

“But control over markets, transport routes, bus and truck terminals, the drug trade, theft and mugging remained visible amid allegations of political and administrative patronage.”

The report also said attacks on shrines and religious figures continued, citing incidents at Shah Ali shrine in Dhaka and the attack on a pir in Kushtia. It described such incidents as ominous for free thought, cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence.

On press freedom, TIB said 188 journalists were harassed or affected in 130 incidents. Cases were filed against 12 journalists, while seven were arrested.

It also criticised the continuation of legal action over social media posts and the government’s decision to keep the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre operational despite the interim government’s move to abolish it.

Iftekharuzzaman said the overall 100-day record was “encouraging and promising in one sense, but worrying in another” due to the absence of a clear roadmap for governance, anti-corruption efforts and accountable institutions.

He identified resistance from a section of the bureaucracy, along with political actors who view power as a source of personal gain, as the main obstacles to reform.

US downs Iran drones

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costs for damages already inflicted on Gulf allies by Iran, the source said, adding that the US will consider using Iranian assets for repairs of any future destruction as well. The source did not specify what kind of assets the Treasury was examining.

The disclosure came a day after Mohsen Rezaei, an adviser to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, told CNN that a peace deal to end the three-month war hinged on the release of \$24 billion in Iranian assets frozen by the United States.

Peace negotiations appear to have stalled, although a minister from mediator Pakistan traveled to Tehran on Saturday with a letter for Khamenei, Iran’s semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

Meanwhile, US intelligence has raised the alarm about “unhinged” spying by Israel on America’s senior Iran negotiators.

Israel has been eavesdropping on Steve Witkoff, Trump’s chief negotiator, Elbridge Colby, the Pentagon’s top policy official, and Michael DiMino, a senior Middle East policy adviser, intelligence officials claimed.

The allegations, reported by The New York Times, come despite extensive military co-operation between Washington and Jerusalem during the war. Israeli officers have been working with their counterparts at US Central Command, sharing operational intelligence.

The Pentagon has raised its counterintelligence threat level for Israel to its highest level, US media reported.

In a separate development, a plane carrying Iran’s World Cup football squad landed early yesterday in the Mexican border city of Tijuana, AFP journalists witnessed, after the United States kicked off a bitter diplomatic row over visas.

Quarter of budget to go to 5 ministries

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However, excessive block allocations could lead to a breach of budget discipline. At times, other ministries may exert pressure to spend from block allocations through influence.

Ultimately, block allocations were kept against ministries or divisions for unapproved projects.

In the Tk 300,000 crore annual development programme (ADP), Tk 100,000 crore has been kept for unapproved projects and programmes, with Tk 66,000 crore reserved for education, health and local government.

But at the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting last month, where next fiscal year’s ADP was approved, two decisions were taken to ensure that funds from one sector are not spent in another.

Allocations can be reallocated among ongoing projects without

changing the total allocation within the same ministry or division. However, funds cannot be transferred or reallocated from one ministry to another.

Inter-sectoral reallocations within the approved ADP will not be allowed.

At the NEC meeting, a list of 1,277 unapproved projects was approved for inclusion in next fiscal year’s ADP.

From this list, projects aligned with the government’s electoral manifesto will be incorporated into the ADP with allocations after approval by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

New projects will be taken to fulfil promises made by the Members of Parliament for the development of their constituencies, said planning ministry officials. These project proposals will be scrutinised and then included in the ADP with allocations.

Block allocations have also been kept for others such as the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture.

In addition, Tk 20,000 crore has been reserved for development assistance under special needs and Tk 17,000 crore for social development assistance under special needs.

Of the Tk 17,000 crore, Tk 14,500 crore has been allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare for the Family Card programme, Tk 1,400 crore to the Ministry of Agriculture for the Farmers’ Card programme, and Tk 1,100 crore to the Ministry of Religious Affairs for honorariums to imams of mosques and individuals serving religious institutions.

Since the beneficiaries of the programmes have not yet been identified, the allocations have been kept as block allocations.