

YOUR FAVOURITE STARS and their favourite teams this World Cup



VISUAL: ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

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With the FIFA World Cup 2026 beginning today, football fever has gripped the entire world. Bangladesh is no exception. From tea stalls to every corner of daily life, people are talking about the tournament. Fans are competing to hoist their favourite team's flag. Showbiz celebrities are no different. Each has a team they love and support.

Veteran actor Abul Hayat is a lifelong Brazil supporter. "I have supported Brazil ever since I understood the game. I am not just a fan. I am obsessed with

their play," he said. "I also enjoy watching Argentina, but my favourite team is Brazil. I regularly watch European club football too. Every time I watch them play, I wonder when our own players will reach that level. This time I am waiting for Brazil to do something great."

Azizul Hakim backs Germany. He once played football himself, representing Victoria Sporting Club in the first division. He said Germany's style captivated him from that time. "Football has a certain rhythm and beauty. Germany has that. Every player

in that team is a star. The whole team plays with full force. That is why they keep going forward. All European teams play well, but Germany is different. Back then it was West Germany," he said.

Siam Ahmed supports Spain. "Spain's football draws me in deeply. I have supported them from the beginning. Most people here go for Brazil or Argentina, but Spain has always been my team. They play with a unique rhythm that fascinates me," he said.

Rafiath Rashid Mithila supports Argentina. "Argentina is Maradona's country. I love both

Maradona and Messi. I hope my favourite team sets a record this time," she said.

Tanzika Amin also supports Argentina. "You can talk about football for hours. Everyone has their favourite team, and mine is Argentina. I really want my team to win the World Cup this time," she said.

Chanchal Chowdhury, whose fan base spans both in Bangladesh and West Bengal, also backs Argentina. "I have loved this team ever since I was old enough to understand football. I support Argentina and so does my son," he said.

Ziaul Faruq Apurba supports Brazil. "I love Brazil because they play in a very unique way," he said.

Actor Shajal Noor is a keen sports fan. He supports Argentina. "The World Cup is here again. I support Argentina for many reasons, but one of the biggest reasons is Maradona. I still remember watching my favourite player when I was very young," he said.

Popular singer Asif Akbar supports Brazil. Popular model, actress Monalisa supports Argentina. "All my love for my favourite team. I want them to bring the World Cup home," she said.

Actor Emon supports Argentina. On the other hand, Omar Sani and Apu Biswas support Brazil. Television actor Zahid Hasan's favourite team is Argentina.

Bidya Sinha Mim supports Brazil. "Brazil is my favourite team. It is the country of the great footballer Pele. I have loved their play since childhood. I hope my favourite team does well in this World Cup," she said.

Habib Wahid returns with original single 'Premer Kolonko'



Following the success of his recent folk-fusion tracks *Moha Jadu* and *Koi Roila Re*, singer, composer and music producer Habib Wahid is set to release a new original song titled *Premar Kolonko*.

The song has been written by filmmaker and lyricist S A Haque Olike, while Habib has composed and arranged the music. The music video has been directed by Chandan Roy Chowdhury.

Speaking about the project, Habib said he wanted to offer listeners something different after releasing consecutive folk-fusion songs. He expressed hope that the song's lyrics, melody, arrangement and video would meet audience expectations.

Premar Kolonko is expected to be released online soon.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Fête de la Musique 2026'

A cross cultural percussion show unfolds as *Fête de la Musique 2026* brings together the rhythmic worlds of Brazil and Bangladesh in Dhaka. Featuring Áquila Lima of Brazil and Mithun Chakra of Bangladesh, the performance explores improvisation, tradition, and electronic experimentation, where sound becomes a shared language across borders.

Date: Saturday | June 13, 2026

Time: 6 pm onwards

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



NEWS

UN concerned over reports of push-ins

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that vulnerable individuals had been stranded along the Bangladesh-India border, particularly near Panchagarh and Thakurgaon.

According to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), the force has thwarted more than 30 attempts by Indian authorities to push people into Bangladesh since early June.

The UNRC noted that media reports indicated Indian authorities had reportedly taken back 21 individuals, including women and children, who had been stranded near the border.

"The UN continues to engage with relevant authorities and partners to better understand developments on the

ground and to assess any humanitarian needs that may arise," Carol said.

She recalled that both Bangladesh and India are signatories to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), under which they have committed to strengthening cooperation on migration governance and protecting the rights and dignity of migrants in vulnerable situations.

"These principles remain important in guiding responses to complex cross-border migration challenges."

The UN, she added, stands ready to support the Bangladesh government upon request and in line with its mandate.

She said through its presence in both Bangladesh and India, the International

Organization for Migration (IOM) can facilitate coordination, support information-sharing and monitoring efforts, and assist vulnerable migrants through its referral networks.

Welcoming the UN's response, Mir Ahmad said push-ins are completely unlawful and unacceptable, and border killings must stop.

He said issues over an individual's legal status should be settled through established international procedures, not through push-ins.

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman or State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed could not be reached for comment on the parliamentary opposition's diplomatic communication.

Art, music, dance likely in class-IV texts next year

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for their future careers, according to a ministry press release.

He added that expanding music, dance, theatre, fine arts, and sports education at the primary level would require a large number of specialised teachers and trainers, creating new employment opportunities for young people in these fields and helping establish sustainable career pathways.

"Over the next five years, around 50,000 to 60,000 new jobs will be created in this sector."

Seeking cooperation from universities, he said the government wanted their graduates to have opportunities to join primary schools as teachers in the future.

"We want to work together on how they can be given proper training, how teacher-preparation components can be linked with university curricula, and how skilled teachers can be developed jointly," he said.

The minister said music, theatre, and dance should not be treated solely as co-curricular activities but as important components of students' overall development.

To that end, he said, the government was already planning curriculum development and teacher preparation.

Primary and Mass Education Secretary Md Shakhawat Hossain, chairpersons of relevant departments from 24 universities, and ministry officials attended the meeting.

The life he never got to build

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crushed between two buses in the Chankharpul area of the capital.

The incident took place around 4:00pm yesterday on the road between the new building of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Chankharpul.

DMCH police outpost In-charge Inspector Md Faruk said the body was sent for an autopsy.

According to witnesses, Joydev was trying to board a Narayanganj-bound Moumita Paribahan bus when a Thikhana Paribahan bus coming from behind attempted to overtake it and hit him.

He was rushed to the emergency unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition and was declared dead around 4:30pm.

His brother, Samiran Pandey, said Joydev, who is originally from Barishal's Agailjhara upazila, worked at Rovel Laboratories, an Ayurvedic medicine

manufacturing and distribution company. He was the family's main provider, supporting his wife, newborn child, and elderly parents.

Samiran added that his brother left for work around 8:00am every day and usually returned in the evening despite a heavy workload. "That day was no different. He had finished work and was on his way home to Jatrabari when the accident occurred."

Joydev's co-worker Mizanur Rahman said they had been working together in the Shahbagh area earlier in the day. "We were together in the morning. After we parted ways, I received the news," he said, adding that Joydev had been working with the pharmaceutical distributor since 2011.

After hearing the news, Samiran and his sister Sonju Pandey, both of whom live in the capital, rushed to DMCH. Upon seeing his body, Sonju broke down in tears.

They demanded strict punishment for those responsible and compensation to support the family, which has been left without its sole breadwinner.

Samiran said that, as of filing this report at 9:45pm, they had not yet informed Joydev's wife and elderly parents of his death.

"His wife Borna is aware that he was involved in a road accident but has not been told that he died."

He further said their father, Suren Pandey, 82, and mother, Shondha Rani Pandey, 70, are both elderly and suffer from various health complications. "Their condition is not good enough to bear such devastating news. We are still trying to decide how and when to inform them of Joydev's death."

Samiran, however, said that after the post-mortem examination, Joydev's body would be taken to his village home in Barishal for burial today.

ADB may fund 19 projects worth \$3.8b

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development (\$200 million) and building the SASEC Dhirasram inland container depot (\$300 million).

Altogether, the projects involve about \$1.9 billion, according to the plan shared by the ADB and ERD with journalists on Tuesday.

In 2028, it will fund the modernisation of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited and establish the National Data Governance Authority (\$150 million), the hi-tech park project (\$200 million), strengthening of the power distribution system in Cumilla (\$300 million) and the health sector digital transformation project (\$200 million).

It will provide \$150 million to make agriculture in the northwest sustainable and resilient agriculture (\$150 million), \$250 million to improve the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, \$150 million to improve the access road to Chattogram port, \$150 million to develop Mirsarai economic zone and \$150 million for developing Cox's Bazar for tourism.

In total, \$1.9 billion will be provided in 2028.

The ADB intends to provide \$5 billion over five years for IGND.

The IGND, which will be integrated into the strategic framework for fiscals 2026-27 to 2030-31, will later be absorbed into the North-West Dhaka South-East Economic Corridor, which is a 20-year plan involving \$80 billion to decongest Dhaka and Chattogram.

Of the \$80 billion, \$22 billion would go towards water and climate, \$17 billion towards energy and power, \$9

billion to railways, \$7.7 billion to roads, \$3.9 billion to logistics and \$3.5 billion to ports and inland water terminals.

Once completed, the corridor would add 2 percentage point to the annual GDP growth, create 1 crore jobs over the next decade, support export diversification and contribute 20 percent towards the \$1 trillion economy target.

At the event, Chandan Sapkota, country economist of the ADB, said the proposed initiative would require about \$4 billion annually, with half of the financing expected from multilateral development banks and development partners, and the remainder from the private sector.

The ADB has already committed \$1 billion to the initiative, while another \$1 billion is expected from development partners.

Public investment would lead the process in the initial years, while private investment is expected to increase gradually as regulatory reforms, capital market development and investment facilitation measures take effect.

"The larger challenge, however, lies in mobilising private investment. The issue is not money. The issue is bankable projects," he said, adding that investors would be willing to commit funds if projects offer credible returns.

The government would need to introduce new incentives to draw private investors.

Most of the proposed investments are linked to existing economic zones and growth centres where land has already been acquired, reducing concerns over land availability for private investors.

"There is a substantial amount of unused land in the economic zones. The main requirement for additional land acquisition will be for public infrastructure projects," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of extending the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) highway network from Rangpur to Banglabandha and Burimari, describing it as a missing link in a regional corridor that already connects neighbouring countries.

He said lessons from both successful and unsuccessful international experiences have been incorporated into the proposed governance structure, noting that strong institutional arrangements are often the deciding factor in whether such initiatives succeed.

At the event, SM Zakaria Huq, additional secretary at the Economic Relations Division, said discussions with development partners would continue to better understand their potential contributions to the initiative.

Referring to private sector participation, he said an information-sharing session was held with business representatives the previous day, where investors responded positively to the proposal.

"The private sector has shown enthusiasm," he said.

The ADB and the World Bank maintain formal co-financing arrangements and development partners had expressed strong support for the initiative during discussions held the previous day.