

‘Mastul’ set for July theatrical release

Bangladeshi filmmaker Mohammad Nuruzzaman’s *Mastul* is set for theatrical release on July 17, with its promotional campaign beginning through the unveiling of the film’s first official poster, designed by Dhruva Esh.

The film follows an ageing cook aboard a fuel tanker and a street child in Narayanganj, exploring themes of marginalisation, loneliness, affection, power, and survival. Set against the backdrop of one of Bangladesh’s busiest river ports, it stars Fazlur Rahman Babu, Deepak Suman, and Aminur Rahman.

Shot across river routes, ports and fish markets, the production also features real tanker crew members alongside professional actors.

Mastul has earned international recognition, including a Special Mention at the 47th Moscow International Film Festival and the Best Artistic Contribution award at the Cheboksary International Film Festival.



FS Nayeem recalls a night of Messi magic at the World Cup



RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Watching Lionel Messi from just a few rows away was the highlight of FS Nayeem’s recent World Cup adventure in the United States. Alongside his wife, actress Nadia Ahmed, the actor attended Argentina’s match against Algeria and experienced the atmosphere of football’s biggest tournament firsthand.

Photos of the celebrity couple at the match took social media by storm after Nadia, a passionate Argentina supporter, shared glimpses of their World Cup experience online.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Nayeem revealed that what began as a casual family plan soon turned into an unforgettable football adventure involving Nadia’s younger sister, Nandita, and her husband.

The most entertaining aspect of the trip, according to Nayeem, was that everyone supported different teams.

“We all support different teams,” he said with a laugh. “Nandita is a Germany supporter, I support Germany as well, Nadia supports Argentina, and Nandita’s husband is a Brazil fan. We applied for tickets to matches involving all of our favourite teams.”

With World Cup tickets distributed

through a lottery system, all four submitted applications in the hope of securing seats for different matches. Fate, however, had a special surprise in store.

“Fortunately, we got tickets for the Argentina versus Algeria match on Wednesday, which meant we got to witness Lionel Messi’s magic live,” he recalled.

For Nayeem, attending a World Cup match had long been a dream.

“Watching a World Cup match from the stadium is a huge thing for me. It was a truly special moment for all of us,” he said.

Before heading to the stadium, the group spent several hours at the FIFA Fan Festival, immersing themselves in the carnival-like atmosphere surrounding the tournament.

“There were live concerts, football-

surrounded by Argentina supporters.

“Almost 90 percent of the people sitting around me were Argentina supporters, while maybe two percent were supporting Algeria,” he said. “Most of them were busy recording the match on their phones, but I was just quietly watching Messi.”

According to him, that turned out to be the best decision of the night.

“It felt like every time Messi touched the ball, something extraordinary was about to happen. Even if he had possession for only a few seconds, he would either create a goal-scoring opportunity or deliver a beautiful pass. The entire stadium would erupt whenever he got hold of the ball.”

The electric atmosphere left a lasting impression on the actor, particularly the passion displayed by Argentina’s supporters.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

themed souvenirs, giant screens, and countless activities for fans. Those who couldn’t get tickets could watch the match there. We also took lots of photos with different attractions and installations,” Nayeem said.

Afterwards, FIFA’s shuttle service transported them to the stadium.

“We reached around 7:20 pm, and the match started at 8 pm. The entire stadium was packed. We had fantastic seats. This wasn’t club football—it was the World Cup. I kept telling Nadia, ‘I can’t believe we’re actually watching a World Cup match right now.’”

Once inside, Nayeem found himself

“Argentina fans are incredibly expressive. They were singing throughout the match. Some were even playing instruments. The whole experience felt magical,” he said.

Reflecting on the evening, Nayeem said the crowd’s reaction to Messi perfectly demonstrated the football icon’s universal appeal.

“The way people cheered for him every time he touched the ball showed exactly why Messi is loved by football fans all over the world. But thanks to Nadia, I got to experience a part of that passion firsthand. She’s a true Argentina fan,” he added.



Shilpakala Academy to mark World Music Day with two-day festival

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will celebrate World Music Day with a two-day music festival on June 21 and 22 at the National Theatre Hall in Dhaka. The event is being organised with support from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Nitai Roy Chowdhury will attend the opening day as the chief guest. Musician Ali Newaz Mahmud Khaiyam and writer Zahed Ur Rahman will be present as special guests. Veteran lyricist Moniruzzaman Monir will be honoured at the programme.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting will attend the second day’s event as the chief guest. Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Director General Sheikh Rezauddin Ahmed will preside over both sessions.

Formal proceedings will begin at 6:30 pm each day, followed by musical performances featuring artistes from different generations and musical traditions.

NEWS

Healthcare reels from shortage of nurses

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More than half of the doctors, pharmacists and medical technologists expressed interest in working abroad, while 45.9 percent of the nurses showed similar aspirations.

However, actual migration remains limited. Only 7.1 percent of those interested had applied for overseas jobs, reflecting a major gap between aspiration and preparedness.

The report identified visa and work permit difficulties, certificate equivalence issues, lack of guidance and high licensing exam costs as the main barriers.

To address the crisis, the study recommended prioritising recruitment and training of nurses and midwives, ensuring equitable rural deployment of health workers, aligning workforce production with actual service demands and a government-supported mechanism to find jobs abroad.

While presenting the findings of the study titled “Potential of Health Workforce for Harnessing Demographic Dividend in Bangladesh:

Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Implications”, Aminul Haque, who led the research, said Bangladesh had 123,853 registered MBBS doctors and 85,971 registered nurses as of 2023.

The country has already met the WHO minimum benchmark for doctors, which recommends at least 0.50 doctors per 1,000 population. Based on that standard, Bangladesh needed around 88,909 doctors in 2026, which is below its current stock.

However, the WHO benchmark remains lower than the average demand in South and Southeast Asia, Haque said.

Bangladesh continues to face a severe shortage of nurses and midwives, with the projected 2026 supply expected to meet only 43 percent of the required demand.

Private sector dominates when it comes to producing graduates, with private institutions accounting for 6,828 of the 11,328 MBBS seats and 33,840 of the 41,750 nursing seats.

Although there are 0.73 registered doctors per 100 population, only

0.18 doctors per 1000 population are working under Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said Haque, also a professor at DU’s Department of Population Sciences.

DGHS, the Directorate General of Family Planning and the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery have 71,765 posts vacant, which is 28.6 percent of the seats.

Referring to the study, MA Muhith, state minister for the health ministry, said the situation in rural areas is much worse than the national average in terms of the availability of doctors.

But, the absence of nurses and midwives is severe, even though the issue is not discussed much, he said, adding that the number should be increased by three to five times.

The findings of another study, conducted by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission and funded by the NIPORT, on health workers’ preparedness for the effective management of pandemic diseases were also presented at the programme.

Confirmed, suspected cases

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month, except on June 13, when admissions fell to 672, according to DGHS data.

The data showed that 1,016 patients with measles or measles-like symptoms were admitted to hospitals in the last 24 hours. So far, 57,902 patients, mostly children, have been hospitalised. Of them, 53,722 have been discharged, leaving 3,681 still undergoing treatment.

Daily cases have remained above 1,000 this month, with the only exception on June 13, when 733 suspected cases and 63 confirmed cases were recorded.

The number of deaths has remained below 10 a day since May 29, according to the data.

Public health expert Mushtuq Husain said measles cases were not declining for two main reasons: vaccination coverage may not have reached 95 percent in all areas, and infection prevention and control measures were not being properly followed in hospitals and communities.

He added that isolation and quarantine — key measures in any epidemic — had largely been ignored,

despite being essential components of outbreak management.

Mushtuq further said the vaccination campaign target was largely set online from offices due to time constraints, which may have led to inaccurate planning. “As a result, many children may have remained unvaccinated.”

He stressed the need for a vaccination campaign targeting all children under five and a revised house-to-house microplanning approach to reduce infection rates.

“Deaths are still being reported regularly, leaving no room for complacency,” he said, warning that children who had contracted measles could face severe complications if they later became infected with dengue, as measles significantly weakens the immune system.

DGHS Director General Prof Pravath Chandra Biswas said the number of deaths, particularly confirmed deaths, had declined sharply following the vaccination campaign.

He added that the number of cases had also fallen in June compared to previous months and expressed hope that the situation would come under further control soon.

18 students fall sick after school meal

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the hospital with stomach aches.

“Initially, it is suspected that the students may have fallen ill due to consuming low-quality food or because of the excessive heat. However, nothing can be said for certain at this stage,” he said.

District Primary Education Officer Saiful Islam said the food had been supplied by a non-government organisation.

“Samples of the food have been collected and will be sent to a laboratory for testing,” he added.

Saiful also noted that similar incidents involving students falling ill after consuming food provided under the school feeding programme had occurred in different upazilas of the district in the past.

“The matter has been reported to the higher authorities. Following instructions from the ministry, the district administration formed an investigation committee, which has already submitted its report,” he added.

Uproar in JS over loan defaulter tag

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Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal responded that the matter would be reviewed and removed, if found expungeable, from the proceedings.

Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam then said the opposition had raised concerns about loan defaulters even before the election.

“Nominations were given to loan defaulters. Now, if a party nominates loan defaulters and brings them into parliament, that responsibility lies with them. If so many loan defaulters are in parliament, then naturally people will call it a ‘parliament of loan defaulters,’” he said.

“And since we call parliament sovereign, if we cannot call loan defaulters by their name here, then honourable Speaker, where else can we?”

He argued that the remarks should not be expunged.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed then said none of those present in the House were loan defaulters.

Referring to the Representation of

the People Order and other election laws, he said anyone declared a loan defaulter by a court is disqualified from contesting elections.

“That means they may be indebted, but not defaulters,” he said.

He added that some nominated candidates had cases with banks and others with private parties, but those cases were settled through the courts and the candidates were declared eligible to contest.

Later, Rumeen clarified her remarks. “That is one fact,” she said.

“Secondly, as a lawyer, I know very well how loans are rescheduled through small payments before elections and how, once a name appears on the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) list, a writ petition is filed to stay it, allowing the candidate to contest. Then interest payments stop again. We understand this process very well.”

The exchange came against the backdrop of earlier disputes over loan default status and findings by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on lawmakers’

declared liabilities.

Ahead of the 13th parliamentary election, the Election Commission cancelled the nominations of 82 aspirants on loan default grounds based on Bangladesh Bank’s CIB information.

However, 31 other candidates were not listed as defaulters because of court stay orders.

Two BNP candidates — Aslam Chowdhury of Chattogram-4 and Sarwar Alamgir of Chattogram-2 — were later allowed to contest following court orders, although publication of their results remained suspended over loan default allegations.

In a press release on February 16, days after the election, TIB said half of the members of the 13th parliament had declared liabilities or debts.

According to the report, MPs’ total declared liabilities or debts stood at Tk 11,356 crore, the highest among the previous four parliaments.

It also said the top 10 MPs with the highest declared liabilities or debts were all from the BNP.

Colombia’s ‘Lucho’ steps into spotlight

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It’s a continuation of a remarkable run of form for the Bayern Munich winger, who scored 26 goals in all competitions in his first season in Germany, winning the Bundesliga title and a German Cup.

That came after helping Liverpool win the Premier League title in 2024-25 with 13 goals. The fact the English side’s title defence collapsed so soon

perhaps highlights the gap Diaz left, with his high pressing and urgency as key as his trickery and clinical finishing.

“It was a very special moment; I felt an incredible sensation when I went out to warm up,” Diaz told reporters on Wednesday. “I worked and fought for this. I am living out my childhood dream of playing in a World Cup with my national team, and it’s even better

to have contributed a goal and an assist.”

Rodriguez made a name for himself at in 2014 by steering Colombia to the quarter-finals and winning the Golden Boot with six goals. Diaz is already a well-known quantity but Colombia fans will be hoping their beloved ‘Lucho’ can inspire them to go even further this year.

One country, one question paper

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On teacher shortages, he said the education ministry would work with the cultural affairs ministry, and cultural personalities at the district level could support schools through upazila level clusters.

The press briefing was arranged to inform the media about the “Primary School Gold Cup Football Tournament” and the “Startup, Science Project and Innovation Idea Showcasing Programme”.

Bobby Hajjaj, state minister for primary and mass education, and Mahdi Amin, education adviser to the prime minister, also addressed the briefing.

Mahdi Amin said the government wanted an education system based on equity, civic values, discipline, practical skills and real-life learning.

From the next academic year, sports and culture will be introduced as new subjects from class four, he said, adding that “learning with happiness” along with technical and vocational education will be introduced from class six.

According to him, culture would not mean only music and dance; it could include reading, handwriting, recitation, poetry, storytelling, debate and arts. While sports would include football, cricket, kabaddi, chess and

swimming, among others.

Mahdi said more than 11 lakh boys and more than 11 lakh girls from 65,342 schools took part in the Primary School Gold Cup Football Tournament, which began on April 6.

The final will be held at the Army National Stadium on June 20.

Bobby Hajjaj said the ministry was taking an initiative to arrange global-standard football training for champion teams.

The final round of the “Startup, Science Project and Innovation Idea Showcasing Programme” will be held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on June 29.