

Bangladeshi dancer presents Manipuri heritage research at Taiwan conference



Bangladeshi Manipuri dancer and researcher Sweety Das presented her research on the Manipuri community of Bangladesh at the International Dance Conference Festival (IDCF) 2026, held in Taichung, Taiwan.

The conference, organised by the World Dance Alliance (WDA) in collaboration with the National Taiwan University of Sport, took place from June 23 to 27 at the university.

Das, a PhD researcher at Jahangirnagar University and Director and Principal of Dikhsha Dance Institute, represented Bangladesh at the international gathering of dance scholars, researchers and practitioners.

The study is the result of more than eight years of continuous fieldwork and close engagement with the Manipuri community under Shadhona – A Centre for Advancement of South Asian Culture.



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY

‘Unfamiliar Affinity’ explores art, identity and belonging

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Kala Kendra is currently hosting a unique multimedia exhibition titled *Unfamiliar Affinity*. Curated by Wakilur Rahman, this is a solo exhibition by a Bangladeshi-German photographer and multimedia artist Raga Rahman.

At the opening ceremony, prominent artist Professor Lala Rukh Selim of the Department of Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka, and architectural critic Kazi Khaleed Ashraf attended the inauguration ceremony, appreciating the artist's skills in this particular genre of work.

Raga Rahman was born in Berlin, Germany, in 2000 and has been studying Photography in the Field of



Contemporary Art at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig since 2022. She is currently living in Bangladesh as an intern at Goethe-Institut Dhaka.

In 2023, Raga created a photo series that is being displayed at the exhibition. This series, called *Der Himmel ueber Dhaka* (The Sky upon Dhaka), is an array of photographs captured from different rooftops. According to Raga, in one of the world's most densely populated cities with awful traffic, rooftops are among the few places

that are like oases, offering serenity. She has spent hours observing people from above, thinking about their lives. She has seen blankets, mattresses, and lentils being dried, children learning roller skating, and senior citizens resting. The photographs are in black and white, with perfect framing and hierarchy of subjects. The compositions are balanced; some are symmetrical, some are asymmetrical, and some make the spectator curious about the photographer's headspace.

My Body is a Blanket is a five-minute performance art video exploring the connection between inherited experiences and sentiments through the act of folding a blanket. *Log Lady and Other Tales* is a 15-minute video of Raga's research into plant language, during which she learned about scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose. This is a video essay of her understanding of interspecies

communication between plants and humans, as trees are also sentient beings that hold wisdom and spirituality.

The most interesting element of this exhibition is *The Wooden Choir*, a sound installation with wooden stems and speakers, where speculative sounds mimicking those of plants are made audible using synthesisers. The stems are laid out in a room, and visitors are encouraged to interact with the space physically. The aim is to listen to plant sounds in a playful manner, as they are just as alive as we are.

In summary, *Unfamiliar Affinity* offers a show with a flavour that is out of the box. It is a display of the deep connection of a person with their mixed heritage and culture. Raga has created a sense of identity through her visual narratives. Kala Kendra will run this exhibition until June 30. It will remain open daily from 4 pm to 8 pm.

Shilpakala Academy hosts electronic music workshop and live show



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) organised an event titled *Notun Shobdo: Electronic Music Workshop and Stage Performance*, held on Saturday (June 27) at the National Music and Dance Centre Auditorium, where participants had the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of electronic music, including sound design, beat-making, live setup techniques, and the basic use of music software and hardware.

The workshop was conducted by Shadwaan Chowdhury, Nazmus Sakib and Hasib Mahmud, and aimed at young and emerging musicians, sound artistes, and music enthusiasts. The programme also featured a live electronic music performance.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Tribute to originals | MJ x Warfaze’

Warfaze is set to reimagine Michael Jackson's greatest anthems with every riff, beat, and chorus to make a night where nostalgia meets pure rock energy.

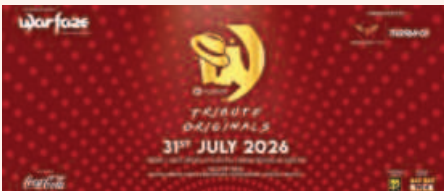
The concert offers iconic songs reborn through thunderous guitars, explosive drums, and powerful live vocals, paying tribute to Michael Jackson's timeless legacy. Tickets are available on the website of Get Set Rock.

DATE: FRIDAY | JULY 31, 2026

GATES OPEN: 4 PM

SHOW STARTS: 6 PM

VENUE: HALL OF FAME, BCFCC



NEWS

Knockouts beckon as WC lives up to hype

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underlining the excitement of the expanded competition.

The group stage also witnessed Cape Verde's remarkable run to the knockout stage on their World Cup debut, two-time champions Uruguay's shock group-stage exit, surprise draws for Spain and Portugal against Cape Verde and DR Congo respectively, and all three host nations progressing to the Round of 32.

HOSTS FLY HIGH

Much of the pre-tournament speculation revolved around how the three host nations would perform. Mexico had failed to reach the knockout stage in 2022, while Canada had never won a World Cup match in their previous appearances in 1986 and 2022.

This time, however, all three hosts reached the Round of 32 by the end of the second round of group matches, winning five of their six combined fixtures. Mexico finished with a perfect record by winning all three group matches, while the US topped their group with two wins. Canada, meanwhile, achieved their first World Cup point as well as first win, and also qualified as runners-up behind Switzerland.

SURPRISES SUSTAIN

This World Cup produced its first major upset when tournament favourites Spain were held to a goalless draw by Cape Verde, inspired by a sensational goalkeeping display from Vozinha. The African nation then drew against Uruguay and Saudi Arabia to finish as group runners-up with three points, becoming the first team since Chile in 1998 to qualify for the knockout stage with three draws and the smallest nation ever to reach the World Cup knockout rounds.

Elsewhere, Portugal were held to a 1-1 draw by DR Congo, Brazil were

forced to settle for a 1-1 draw against Morocco, while Germany – who began their campaign with a 7-1 win over debutants Curacao – suffered a surprise 2-1 defeat to Ecuador.

RECORDS FALL

At the age of 38, Messi once again lit up the World Cup, scoring five goals in his opening two group-stage matches, including a hat-trick against Algeria in Argentina's campaign opener. He later netted twice against Austria to surpass Miroslav Klose's long-standing record of 16 World Cup goals and now tops the all-time scoring chart with 18.

France's Kylian Mbappé, Norway's Erling Haaland, France's Ousmane Dembélé and Brazil's Vinicius Júnior have each scored four goals, setting up an intriguing race for the Golden Boot.

Ronaldo, after failing to score in Portugal's opening match, responded with a brace against Uzbekistan, becoming the first footballer to score in six different World Cups.

Mohamed Salah and Kevin De Bruyne have also made their mark, while teenage sensation Lamine Yamal has continued to impress on the biggest stage. Although goals have dominated the headlines, the tournament has also featured several outstanding goalkeeping performances.

Meanwhile, Neymar Jr marked his long-awaited return from injury by coming off the bench in Brazil's final group-stage match against Scotland.

The North American edition has also broken attendance records, with total spectator numbers already surpassing four million by the end of the group stage, eclipsing the previous World Cup record set by the United States in 1994.

PATH AHEAD

While the group stage featured relatively few heavyweight clashes, a

series of surprise results has set up a fascinating knockout phase.

Despite topping their respective groups, the Netherlands and Brazil face difficult Round of 32 ties against Morocco and Japan respectively. France and Germany also find themselves in the same half of the draw, facing Paraguay and Sweden. Should both European giants advance, they will meet in a blockbuster Round of 16 encounter.

For Brazil, either Norway or Ivory Coast await in the last 16, while the winners of the Netherlands-Morocco tie will take on either Canada or South Africa.

Defending champions Argentina appear to have received a comparatively easier route, beginning with a Round of 32 clash against Cape Verde before a potential Round of 16 meeting with either Australia or Egypt.

Spain, Mexico, Belgium and Switzerland are still awaiting confirmation of their Round of 32 opponents following the conclusion of the remaining group-stage fixtures, while the United States will face Bosnia and Herzegovina.

With eight of the best third-placed teams joining the 12 group winners and 12 runners-up in the expanded knockout format, nations such as Senegal have progressed despite collecting only three points, while Iran also remain in contention after drawing all three of their group matches.

Although the tournament faced considerable scrutiny before it began, the quality of football and the drama produced throughout the group stage have largely silenced the criticism. With the knockout rounds now set to begin, the excitement is only expected to intensify as the race for football's biggest prize gathers pace.

USA football's global scale in full display

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Verde is right now."

He added, half stunned, that even Tom Brady had fewer followers, despite a career widely considered one of the most dominant in sports history. For Hand, that gap revealed something larger than a single match: football's global gravity.

Across the United States, the same realization was spreading in different forms. The World Cup wasn't acting like a foreign import trying to earn attention; it was exposing how little of its scale Americans had fully absorbed. Stadiums filled near capacity, and broadcasts drew millions. The sport was not arriving – it was already everywhere.

Sports marketing analyst Bob Dorfman said the shift was emotional as much as statistical. Fans were

discovering not just elite athletes, but entire cultures of support, where traveling crowds treated matches like national rituals. Anthems echoed through stadiums with a weight that surprised many first-time viewers.

In Los Angeles, outside a match between the United States and Turkey, the atmosphere felt closer to a festival than a game. Drums echoed, smoke filled the air, and fans arrived dressed in costumes – from superheroes to fictional coaches like Ted Lasso – blending humour with devotion.

Inside the stadium, supporters like Alicia Rutz said Americans were learning to watch differently, celebrating not only goals but movement, timing, and craft. The sport was becoming legible in new ways.

Yet questions lingered about

permanence. The United States had seen surges before, from the 1994 World Cup to the rise of MLS and the dominance of the women's national team. Each time, growth followed – but never quite overtook the country's established hierarchy of sports.

Even now, stars like Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Christian Pulisic coexist in the American consciousness with Patrick Mahomes, Arch Manning, Alex Ovechkin, and Caitlin Clark.

For Hand, that overlap defined the present moment: intense, global, and temporary.

Still, something had shifted. For a few weeks, the scale of football was no longer abstract. It was visible, viral, and impossible to ignore. And even if attention would drift again, the memory of that scale would not.

Charging gaps stalling EV adoption

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battery replacement and payback, and gaps in the battery ecosystem.

Tax and duty incentives alone would not be enough without adequate charging infrastructure, reliable electricity, advanced battery management systems and greater private-sector participation, Taskeen said.

He called for public-private investment, dedicated depots for electric buses, mandatory EV charging facilities at new buildings in Dhaka and Chattogram, and a coordinated long-term policy framework.

EVs remain at a nascent stage in the formal sector, with only around 700 vehicles officially registered, although the informal market is larger, said

Shibbir Bichitra Barua, additional secretary at the commerce ministry.

"So we need accurate data to be essential for effective policymaking," he said.

The lack of a proper registration system for battery-run vehicles has left the government without accurate data on electricity consumption in the sector, said Md Mojibul Islam, chief engineer of the Bangladesh Power Development Board.

He also blamed the use of substandard batteries for considerable electricity wastage.

Md Aminur Rahman, director of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), said the authority has approved 32 EV charging stations, of which nine

have been installed and six are already operational.

He urged operators of unauthorised charging stations to obtain SREDA approval and said the authority is updating the Electric Vehicle Charging Guideline 2022. He also stressed the need to maintain quality standards for both charging stations and imported EVs.

The government is working on several EV initiatives under the prime minister's close supervision, said Mohammad Moksed Ali, joint secretary at the Road Transport and Highways Division.

These include bus route rationalisation, a public transport fund, viability gap financing and a plan to introduce 400 electric buses with World Bank funding under a gross cost contract model involving IDCOL, he said.

‘Cops shouldn’t probe themselves’

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innocent, he said, while calling for an independent police enquiry commission.

Khalilur Rahman Khan, director of the NGO Affairs Bureau, suggested exploring private investigations into police torture as the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 allows individuals other than magistrates to conduct probes.

The conference also shed light on state violence during the uprising, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings by police and state forces during the previous Awami League regime.

Ruhul Amin from Satkhira described how police shot him in the leg in 2014, leading to amputation. Relatives of border killing victims, including Felani Khatun's father Nurul Islam and Mursalin's brother Yasin Mia, also spoke.

Rights activist Sazzad Hossain said 1,353 Bangladeshis have been killed by India's Border Security Force's gunfire since 2000.

Armed attacks on unarmed individuals at the border are a gross violation of international law, said Saifuddin Ahmed, professor of the University of Dhaka's Department of Peace and Conflict Studies.

More than 1,500 complaints were submitted to the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, said its former member Nur Khan Liton.

The July uprising's aspirations will remain unfulfilled if the pattern of repression does not change, said Liton, chief adviser of the Human Rights Support Society.

Ensuring state accountability requires impartial investigations following international guidelines such as the Istanbul Protocol, said Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, former president of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

Bangladeshi couple, child

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undergoing treatment there, Nayeem said.

Asked how the family came to know about the incident, he said Ayon informed them over the phone.

Contacted, Babul's father, Kamal Sirajul Islam, said, "My son was very honest, gentle and polite. We don't know why they brutally killed my

son, his wife and daughter. I demand exemplary punishment for the killers. "I also seek the government's support to bring their bodies back home as quickly as possible."

Companion Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Nurul Hakim said, "We came to know about the incident from the victims' family. Police have visited their village home and spoken to them."

Contacted, Noakhali Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shafiqul Islam said he learned about the incident through social media.

"We are yet to receive any official communication regarding the matter. The district administration will take the necessary steps to bring the bodies back home upon receiving a formal written request from the victims' family members."