Prantar paves new path in his career

SHARMIN JOYA

"Artistic growth means deliberately stepping outside the comfort zone," says Prantar Dastider, who recently ventured beyond acting to explore a new side of his career. Having long been the "answerable guy" at press interactions, he was drawn to experience things from the interviewer's perspective. Inspired by red-carpet formats across Hollywood, Bollywood, Korea and BAFTA, he took up the opportunity to host Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT Awards red carpet, testing his spontaneity through live, unpredictable interactions.

Behind the scenes, the assignment required intense script preparation and guest research alongside co-host, actor Priyontee Urbee. Yet on event day, Prantar deliberately entered the venue with a blank slate. "After entering the venue, I intentionally decided to clear my mind so I could remain completely spontaneous," he shares. Beyond managing the floor, the experience brought the thrill of direct networking. "I am grateful to my co-host for supporting me throughout."

"It was an unmatched excitement to talk directly with acclaimed directors and colleagues whose work I had long admired from afar but had never spoken to face-to-face," he notes.

Addressing discussions of an OTT industry slowdown following its initial post-2022 surge, the ***Antonagar*** actor remains resolutely optimistic. "I am not frustrated at all," Prantar emphasises. "A down phase doesn't mean something is going to be worse; rather, it means something better is coming. Audiences are already familiar with streaming platforms, so this is our scope to experiment with deeper story arcs that we hadn't thought about before".

On the acting front, Prantar speaks passionately about his upcoming project ***Separation***, directed by Giasuddin Selim, sharing the screen with Pori Moni and Imtiaz Barshon. "Selim *bhai* is a complete house of energy—he is the biggest charger on set," Prantar describes enthusiastically. "He makes sure every single character graph holds purpose". Rooted in human drama, the story explores the subtle realities of everyday relationships across spouses, siblings, and colleagues. "When contemporary stories reflect regular life, people deeply connect with the content," he explains.

Looking ahead, Prantar's artistic footprint continues to expand across multiple formats. He has recently finished dubbing for director Rashed Chowdhury's government-grant feature ***Sokhi Rongomala***, which is entering post-production ahead of international film festival circuits. He also shared that he is also working on projects to be released on the upcoming Valentine's and Eid.

Adding another major dimension to his hosting career, Prantar is set to anchor the main stage at the Bangladesh Achievers Awards 2026. Recognising the distinct shift from red carpet interviewing, he approaches the main stage with a measured mindset. "On the red carpet, you have the room to be spontaneous, but the main stage demands a strictly composed demeanour," Prantar reflects. "It is a whole lot of a bigger responsibility".



PHOTO: CREATENT



Sanjoy to perform at SAFF Championship opening ceremony

Bangladeshi-origin American DJ and producer Sanjoy Deb is set to headline the opening ceremony of the TECNO SAFF Championship Bangladesh 2026 on November 5.

Having previously performed at the FIFA World Cup 2026 opening ceremony in Toronto, the international artiste expressed his excitement about returning to perform in his home country. Organised in partnership with iSmartu Technology BD Limited, the performance marks a major highlight for the regional football spectacle.

The SAFF Championship will run from November 5 to 17 in Bangladesh, featuring national teams from across South Asia competing for the regional title.

Ferdausi Rahman reflects on her musical journey in new BTV show



Legendary singer Ferdausi Rahman appeared as the first guest on Bangladesh Television's (BTV) new programme ***Kingbodontir Sannidhye***, which premiered yesterday.

The inaugural episode explored different aspects of her long musical career, artistic journey and achievements, offering insights into her experiences and reflections from a lifetime dedicated to music.

The programme aims to highlight the lives, struggles and achievements of distinguished personalities from various fields and share their experiences and values with the younger generation.

Kingbodontir Sannidhye will air on the first and third Sundays of every month at 10 pm. Produced by Tanvir Ahmed Khan, the programme is presented by Ferdausi Ahmed Chowdhury.

EVENTS

'Invisible Stories'



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy hosts l***nvisible Stories***, a cross-cultural theatrical production blending Bengali folklore with modern mystery. Combining body puppetry, live Sundarbans folk music, and a French-Bangladeshi creative partnership, the performance brings ancient spirits to life, offering an evocative exploration of myth, memory, and local storytelling traditions.

Date: Friday–Saturday | November 6–7, 2026
Time: 6 pm onwards
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

Parties run on power-centric business model

FROM PAGE 12

Except for the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), no party constitution limits how many terms an individual can serve as chief.

Although party constitutions provide for leadership elections, most parties choose chiefs by voice vote instead of secret ballot. Only the CPB and Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party) were found to have had multiple candidates competing for the top position.

National councils were irregular in 16 parties, while decisions often came from individual leaders rather than elected forums. Grassroots committees mainly implemented central decisions, with little say in policy or strategy.

The study said most parties bypassed the Representation of the People Order (RPO) requirement to consider candidate panels proposed by local committees.

Instead, nomination boards interviewed aspirants and gave party chiefs' preferences the greatest weight.

Many party constitutions lacked clear eligibility criteria. Wealth, muscle power, and unquestioning loyalty influenced selections, particularly in influential parties. TIB reported allegations of awarding nominations in exchange for money in three of these parties.

Businesspeople made up 48.5 percent of candidates and 59.9 percent of elected MPs in the 2026 parliamentary election, according to the study. The corresponding figures in 2024 were 57.6 percent and 65.3 percent.

FINANCES QUESTIONED

TIB found a huge difference between the income and expenditure accounts parties officially provided, and the figures estimated in the research.

"In the existing political culture, huge amounts of money are required to conduct the activities of parties; the management of that money is carried out completely through informal and non-transparent processes," said the report.

TIB estimated that a party maintaining offices and regular activities nationwide down to union ward level could spend Tk 1,532 crore to Tk 2,188 crore annually, excluding election expenses.

By contrast, the highest expenditure reported in the published 2025 accounts of four parties was Tk 23.91 crore, by Jamaat-e-Islami.

The BNP reported Tk 15.26 crore.

The estimate is a model based on organisational reach, not verified spending by any party, so comparing these figures cannot establish undeclared expenditure.

The study said parties lacked clear financial policies and annual budgets.

Local activities were often financed informally by individuals and omitted from central accounts.

None of the 16 active party websites reviewed published financial reports or election expenditure accounts.

TIB also alleged coercive fundraising in some cases, and donations from wealthy people seeking positions, nominations or future benefits.

It further alleged that many parties submitted nominal audit reports prepared for payment, while neither the parties nor the Election Commission published the audited accounts.

Iftekharuzzaman said such personal dependence and financial opacity created a large gap between official accounts and reality.

The study also presented statements from party leaders on election expenditure. One said, "In some areas, Tk 25 lakh is spent in a single day on election expenses."

Another, referring to election spending, said, "In the election field, the Tk 1,000 note is the smallest denomination."

A district-level leader said a candidate from a major party spent more than Tk 50 crore in the 12th parliamentary election.

TIB estimated that candidates in the 2026 election spent, on average, 169.5 percent above the permitted limit.

Meeting the organisational requirements for registering a new party could cost Tk 33 lakh to Tk 76 lakh, TIB estimated. This is not a government registration fee but the cost of maintaining the offices and documents the rules require.

Citing Ain o Salish Kendra data, it reported 4,280 incidents of intra- and inter-party political violence between January 2013 and August 2026, leaving 746 dead and 46,351 injured.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Despite commitments to nominate at least five percent women candidates in the 2026 election, 13 of the studied parties fielded none.

Women made up only 3.1 percent of the nominees of the 12 other participating parties that nominated women, compared with 7.9 percent among independent candidates.

Across the election, women were 83 of 2,028 candidates, or 4.09 percent.

Only two of the 32 parties had women in at least 33 percent of central committee positions, the level parties are required to work towards by 2030.

Jamaat and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis had none.

TIB said loyalty and family connections often outweighed merit when women were nominated to reserved parliamentary seats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TIB recommended amending the RPO and party registration rules, publishing independently audited accounts, and empowering the Election Commission to scrutinise finances.

It also recommended holding regular secret-ballot leadership elections, defining tenure limits, expanding women's and grassroots participation, and introducing effective disciplinary safeguards.

Iftekharuzzaman said internal reforms were essential to ensure good governance within political parties, which he described as key institutions of democracy.

Khulna Tanti Dal leader hacked to death

FROM PAGE 12

Rahman said the killing apparently stemmed from a dispute over payment for a refrigerator bought on credit.

"A Chhatra Dal leader owns a refrigerator shop, while the deceased ran a computer shop. Humayun had bought a refrigerator from his shop on credit. A dispute arose over the outstanding payment," the OC said, quoting locals.

Gopi Kishore Roy, assistant commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said police received information about the attack around 7:00pm and rescued Humayun from the scene.

"There were several sharp-weapon injury marks on his body. We have collected CCTV footage. We have initially identified some suspects, but we cannot disclose their identities at this stage due to the ongoing investigation," he said.

Police were conducting raids to arrest those involved, he added.

France begins

FROM PAGE 12

Portugal's housing crisis.

On Saturday evening, hooded rioters looted stores in Frankfurt after tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets across Germany's biggest cities to demand better education and lower living costs.

Official numbers suggested turnout was below the 182,000 participants that organisers initially expected. Police in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin reported as many as 18,000 protesters, half the roughly 36,000 on the organisers' website.

German authorities said Saturday's demonstrations, which coincide with Halloween festivities, had been largely peaceful, but warned of attempts by extremist groups to exploit the movement.

Two confess in journalist Alif murder case

FROM PAGE 12

Police earlier produced them before the Durgapur Chowki Court last evening, General Recording Officer Kamrul Hasan of the court told The Daily Star.

Detective Branch of Netrokona arrested Emon and Sabbir during a raid in the Dhanpur Bazar area of Sunamganj's Bishwambharpur upazila on Saturday. They were later handed over to Durgapur police.

Contacted, Durgapur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Khondokar Shaker Ahmed said both suspects admitted their involvement in the killing.

He declined to give details of the statements in the interest of the investigation.

Police were now verifying the names, addresses and alleged involvement of individuals identified by the accused during interrogation, he said.

The OC also said multiple cases, including on murder charges, were pending against Emon and Sabbir.

According to investigators, Emon was the prime accused in a case filed over an attack on Alif on November 10 last year. Sabbir was also named as an accused.

On the night of October 15 this year, Alif was shot dead in the Telanjiya area near Uttrail Bazar on the Shyamganj-Birishiri road in Durgapur.

He was the Netrokona correspondent of private IP television channel Ruposhi Bangla, and ran a Facebook page named "Detective Article", where he published reports on border smuggling, crime, and other irregularities.

A tale of two systems

FROM PAGE 12

rooted weaknesses.

Many schools continue to suffer from a shortage of qualified teachers. Laboratories remain inadequate, ICT facilities are unevenly distributed and sometimes non-existent. And practical science education is very limited.

Particularly concerning is the poor performance in English, mathematics and ICT -- the subjects that form the foundation for higher education, employability and participation in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Reliance on private tuition demonstrates the ineffectiveness of classroom instruction, another systemic failure of our system.

Education quality is also linked to the quality of teachers.

In Bangladesh, teachers are relatively low-paid, discouraging many talented and high-achieving students from choosing it as a career.

Many begin their careers without adequate training in pedagogy or classroom management. Even when training is provided, inadequate as it is, teachers face challenges in applying what they learn in overcrowded classrooms with limited resources.

Bringing about these changes in skills and resources requires substantial public investment, which remains deficient.

Bangladesh's education spending hovers around 2 percent of GDP, well below UNESCO's recommended 4 to 6 percent, or 15 to 20 percent of total government expenditure.

But unlike physical infrastructure, which generates immediate and visible political dividends, investment in education takes years, often up to a decade, to bear fruit. As a result, education has rarely received the priority it deserves.

The stark contrast between the outstanding performance of cadet colleges and the poor results in mainstream education demonstrates a simple reality: educational achievement is shaped not only by students' abilities, but also by the quality of the opportunities and support they receive.

Until those opportunities are distributed more equitably, disparities in outcomes are likely to persist.

Keep factories running

FROM PAGE 1

vandalism or attempts to create unrest during the protests.

Labour Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who also attended the meeting, alleged that a political group was trying to destabilise the government.

"It is clear that, with December approaching, members of a political party and its affiliated organisations are engaged in efforts to destabilise the government. We will confront these politically," he said.

Salahuddin also alleged that the unrest was being instigated from across the border, with some groups exploiting garment workers to disrupt production and exports.

"Based on the information available to us, our analysis suggests that elements from across the border are attempting to create instability by using innocent garment workers," he said.

The home minister further alleged that masked individuals had infiltrated the protests to pursue vested interests. He said those involved in violence had already been brought under the law and warned that authorities would take a firm stance against any unlawful activities.

Asked about the government's response if workers resumed protests today, Salahuddin said genuine workers and labour organisations were not involved in violence and stressed that workers' demands should be resolved through dialogue.

He said a wage board was already in place to determine minimum wages and that the prime minister had instructed relevant agencies to protect workers' rights and improve their living standards.

The minister also urged factory owners to keep their plants operating, resolve disputes through discussions with workers and avoid disruptions to exports.

Earlier in the day, garment workers blocked roads in Mirpur, Savar-Ashulia, and Gazipur, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000. The protests disrupted traffic and were marred by clashes with police and incidents of vandalism and arson.

Son's HSC success costs Chuadanga JCD chief committee

FROM PAGE 12

secretary Mominur Rahman Malita told Prothom Alo that the unit had long been urging the central leadership to form a new committee as its term had expired.

However, he said he had not expected the committee to be dissolved under such circumstances and criticised Shahjahan for publicising his son's results.

Shahjahan said he had no objection to the decision.

He said he had been involved in JCD politics for 28 years and hoped to join Jubo Dal if the central leadership approved.