



‘Artistes have a responsibility to portray

# DIVERSE CHARACTERS’

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SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Mehazabein Chowdhury, besides being a household name as an actress, also garnered appreciation for her script for “Alo” last year.

In a candid interview with The Daily Star, the ‘Chirokal Aaj’ actress talks about her return to set, to shooting, and her expectations this year.

Have you returned to shooting yet? I definitely enjoyed my little vacation. However, I have returned to shooting for a Valentine’s day tele-fiction. However, I want

to be selective regarding my work this year.

What are your expectations for the New Year?

I really hope that Covid-19 cases do not increase this year, and that it is completely wiped out from the world. I do not want Omicron to affect our lives.

In terms of work, I have been selecting unique plots throughout the years, which the audiences have greatly appreciated. Artistes have a responsibility to adapt into diverse characters.

You received a lot of appreciation for writing the script of “Alo”. Will we see you as a scriptwriter this year?

You cannot really predict when a good story hits you. In “Alo”, I tried to portray the harsh realities of an honest female officer, I am glad that I could get so much appreciation for writing the script for “Alo”. I will definitely try writing more scripts if a good plot pops up in my mind.

Do you have any message for your fans?

Stay safe, stay healthy and watch more Bangladeshi content!

## Shajal, Moushumi Hamid to star in ‘Kokhono Akash Nil’



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Popular on-screen couple Shajal and Moushumi Hamid will be seen in a new tele-fiction “Khokhono Akash Nil”.

Directed by Nasiruddin Masood and written by Shahida Sultana, the show will air on Boishakhi TV today at 8:30 pm.

It also stars Moumita Mou, Hannan Shelly and Harunur Rashid in pivotal roles.

## Batighor’s ‘Monkey Trial’ to be staged today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Noted theatre troupe Batighor will premiere the second show of their 15th production titled, “Monkey Trial” at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy today.

The story of the fictional courtroom play is based on the true events of the infamous Scopes Monkey Trial in 1925.

The play, based on Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee’s Inherit the Wind, has been translated into Bangla by Khalid Hasan Rumi, Mridha Ayomee, and Muhaimin Anjan. It has been directed by Muktonil.



# COUNTRYWIDE



Despite working hard on chatal, female workers in Kurigram get half wages of their male counterparts.

PHOTO: STAR

## RICE MILL WORKERS’ PAY

# Women get less than half of what men get

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Female workers in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram toiling hard on a chatal (paddy husking and drying yard) even braving inclement weather are being subjected to extreme discrimination in wages.

They said a male worker working on a chatal gets Tk 350 to Tk 400 a day whereas a female worker gets Tk 150 to Tk 170 only.

But female workers have to do the same work as the male workers do yet they get half the wages, a glaring example of gender discrimination.

Despite their unwillingness to work for wage inequality, they have no choice either. They are helpless due to a lack of employment opportunities in their localities.

Most of them come from erosion affected families and many of them are divorced. They work hard on chatals to feed their children.

According to the Lalmonirhat and Kurigram Mill Owners’ Association, at least 15,000 male and 5,000 female workers work on about 1,500 chatals in 14 upazilas of the two districts. Along with the male workers, the female workers are engaged in boiling, drying and threshing the paddy.

Mina Begum, a worker of a chatal in Andharijhar area of Kurigram’s Bhurungamari upazila, said she knows that they were being paid less but they could not manage any other jobs.

If a female worker demands a fair wage, the owner of the chatal fires her, she said.

Minoti Bala, another chatal worker at Sakoya village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said she is also struggling to run her family with a wage of Tk 150-170 a day.

“Had there been any other source of income, I would have left the chatal work,” she said.

Jamsher Ali, owner of a chatal in Andharijhar area, said the male workers get higher wages as they carry sacks full of paddy.

## ONION CULTIVATION

# Pabna farmers eye bumper yield

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Mohammad Kamruzzaman of Sujanagar upazila experienced a huge production cost in onion cultivation due to a high price of the seeds last year.

This year, the farmer from Durgapur village looks much happier because he is cultivating onion with his own produced seeds.

Kamruzzaman has sown his own grown onion seed on bighas of land and hybrid variety of seeds on two bighas this season.

After harvesting the Kondo variety (Mulkata Piaj) in the middle of this month, he will sow his own seed on five bighas more.

“Last year, the production

increased up to 30 percent as I cultivated early variety of onion on 10 bigha, buying each kilogram of seed at Tk 8 thousand.” Kamruzzaman said.

Taking lesson from the previous year, he grew sufficient onion seeds this year and eying a bumper yield too.

It also saved his production cost, the farmer added.

Like Kamruzzaman many onion farmers in the upazila have cultivated their own seed this year.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), 6.35 lakh tonnes onion was produced from 44,030 hectares of land.

“We have target to bring the same amount of area under onion

cultivation this year and expecting a good yield as well,” said Mohammad Idris Ali, deputy assistant agriculture officer at Pabna DAE.

Of the land, about 31,250 hectares have already been brought under the cultivation till the end of December last year, he said, adding that many farmers will sow their own onion seed after harvesting the Kondo variety by the middle of this month.

The Kondo variety onion pulp is planted in October and November, while the seed onion cultivation continues between January and March, the DAE officials added.

Besides, although the yield is high this year, farmers are disappointed due to its poor market price.

“Last year, I sold each maund of Kondo variety onion at Tk

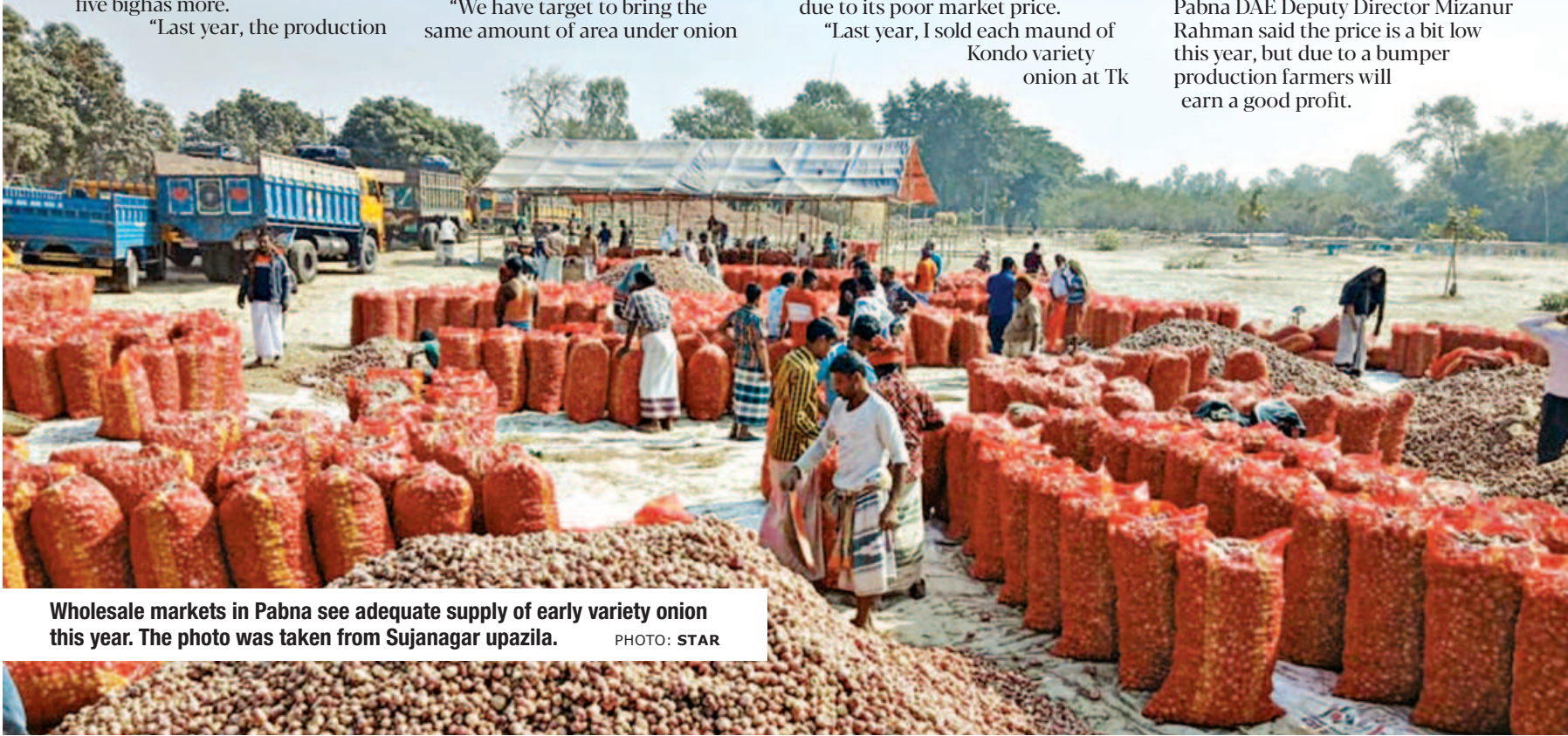
1,700 to Tk 1,800. But it is selling for Tk 1,150 to Tk 1,200 this year,” farmer Nasir Uddin of Char Gargari in Ishwardi upazila said.

Abdur Rashid, a trader at Sujanagar wholesale market, said onion price dropped a little this year due to adequate supply.

Moreover, huge quantity of imported onion are also available in different wholesale markets, the trader added.

Farmers said they are compel to sell the Kondo variety onion at a low price because they cannot store the early variety at home as it gets rotten too early.

While talking to the Daily Star, Pabna DAE Deputy Director Mizanur Rahman said the price is a bit low this year, but due to a bumper production farmers will earn a good profit.



Wholesale markets in Pabna see adequate supply of early variety onion this year. The photo was taken from Sujanagar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR