



Siam Ahmed and Puja Chery with fans during 'Shaan' promotions.



'Ityadi' remains a must-watch for television buffs during Eid.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## EID BREATHES LIFE into entertainment industry

While cinema halls saw a much-needed influx of people, social media news feeds were graced by celebrities in their beautiful Eid attires. The world of entertainment, which lived under the shadow of a global pandemic, finally seemed to come alive this Eid. The happiness, ever so contagious, spread across all avenues.

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

'Shaandar' Shaan, 'Golui' not far behind Siam Ahmed and Puja Chery starrer "Shaan" is the talk of the town, bringing back audiences to cinemas in waves. Having released in 35 halls across the country, the team of the M Rahim directorial is on a mission to grace halls and the fans personally. "Not just 'Shaan', but I hope all films do well, for the sake of our industry," said Siam to The Daily Star.

On the other hand, "Golui", featuring Shakib Khan and Puja Chery, released in 29 halls, is doing well too. Shakib Khan, who is currently in the USA, is eagerly looking for updates on his film. "Bidrohi", starring Shakib and Bubly, is also attracting viewers.



Popular actresses in their Eid attires.

Coke Studio continues serenading as 'Guru' returns

In its fourth release, Coke Studio Bangla presented a banger of a track, as the mysticism of Lalon bumped lists with high-energy rap. Sumi, the vocalist of Band Lalon, presented a fantastic rendition of

"Pagol Chara Duniya Chole Na", while rap crew Jalali Set made their much-anticipated return with their high-octane performance. The glass of Coke is truly getting more chilled by the second.

On 'Chaad Raat', legendary rockstar James released "I Love You", his first original after over a decade. While fan opinions



remain divided on the song, the fact that the rock 'Guru' has returned to create more originals is surely welcome.

Television clings to tradition, while OTT innovates

Watching television on Eid is a tradition, with shows like "Ityadi" still remaining a must-watch every year. Many theatrically released films were also telecast this year, with "No Dorai", "Gondi", "Dhaka Dream" and "Laal Morogor Jhuti" seeing successful premieres. Telefilms and special projects featuring Afran Nisho, Apurba, Mehasabien and Tanjin Tisha, among others, fared well.

However, stars tended to drift towards OTT and digital platforms. Bongo BOB released "Chol", the first ever interactive web series in the country. It featured Yash Rohan and Sabila Nur as the leads. "I focused on



Chirkutt lands in the USA for their show at Madison Square Garden.

OTT this Eid", said Afran Nisho to The Daily Star. "Be it the cinematography, the narrative style, or the overall editing and colour grading, OTT productions offer more for the audience to relish on."

Chirkutt to perform at Madison Square Garden today

Folk fusion band Chirkutt will make history, as they will perform alongside legendary band Scorpions at Madison Square Garden today. The band posted a picture on social media, after landing in New York. "We are proud to represent this country in the world's most famous arena, and we hope that more local bands will follow suit," said the band's vocalist, Sharmin Sultana Sumi, to The Daily Star.

Leading ladies take over the internet in traditional attires

Photos of actresses wishing 'Eid Mubarak' in stunning traditional attires were arguably the grace that the festival needed.

The men were not far behind though, but often tended to re-use older pictures for the same greetings, which takes points off their Eid-o-meter!

## SATYAJIT RAY'S 'Pratidwandi' on special screening at 75th Cannes Film Festival

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Marking the 75th year of India's Independence and the Cannes International Film Festival, there will be a special screening of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray's "Pratidwandi" at the festival. India will be the "Country of Honour" and Deepika Padukone will serve as one of the jury board members at the event.

"Pratidwandi", which was released in 1970, has been digitalised and will be premiered at the prestigious festival. It is the first film from the "Kolkata Troyee" trilogy of Ray. It stars Dhritiman Chatterjee, Kalyan Chatterjee, Soumitra Chatterjee, and Anindita Chatterjee among others.

The Cannes International Film Festival will run from May 17 to 28.



## 'Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness' arrives in Star Cineplex today



The much-anticipated Marvel Studios film, "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness", releases at Star Cineplex today. Directed by Sam Raimi, the film stars Benedict Cumberbatch, Elizabeth Olsen, and Chiwetel Ejiofor, among others.

In the film, Dr Stephen Strange casts a forbidden spell that opens the doorway to the multiverse, including alternate versions of himself, whose threat to humanity is too great for the combined forces of Strange, Wong, and

Wanda Maximoff. Tickets for the first screening of the film have been sold out at all branches of Star Cineplex.

## COUNTRYWIDE

### BRICKFIELDS NEAR FARMLAND

## Farmers facing challenges in crop production

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Many farmers in Biral upazila have been facing enormous challenges in producing quality crops in their farmlands due to emission of toxic gas from two surrounding brick kilns.

Affected farmers said toxic gas released from two nearby brickfields has been damaging their crops in around 200 bighas of land as well as causing health hazards for local people for the last four years.

They said not only paddy, but other seasonal fruit orchards, including lemon, banana, mango and litchi, are also badly damaged this year.

The two brick kilns—JBM Bricks and SKB Bricks—located at Rajuria village in the upazila have been running their operations for last 19 years.

Although local administration had shut those brickfields in the past for not meeting their requirements, the unscrupulous businessmen returned again and resumed operations once again, affected farmers said.

Farmers alleged that for the last four years they have been counting huge loss as almost all their crops were damaged due to release of toxic gas from the two brickfields.

The damages were extensively high in 2018 and this season, they added.

On April 17, about 50 affected farmers submitted written complaints to Biral Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and Upazila Agricultural Officer (UAO), seeking their intervention, but they are yet to take any necessary step in this regard.

In their complaint, farmers alleged that Farhad Hossain and Shafiqul Islam, owners of the two brickfields, have been using tyres and tree logs as fuel instead of coal for burning bricks.

The toxic fume released from both the brick kilns is not only damaging farmers' cash crops, it also causing serious threat to public health for long.

Ashrafur Islam, one of the affected farmers, alleged that orchards of different seasonal fruits, including mango, litchi,

lemon and banana, of 10 farmers on 50 bighas have been completely damaged this year due to release of toxic gas from the adjacent brick kilns.

Moreover, paddy on 30 bighas was also damaged, he said.

Ashrafur said he cut down his mango trees on 6 bighas in 2018 as those died due to toxic gas emitted from the brick kilns.

He later planted lemon trees on 4 bighas, but his entire orchard got damaged again this year.

Despite repeated attempts this correspondent could not reach Biral UNO Afsana Kawsar for his comments in this regard.

Biral UAO Mostafa Hasan Imam said they are planning to assess the affected area.

When asked, Farhad Hossain, owner of JBM Bricks, said every problem has a solution.

According to Dinajpur Department of Environment (DoE), there are 270 brick kilns in the district.

Of those, only 76 have clearance certificates.



Tyres and tree logs are being used as fuel for burning bricks at two brick kilns in Dinajpur's Biral upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

### LPG price

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be selling for Tk 1,335 including value-added tax, down by Tk 104 from last month.

The new price will be applicable rationally for other cylinders ranging from 5 kgs to 45 kgs, said BERC Chairman Abdul Jalil while announcing the new price.

The BERC also lowered the rate of autogas price to Tk 62.21 per litre from Tk 67.02 for motor vehicles.

The price of LPG marketed by the state-owned LP Gas Company will stay unchanged.

LP Gas accounts for less than 5 percent of the \$27 billion market for LPG, progressively becoming the fuel of choice for cooking and running vehicles.

On April 12 last year, the BERC for the first time fixed the retail-level LPG prices.

### No Eid

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year, up from \$24.7 billion received in fiscal 2020-21.

Let alone hitting that number, it is unlikely that last fiscal year's receipts would be bested.

The sliding remittance inflows coupled with the surge in imports have put pressure on the balance of payment and the country's foreign exchange reserves.

The foreign currency reserves are hovering around the \$44 billion-mark, down from about \$46 billion in the earlier part of the fiscal year.

Between July last year and March this year, about 7 lakh Bangladeshis left for jobs abroad, according to data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

## Largely hassle-free, yet 40 die

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increase monitoring today and tomorrow when a huge number of people are likely to return Dhaka.

**BIKES, THREE-WHEELERS**  
In Rangpur, at least five people were killed when a microbus collided head-on with a locally-made three-wheeler at Soleyshah Bazar on Rangpur-Dinajpur highway on Wednesday.

The microbus, heading for Saidpur of Nilphamari from Rangpur, crashed into the three-wheeler around 7:00pm, leaving three people, including a couple, dead on the spot.

Locals rushed the others to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where two more died.

Dulal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Gangachara Police Station, said all the victims were in the three

wheeler.

The microbus driver fled the scene.

In Joypurhat, four people were killed in three accidents on Saturday and Thursday.

According to police, Shimul and Shanto were on a bike. When the bike reached Purnapool of Joypurhat-Hili Road, it hit a roadside tree, leaving Shimul dead on the spot. Doctors declared Shanto dead at a Bogura hospital.

Two others in the district died in road crashes involving three-wheelers.

In Dinajpur, four people were killed road in crashes involving bikes and three-wheelers yesterday.

In Sirajganj, three people were killed and five others injured in bike and three-wheeler accidents on Eid day.

In Pabna, three people

were killed and two injured in two crashes involving bikes, three-wheelers and a truck on Wednesday and yesterday.

In Tangail, two bikers were killed and another injured on Tuesday.

In Cumilla, six people were killed in four accidents between Eid day and yesterday. Bikes, three-wheelers and cars were involved in those.

In Fakirhat of Bagerhat, three people were killed and 15 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a truck on Sunday.

The dead included the two drivers and a 10-month-old child, locals said.

Four people were killed in Dhaka, two each in Mymensingh and Barishal, and one each in Magura and Cox's Bazar.

## It's malicious, unacceptable

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last year that contained objectionable statements," he said.

The minister was speaking at a press briefing at his home in the port city's Dewanji Pukur Par.

Hasan said the RSF also ran untrue and fabricated reports on Bangladesh's media. The country's journalist unions protested their reports that time, he said, adding that even some Bangladeshi expatriates in France sent a legal notice to the organisation through a lawyer.

He said the legal notice mentioned that RSF could not make such statements against any country or head of the government as per the law of France.

They did this by violating French law. So, the report on Bangladesh's ranking is not acceptable in any way, said Hasan, also that joint

general secretary of Awami League.

The minister said the RSF, also known as Reporters Without Borders, collected data and information from those who are spreading propaganda against the country abroad. The report is of no value and the organisation is publishing reports against Bangladesh continuously with an ill intention, he added.

Hasan said the RSF has also talked about the Digital Security Act. There was no need of such a law when the issue of digital systems did not exist, he told reporters.

The minister said such law exists not only in Bangladesh, but also in many other countries, including neighbouring India and Pakistan, Singapore, Australia, and the USA.

He said everyone should remain alert so that none can misuse the law.

### Covid

FROM PAGE 12  
coronavirus spread beyond China.

Countries around the world reported 5.42 million Covid-19 deaths to the WHO in 2020 and 2021—a figure that today stands at 6.24 million, including deaths in 2022.

The Geneva-based organisation has long said the true number of deaths would be far higher than just the recorded fatalities put down to Covid infections.

Deaths linked indirectly to the pandemic are attributable to other conditions for which people were unable to access treatment because health systems were overburdened by the crisis.