



KEYA PAYEL gears up for Eid

Asian Paints joins AsianAid Bangladesh’s ‘Happy Home’ project



In 2006, the non-profit organisation AsianAid Bangladesh initiated the “Happy Home” project in Bangladesh, with the aim to shelter underprivileged girls. Now, during the month of Ramadan, Asian Paints Bangladesh has also joined in on the project to provide underprivileged girls a chance to have a better future. Believing that a healthy and ‘happy’ environment is essential for every child’s growth, Asian Paints Bangladesh has started a new campaign where BDT 1 from every liter of Asian Paints Ultima and Royale Luxury Emulsion sold will be spent on the welfare of the girls of Happy Home. Speaking about this, ActionAid Bangladesh’s Country Director Farah Kabir said, “Girl children are the most vulnerable among street children. To provide them with a safe shelter and bright future, we started the ‘Happy Home’ project. We are glad that Asian Paints joined us in making the children’s lives colourful.”

Actors Equity launches legal wing to protect rights of TV artistes

Actors Equity Bangladesh has taken a bold step to ensure protection of Television artistes from bullying and harassment, by launching a special legal wing. Yesterday, a special press meeting was organised, where Ahsan Habib Nasim, President of Actors Equity along with several artistes, talked to the media about the alarming issues. The legal team will have three lawyers who are specialised to deal with crisis and they will be providing all kinds of legal support to the artistes throughout their trial periods.



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SHAH ALAM SHAZU
From *Tor Jonno Pagol* to *Tomar Ami*, Keya Payel has made her mark in Television with her subtle performances and charming persona. This Eid, the actress has a packed schedule as she is busy shooting for tele-fictions. In a conversation with The Daily Star, the actress talks about Eid dramas, working with Apurba, and more.
What are you working on right now?
I am currently working on Eid dramas most of which will be aired on various TV channels. I have completed filming for *Priyo Pre-Honeymoon* opposite Apurba, and we will also be shooting together for Shihab Shaheen’s project as well. I have also worked with Jakaria Showkhin for *Ural Pakhi* and Mostafa Kamal Raz for an Eid special tele-fiction.
How do you think audience respond to tele-fictions during Eid?
Eid is a huge time for us as audiences sit in front of TV to watch their favourite stars. A lot

of new dramas are being produced and thus the audiences have a wide variety to choose from. I love getting feedback from my loved ones, and so it’s a really special occasion for me.
Do you think Eid dramas have better plots compared to regular ones?
Oh yes, no doubt, I get to read the scripts and not one of them are similar to another. I get to choose between variety of characters and plots which has the tenacity to pull audiences.
You have worked with Apurba in a lot of Eid projects. How is he as a co-star?
Apurba bhai is one of my favourite co-artistes. He is a really nice and a gentle human being who really supports me. As a senior, he always tries to help me up out with my dialogues and

ensure that I give my best. Although I didn’t get to work with him a lot, but fans still loved our projects.
How supportive was your family when you decided to join showbiz?
Initially, I would often come home late from shooting, and my family had a problem with that. However, when I took them to shooting with me, they realised why it takes me so long to come home. My biggest critic is my mom as she always tells me to improve my acting. If she likes something she would always praise it.
What are your plans for Eid?
I will mostly stay at home and watch TV dramas. This is the only time I get to enjoy leisure time and thus resting and watching other people’s work really inspires me.

NEWS

New Kalurghat bridge to cost Tk 14,000cr

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In February 2015, the government sought technical help from the Economic Development Co-operation Fund (EDCF) of South Korea to carry out a feasibility study. The study published in December 2015 recommended building a two-lane road and single-line rail bridge.
Four months after preparing a DPP for the new bridge with an estimated cost of Tk 1,163.27 crore, BR in October 2018 decided it would build a dedicated rail bridge with double lines.
In 2019, another feasibility study was launched but it was suspended as the authorities realised that Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority in November 2018 put the Karnaphuli in a different category for which the bridge would need to give more clearance to vessels.
In the meantime, BR continued to go back and forth over the design.
Another study, with EDCF’s fund, was launched in 2021 and

it preliminarily recommended a double-decker bridge with a double-lane road on top and a dual-gauge double-line rail line on the bottom.
But the Prime Minister’s Office in August 2022 directed that the bridge be single-decker with a double-line dual-gauge rail line and double-lane road, sources said.
12 TIMES THE COST
A joint venture of Yooshin Engineering Corporation and Dohwa Engineering completed a study early this year and estimated the project cost would be \$1,342.34 million or Tk 13,824.19 crore (\$1= Tk103).
Of the total, \$712.51 million or Tk 7,338.9 crore is expected to come from a Korean loan while the rest will be paid by the government.
The cost may increase further if the current dollar rate (\$1= Tk107) is taken into account.
Sources said after the PMO changed the design, the cost increased by Tk 250 crore.
COST ESCALATION
BR sources said when the DPP was

prepared in 2018, the length of the proposed bridge was 3km, with 1km of the main bridge and 2km of embankments, with a vessel clearance of 7.62 metres.
They said now the clearance has to be 12.2 metres and this has increased the total bridge length to 11.74km -- 1km main bridge, 5km of viaducts on both sides and 5.74km of embankments on both sides.
“This is a major reason behind the cost escalation,” a BR official said, adding that the decision to have a bigger bridge with more capacity and the price of construction materials were the other reasons.
“It would have been better to have built the bridge in the previous attempt as we have to spend a huge amount of money now,” the official said.
Contacted, BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan said the cost is not supposed to be that high. “I can comment after getting information [from officials concerned],” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Press Club decries

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At the same time, the committee expressed deep concern over the use of DSA against journalists.
The committee thinks that before using the DSA against journalists and the media outlet, the allegation that was raised should have been sent to the Press Council for assessment.
Amendments to a few sections of the DSA were requested. Taking special measures to stop misuse of the act was also urged.
It also strongly condemned the recent attack on journalists covering an iftar mahfil organised by the BNP.
Presided over by Jatiya Press Club President Farida Yasmin, the meeting was attended by General Secretary Shyamal Dutta, Senior Vice-President Hasan Hafiz, joint secretaries Md Ashraf Ali and Ayub Bhuiyan and other members of the committee.
Meanwhile, 26 teachers of Chittagong University yesterday condemned the “misleading and malicious report of Prothom Alo against the state”.
“It is a condemnable and punishable offence,” they said in a

statement.
In another development, 18 socio-cultural organisations on behalf of “conscious civil society” yesterday protested the Prothom Alo report for what it said was insulting and ridiculing the country’s independence.
“It is a heinous crime,” said a statement.
Several organisations strongly demanded the government punish the culprits for the crime of treason subject to a proper investigation.
The organisations include Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote, Awami Shilpigoshthi, Bangabandhu Lekhak Parishad, Bangabandhu Foundation and Bangladesh Writers Club.
Besides, 15 national cultural federations yesterday said disrespecting and ridiculing the Liberation War and the Independence is unacceptable.
The federations include Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Jatiya Kabita Parishad and Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote.

Biker killed

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both buses on fire.
Two fire engines went to the spot around 8:00am and doused the fire around 45 minutes later.
Meanwhile, vehicular movement on the highway remained halted for around an hour.
Police recovered the victim’s body and sent it to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital for autopsy.
Although the buses were seized, the drivers and helpers managed to flee the scene, said SI Masud Al Mamun.
The victim’s father filed a case in this connection yesterday evening, he added.

Over 800 BNP men

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shops with anti-government slogans and attacked police who were on duty there on Saturday afternoon.
Shafiqul Alam Mona, convener of Khulna metropolitan BNP, told The Daily Star, “Whenever there’s a party programme, the police gets desperate to foil it. Leaders and activists were arrested and harassed before the programme. Now, with this case, they will be harassed again.”
“Everyone has seen how the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets during the programme and injured our leaders and activists,” he added.
Tajul Islam, deputy commissioner (south) of Khulna Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that police fired 35 shotgun rounds and 20 rounds of tear shells to control the situation.
“Police were forced to take action as some BNP men suddenly started throwing bricks at our personnel,” he added.

AFP, Helsinki

Media outlet’s licence would’ve been scrapped elsewhere

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of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
Asked why the newspaper had not apologised despite admitting its mistake, he said, “They are still backing their statement [made over the report].”
Claiming that the AL always works to ensure the welfare of media workers, Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said, “We too believe in the freedom of the press and don’t want to undermine this freedom. But journalists have to be responsible.”
Without mentioning the name of the Prothom Alo, the AL leader said, “Those who have committed the heinous crime of using a child with the quote of a day labourer on Independence Day should be punished. We have tolerated many things.”
Quader added that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has done everything

possible, including announcement of the 9th Wage Board for newspapers and formation of a welfare trust for journalists.
Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was arrested in a case filed under the Digital Security Act. A Dhaka court sent him to jail on Thursday.
The High Court yesterday granted Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, who was also sued in a DSA case, a six-week anticipatory bail.
Meanwhile, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said false information was being disseminated that the Prothom Alo reporter was arrested for writing about the rise in commodity prices, reports UNB.
Despite the protests of the people against the newspaper report, the newspaper concerned has not issued an apology and is disseminating false information abroad, Hasan said while

speaking at a discussion with the Bangladesh Press Association at the Secretariat.
Some individuals, both at home and abroad, mock Bangladesh’s development, said the minister, adding that negative news is sometimes given importance.
Hasan said in this particular report, the child did not make the remark but received Tk 10 for it.
He continued by saying the quote mocked the country’s independence, and that boy was exploited because his photo was released alongside the news.
The minister said reports on rising commodity prices are being run by all media and that no one has been arrested for it.
He added that the report in question violated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and mocked the country’s independence.

Protect overseas jobseekers

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During the heavy pressure on the economy due to the Covid pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war, incomes of the expatriates contributed a lot to the country’s reserves and overall development, said the premier.
Hasina said the Awami League government has established Probashi Kallyan Bank to provide loans to the overseas jobseekers.
She also praised the freelancers of the country for earning foreign currencies. “We have given them certificates after bringing them under registration process.”
The PM also requested the expatriates to send their money through legal channels. “We have given special stimulus of 2.5 percent for sending money through legal channels.”
Hasina asked the authorities concerned to take necessary measures so that dreams of the expatriate Bangladeshis do not turn into nightmare after their hard-earned money, sent through illegal channels, is misappropriated.
She also directed the authorities of the Probashi Kallyan Bank to

introduce agent banking in working places of the expatriate Bangladeshis so that they can legally send money conveniently.
“Necessary steps have been taken to ease the process of sending money from abroad through legal and banking channels.”
She said at present there are sufficient employment opportunities in the country and people are earning more.
She mentioned that a day labourer who used to earn Tk 200-300 per day in the past now can earn Tk 600-1,000 per day depending on the nature of work. The minimum earning is Tk 500-600.
Earning in the rural areas is higher than this, the PM said, adding that during the paddy harvesting season, the amount is Tk 700-800 with three meals a day.
“The rural economy has improved a lot. If anyone goes to the rural areas, it will be seen that the living standards in the rural areas have improved a lot.”
Sometimes shortages of labour are also found as people are becoming solvent, Hasina added.