

After giving the audience two back-to-back hits with *Poran* and *Damal*, popular actress Bidya Sinha Mim became the talk of the town last year. Now, the talented actress is venturing into the world of cybercrime thrillers with her film, *Antarjal*, which will be released this Eid-ul-Azha. She also received the award for Best Actress in Kolkata at "Tele Cine Awards" yesterday.

Mim gains momentum ahead of ANTARJAL

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Apart from this, she will also be making her OTT debut with the new web-series titled, *Mission HuntDown*.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, Mim shared insights about her upcoming movie, and much more.

You have received the Best Actress award for your film "Poran" at India's Tele-Cine Awards. How do you feel?

It feels amazing. Especially after acting in my own country's movie, getting recognition from another country is truly heartwarming. This award will undoubtedly add a new dimension to my career. It really gave me momentum ahead of the release of my upcoming projects.

Do you think our audience will enjoy "Antarjal"?

I believe the audience will embrace

"Antarjal" wholeheartedly, since it is Bangladesh's first cyberthriller. Those who are students, thriller enthusiasts and interested in cyber-related subjects in general, will particularly enjoy it. This film will give audiences a Hollywood-like experience.

Tell us about your character in the film.

Last year, "Poran" was released around the same time. In this film, the audience won't see me smiling at all. So, this was a challenging role for me. I love to blend into different types of characters.

Is there anything you want to tell your fans?

I have love and faith in my audience.

My fans also love me. They have showered me with love for the film, "Poran". I believe they will show the same level of love for "Antarjal" as well. I urge the audience to watch "Antarjal" in theatres, with their friends and family.



PHOTO: SHEKHA MEHEDI MURSHED



'Taqdeer' gets an official Telugu remake

After gaining several accolades and winning the hearts of the audience in Bangladesh, Hoichoi's popular web-series, *Taqdeer*, has gotten its own Telugu remake. The new series will be released on Disney+ Hotstar.

The official remake has been titled *Dayaa*, directed by Pavan Sadineni. The series will star JD Chakravarthy, Eesha Rebba, Remya Nambesan, Prudhvi Raj, Kamal Kamaraju, and Josh Ravi in key roles.

Taqdeer director, Syed Ahmed Shawki confirmed the news to The Daily Star and said that the shooting of *Dayaa* has already been completed.

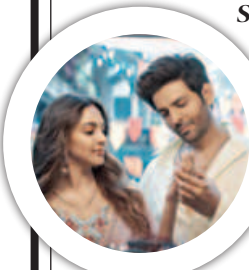
In the series, Chanchal Chowdhury plays a man who gets entangled in a murder scandal, when he finds a mysterious corpse in his freezer van.

Kartik-Kiara duo will hit theatres this June

The trailer of the Kartik Aaryan and Kiara Advani starrer romantic film, *Satyaprem Ki Katha* was released today. This romantic film reunites the dynamic duo of Kartik Aaryan and Kiara Advani, who previously shared the screen in the blockbuster film, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*.

Directed by Sameer Vidwans, *Satyaprem Ki Katha* takes us on a nostalgic journey with its delightful 90s elements. Throughout the trailer, we witness Kartik's relentless pursuit of Kiara for marriage and his earnest attempts to impress her.

Satyaprem Ki Katha also stars Supriya Pathak Kapur, Gajraj Rao, Siddharth Randheria, Anooradha Patel, Rajpal Yadav, Nirmite Saawaant, and Shikha Talsania, among others. The film is set to grace the silver screen on June 29.



NEWS

Govt counting on power plants under trial run

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It has been supplying around 750MW daily since April 6. In recent times, the supply went over 1,000MW.

Hossain said, due to some transmission issues, they were unable to receive the total 1,496MW from the Adani Power. "It will be solved by next week."

Yesterday, Power Division officials met Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, and informed him of a three-phase outline to improve the ongoing power situation.

In the last two weeks, the supply shortage was between 2,500MW and 3,000MW.

The country produced 13,859MW against the demand of 15,700MW as of 9:00pm yesterday.

Amid the heatwave, people across the country are suffering immensely as power cuts are now more frequent. Yesterday, in Dhaka there were outages of at least four to five hours on average and over eight to 10 hours in rural areas.

According to the daily production report of the Power Grid Company

of Bangladesh, four power plants in Khulna and Chattogram with a combined production capacity of 1,365MW are on test runs.

Those are coal-fired SS Power, furnace oil-fired Khulna 330MW Power Plant, gas-fired Khulna 225MW Power Plant, and gas-fired Mirsharai 150MW Power Plant.

At least three of them have completed the reliability tests that require them to continuously run for 72 hours at full load, according to an official of the Power Division.

Mohammad Hossain said, "Regardless of the power plants' condition, the people will get electricity."

In a Facebook post yesterday, State Minister Nasrul Hamid regretted the situation.

"Before 2008, people were out of electricity for 16-18 hours a day. We have the capacity of producing 27,361MW, including captive power. We are capable of generating power as per demand. But due to the global fuel crisis and the devaluation of taka against dollar, imports of primary fuel have been affected," he wrote.

Two siblings die

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He said the employees asked them to enter the house after two to three hours. The family members, however, took extra precautions and returned to the house after about 10 hours.

The inspector said all the family members fell sick and the children had to be rushed to a nearby private hospital.

Zayan died there on Sunday morning and Zahin breathed his last later that night, the inspector added.

The reason for their deaths is believed to be poisoning from the pesticides, he said.

Their sister is still undergoing treatment at the hospital, police said.

The family members and relatives alleged that the incident happened because of the "incompetent" staff of the pest control service.

When this correspondent called the cleaning and pest control service provider, a man, without identifying himself, said a technical team who worked at the house is now at Bhatara Police Station.

Md Shohidullah, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division Police, said they allowed the family to bury the body of one child without an autopsy.

The other child's body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsy.

When asked, the father said he was not sure what caused the death of his elder son on Sunday morning. So he went for the burial without an autopsy.

However, after the death of his second son, he began suspecting that the pesticides used by the service provider might have something to do with it.

Morgue sources said they primarily suspected that the boy died due to pesticide poisoning.

More will be known after the release of the forensic lab report, they added.

Till the filing of this report at 10:00pm, no case was registered with any of the police stations in the capital.

Dhaka to clear

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political opponents; the government has also persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in Bangladesh."

Shahriar said such letters were sent by US congressmen in the past and more letters may be sent in future as the national election is approaching.

"But, as I said, we will reach out to all these members. Not only them, we will regularly update all those who have interest in the issues covered in the letter."

Asked for comments on Japanese Ambassador Iwama Kiminori's meeting some BNP leaders in Dhaka on Sunday and the discussion on the next parliamentary polls, Shahriar said he had no details on that.

He, however, said there was a time about six months ago when foreign ambassadors started talking about Bangladesh's internal issues. "If they do it again and go beyond their limits, the government will take necessary measures."

The state minister said the government has not noticed any such comments recently.

About speculations that some other countries may follow the new US visa policy, he said these are nothing but rumours and propaganda.

Under the visa policy, the US will restrict visas for Bangladeshis believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

Shahriar said as the general election approaches, more propaganda will be carried out and the mainstream media should verify all those information before publishing.

He the government does not believe in the policy of continuing relationship with a country while being under pressure.

Asked about Dhaka's reactions to the setting up of a mural in India's new parliament building that has triggered concerns in Nepal and Pakistan as it is being interpreted as a map of "Akhand Bharat" comprising parts of several neighbouring countries, the state minister said Dhaka has asked its mission in New Delhi for clarification.

The mural, as explained by the Indian foreign ministry, is the map of the Ashoka empire which existed 300 years before Christ, he added. "It has nothing to do with politics. This is not the map of 2023. There is nothing to be confused about," said Shahriar.

Deprived of funds

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million), Bangladesh (\$214.1 million), Algeria (\$196.3 million), Pakistan (\$188.2 million), and Lebanon (\$141.2 million).

The IATA urged governments to abide by international agreements and treaty obligations to enable airlines to repatriate the funds.

Officials of foreign carriers in Dhaka said they have to bring in US dollars to pay for refuelling their planes in Bangladesh even though they have money in Bangladesh.

A senior official of Turkish Airlines said, "We were forced to reduce the number of flights from Dhaka to minimise loss. From Bangladesh, we are not selling tickets of low fares. We are selling these tickets online from

outside Bangladesh or through our agents.

"We are discouraging Bangladeshi people from buying tickets from Dhaka as it will be expensive," the official added.

Ejaz Kadry, sales and station official at Turkish Airlines, said, "Usually an airline tries to sell as many tickets as possible. But we are trying to sell fewer from Dhaka so that we don't pile up the money we cannot repatriate."

Officials of Saudia and Singapore Airlines echoed Kadry.

An official of a foreign carrier said, "If the situation does not improve, foreign airlines will be forced to stop their operations here which will damage Bangladesh's image

abroad."

ATAB in January wrote to the civil aviation and tourism ministry, seeking its intervention. It said foreign airlines are now reluctant to do business in Bangladesh and are flying to destinations where profits are higher.

Aviation Expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said due to the reduction of flight frequencies of airlines, the number of available seats has dropped driving ticket prices high.

He said carriers will be forced to reduce flights if they cannot send the money back home on time.

Around 30 foreign carriers operate around 90 international flights from Dhaka daily, according to sources at the Dhaka airport.

The picture doesn't reflect the reality

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to unite the two factions and get the Hasnat-led faction to work for Abul Khair Abdullah, the AL mayor candidate in Barishal city. Rather, with the election nearing, the rift between the two brothers over the party mayor nominee is widening, said locals.

Hasnat's son is incumbent BCC Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah.

On Sunday, Anisur Rahman Sharif, a member of ward-14 unit AL, alleged that Hasant Abdulalh gave Tk 3 crore to Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) mayor nominee Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim's campaign.

"He has fielded at least three candidates in each of 10 wards to compete against us [loyalists to Khair]. Around Tk 30 lakh was distributed for their election expenditure," Anisur claimed at a press conference.

After his statement, Anisur was suspended from the party by the city unit AL on Sunday night.

The Daily Star could not reach Hasant Abdulalh for his comments.

Earlier, Anisur alleged that the unit's AL General Secretary Safin Mahmud Tarik was working for a pro-IAB councillor aspirant.

Tarik, who is known as a supporter of Hasnat, however, refuted the allegation and accused Anisur of beating him.

Sources inside the local AL said

such conflicts exist in at least 15 out of 30 wards of the Barishal city.

On Friday night, at least 10 people were injured as supporters of two councillor aspirants clashed at a meeting in the presence of Khair Abdullah in the city's Bandroad area.

Shekhar Das, a supporter of Khair Abdullah, was reportedly behind this clash as he did not allow an activist of councillor aspirant Joynal Abedin, a supporter of the incumbent mayor, to get on the stage.

General Secretary Parimol Dash of city unit Sramik League, also a supporter of Hasnat, alleged that his men were harassed by police.

Saiful Islam, commissioner of Barishal Metropolitan Police, said, "Police are not harassing or intimidating anybody... Those who are accused in any criminal cases are only being questioned."

Sources in both factions told this newspaper that the Khair- and Hasnat-led factions formed separate campaign committees.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sarwar Hossain Razib, a joint general secretary of the city unit AL and a supporter of Sadiq, said they have been campaigning separately.

The nine-member AL central coordination team is trying hard to end the feud.

During a closed-door meeting of the team on Sunday night, AL

Presidium Member Jahangir Kabir Nanak, said, "We should remember that there is no alternative to unity. We have to be united to get Abul Khair Abdullah elected in the Barishal City Corporation election.

"... the party has many weaknesses. We have to give momentum to the electoral campaign in every ward by bypassing those. Everyone should be treated as an equal contender," said meeting sources, quoting Nanak as saying.

Ever since the AL on April 15 picked Khair, Mayor Sadiq has been trying to keep his firm grip on Barishal as Khair has been gaining strength, locals and AL insiders said.

Trove of 750 looted

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to the ministry statement.

There are also precious gems set in gold, silver, bronze, as well as bone and amber.

Other pieces include weapons, sarcophagi, funerary urns, ritual objects, furnishings in bronze and marble, mosaic and painted decorations.

The artifacts originate from "clandestine excavations on Italian territory" and were illegally obtained by Symes Ltd, the company owned by Symes, a major trafficker of cultural goods, according to the ministry statement.