

# I'm not afraid of competition: PUJA CHERY

ZAHID AKBAR



In the tumultuous world of showbiz, where success often intertwines with personal trials, actress Puja Chery stands as a shining example of resilience and determination. She has recently experienced the untimely demise of her mother on March 24, leaving her utterly devastated.

In her efforts to cope with the anguish of her loss, she has bravely returned to promote her upcoming Eid film, *Lipstick*.

One of the film's songs, titled *Beshamal*, has already gained significant attention from audiences.

Puja opens up about her personal experience, professional journey and the void left by her mother's absence in a conversation with The Daily Star.

**About 13 star-studded movies are slated for release during this Eid. Are you feeling nervous about having to compete with all of these projects?**

I'm not afraid of competition. I believe in the strength of our film's content. A compelling story, strong production values, stellar performances, and memorable music – all contribute to the success of a project. I am hopeful that audiences will find all these elements in *Lipstick*, so I'm not worried. Also, I'm pleased with the work we've put in and viewers can rely on that.

**You portrayed two characters in this film. How challenging was it to pull it off?**

Acting in two completely contrasting roles was quite demanding, especially as I tackled both simultaneously for the first time. One character, Buchi, is a village girl, while the other is a popular actress. I presented myself distinctly in these two characters and put in my best effort. I strived to bring diversity and depth to my performance.

**Certainly, you are grieving your mother's passing. Tell us, how are you now?**

I'm trying to keep myself occupied at the moment. My mother meant everything to me and always will. Her sudden departure was beyond anything I could have imagined. Her words and guidance continue to inspire me, giving me the strength to carry on. I feel her presence with me always.

**You're returning to the screen after over a year. What took you this long?**

My upcoming movie is scheduled for release exactly one year after the release of my previous project. Following the favourable reception and commercial success of *Jinn*, which premiered a year ago, I've been occupied with filming multiple movies. Several of these completed projects are currently in the pipeline, awaiting their release dates. I eagerly await the announcement of when they will hit the screens.

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PHOTOS: COLLECTED



## Bangladeshi film to compete in Moscow Int'l Film Festival

In continuation of Bangladesh's cinematic ventures reaching global platforms, director Asif Islam's film *Nirvana* secured a spot in the main competition of the upcoming 46th edition of the prestigious Moscow International Film Festival.

The filmmaker shared on social media, "Excited to announce that my film *Nirvana* will have its world premiere at the prestigious Moscow International Film Festival! It's been an incredible two-year journey of hard work, dedication, and passion leading up to this moment."

The festival will be held in Moscow from April 19 to April 26.



## Partha Barua mourns his father's passing

Renowned musician and actor Partha Barua's father, Bimal Kanti Barua passed away at the age of 90 on Tuesday (April 2) at their residence in Moghbazar, Dhaka.

A mournful Partha Barua confirmed his father passed away due to old age-related ailments. His last rites are scheduled to take place in Ichamati, Rangunia, Chattogram.

Bimal Kanti Barua served as an estate officer for the Chattogram Development Authority. He was also a founding member of the Bangladesh Buddhist Foundation.

# COUNTRYWIDE



A farmer is seen busy producing molasses next to a sugarcane field in Gazipur's Kapasia upazila. PHOTO: STAR

## Sugarcane growers busy ahead of Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Sugarcane growers at different villages in Kapasia upazila are passing a busy time as demand of sugar and molasses hugely increases during the month of Ramadan, especially ahead of the Eid.

Usually, molasses is a cash crop for many farmers of several villages in the upazila.

During a visit to several villages, including Amraid, Barishab and Narsingpur villages, on Sunday, this correspondent saw a number of farmers passing busy time harvesting sugarcane and producing molasses.

Locals said production of molasses is a year old tradition and Kapasia is famous for producing it.

Many farmers were seen cutting sugarcane and bringing those where molasses is being produced.

Someone is collecting the juice while someone others are pouring those into the metal-made pan.

When production of molasses is done, another farmer is taking the item to the house for storing.

Farmer Jahangir Alam of Amraid village, who cultivated sugarcane on his one bigha land, said currently at least 10 farmers are engaged in making molasses every day.

Jahangir said farmers were passing busy

time in cutting and threshing sugarcane and producing molasses from it.

The demand for molasses increases ahead of the Eid every year as they never mix any sugar in making molasses, he said.

Usually, molasses is being used for preparing different kinds of cakes.

Farmer Mosharrar Hossain said earlier he used to extract juice from sugarcane manually, but now he is doing the job with machines as it cost less and takes fewer time.

This correspondent talked to Kaniz Rahman and Kalam Mia, who came from Gazipur town to buy molasses for their restaurant.

Kaniz said her son sells sugarcane molasses at his shop in Gazipur town.

Another farmer Kalam Mia said they were selling each kilogramme of molasses at Tk 130.

Kapasia Upazila Deputy Assistant Plant Protection Officer Mokhleshur Rahman said about seven to eight hundred farmers at different villages in the upazila cultivated Amit, Tenari, Rangbilash, Ishwardi 21 and Ishwardi 26 varieties of sugarcane in their fields.

Kapasia Upazila Agriculture Officer Suman Kumar Bashak said about 1,160 hectares of land have been brought under sugarcane cultivation this season.

## Chairman, CEO

FROM PAGE 12 chairman, CEO, and six other officials of Transcom Group of fraud and breach of trust with regard to the company's shares and properties.

Police then arrested five of the accused, who later got bail.

On March 22, Shahzreh also filed another case with Gulshan Police Station, accusing 11 people, including

the three top executives. The complaint mentioned that Shahzreh's brother Arshad Waliur Rahman was murdered.

Lawyers of the accused said Arshad died nine months ago.

The others accused in the case got bail earlier.

According to their lawyers, Shahnaz, Simeen, and Zaraif were abroad when the cases were filed.

## Israel 'hasn't done enough'

FROM PAGE 12 the remains of foreign aid workers killed in the territory in the Israeli strike, an AFP journalist saw.

Once the six charity workers' remains arrive in Egypt, the transports are to be met by representatives from their home nations and are then to be repatriated.

The UN Human Rights Council will consider a draft resolution tomorrow calling for an arms embargo on Israel, citing the "plausible risk of genocide in Gaza".

If the draft resolution is adopted, it would mark the

first time that the United Nations' top rights body has taken a position on the offensive raging in Gaza.

Meanwhile, overnight Israeli strikes killed at least 60 more people, the Gaza health ministry said. At least 32,975 Palestinians have been killed and 75,577 have been injured in Israel's offensive on Gaza since October 7, the ministry added.

The Israeli army said its forces had "killed and apprehended a number of terrorists" in combat and an air strike, in fighting near the Al-Amal Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis, where they had also located numerous weapons.

## PM seeks China's help

FROM PAGE 12 help Bangladesh further develop its southern region," PM's Speechwriter Md Nazrul Islam said quoting Hasina at a press briefing after the meeting, reports BSS.

Hasina told Wen that Bangladesh's Southern had long been neglected as no government, except those of the Awami League, took effective steps to develop that area.

She said some big rivers in the South are vulnerable to climate change and that is why the government is now giving priority to the development of this area.

The premier said China can take advantage of the deep-sea port in Payra.

Talking about the January 7 national election, Hasina said holding the polls was a challenging task considering various aspects.

"We overcame those challenges and held a peaceful election. We have formed a sustainable government and a stable situation is prevailing in the country."

She said that the government wants continuation of the

development spree of the country. She hoped that China as a trusted friend and development partner would help Bangladesh in this regard.

The Chinese envoy said they expect that Bangladesh-China bilateral relations, especially in the areas of trade, investment, and people-to-people contact, will reach new heights in future.

Wen requested the PM to use the Biman Bangladesh Airline's Dhaka-Beijing route for her upcoming visit to China to inaugurate the route.

He added that China wants to invest in Bangladesh's agriculture, green energy, ICT, and manufacturing sectors.

The envoy expressed his country's interest in forging a partnership for metro rail projects in Bangladesh.

He said China is willing to import more mango, jute and jute products and leather goods from Bangladesh.

He said the cooperation between the Awami League and the Communist Party of China will be strengthened.

Regarding the Rohingya issue, Wen said China is working for the repatriation of Rohingyas.

Quoting the envoy, the Chinese embassy in a statement said China and Bangladesh are at "a critical stage of development and revitalisation, facing severe international situation".

"China is willing to strengthen the exchange of experience in governance between the two countries, continue to deepen all-round cooperation with Bangladesh," Wen said.

PM's Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah was present.

## ACC sues 58

FROM PAGE 12 approved 112 posts. The recruitment was made between 2019 and 2023, the statement read.

Some 141 employees were recruited without any prior approval of the UGC or the health ministry.

The statement also stated that the accused misused or embezzled over Tk 5.54 crore as those appointed against the posts got salaries.

## Chhatra Dal's expression of solidarity rejected

FROM PAGE 1 administrative building around 7:00pm, the students condemned the attempts made by different quarters to discredit their movement by spreading false information and carrying out propaganda activities.

"We consider such a statement by Chhatra Dal to be completely politically motivated. We reject their politically motivated solidarity."

The students also said that any similar attempts to confuse their stand on politics-free campus would

be rejected. They cited the results of an online poll conducted among fellow students on Monday and Tuesday. The poll showed that 97 percent participants voted against student politics on campus.

Meanwhile, five Buet students yesterday alleged that they were threatened and bullied both online and in person for advocating student politics.

They met Buet Vice-Chancellor Prof Satya Prasad Majumder in the afternoon and lodged a complaint to him in

this regard. The five later informed the matter to reporters.

Ashiqul Alam, a third-year mechanical engineering student, said, "We were bullied over social media and also in person. We were threatened after we held a press briefing on Monday protesting the activities of Jamaat Shibir and Hizb-ut-Tahrir on Buet campus."

"Our parents have also been threatened. We now feel insecure," he said. The demonstrating Buet students, however, said the allegations raised by the five were untrue.

On Monday, the High Court stayed a 2019 order through which Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology banned political organisations and their activities on the campus.

The order was issued after a group of Chhatra League men murdered second-year student Abrar Fahad inside a Buet dorm.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 9, 2019 said Buet could ban politics on campus if it wanted and that the government would not interfere.

Unrest broke out on the campus on March 29, hours

after a group of Chhatra League leaders gathered on Buet premises in the wee hours of March 28.

Students have been demanding Prof Mizanur Rahman be removed from the post of director of the Directorate of Students' Welfare for what they said was his failure to keep the campus free from politics.

They are also demanding expulsion of Buet student and Chhatra League leader Imtiaz Hossain Rahim Rabbi. The university revoked Imtiaz's residency at the dormitory amid the unrest.