



### Veteran actress Gulshan Ara Ahmed passes away after suffering heart attack

Veteran actress Gulshan Ara Ahmed, known for her work in numerous television dramas, passed away yesterday at 6:40am. She was 59 years old and is survived by her husband, a son, and a daughter. Prior to her demise, she was admitted to the ICU and placed on life support following a heart attack. The news of her passing was shared by director Kajal Arefin Ome in a heartfelt social media post.

Ome wrote, "Our beloved Gulshan Ara Ahmed *apa* left us this morning at 6:40."

He also recalled her memorable performances, saying, "In *Bachelor Point*, she portrayed Kabila's mother and the chairman of Noakhali. We will miss you dearly, *apa*."

Gulshan Ara Ahmed was buried next to her mother's grave in Brahmanbaria after Asr prayers yesterday.

## Katy Perry roars into space on an all-woman flight



Pop icon Katy Perry took a brief journey to the edge of space last Monday, joining an all-female crew aboard one of Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin rockets.

The **Firework** and **California Gurls** singer soared more than 60 miles (100 kilometres) above Earth in a spacecraft operated by the Amazon founder's space company.

She was accompanied by five other women, including Bezos's fiancée Lauren Sanchez. The mission launched from West Texas shortly after 8:30am (1330 GMT) and returned safely around 10 minutes later.

The flight crossed the Karman line, the internationally recognised boundary of outer space.

## Star Cineplex's steep ticket price hike sparks public outcry

Star Cineplex has recently significantly increased its ticket prices without prior notice, leading to widespread criticism from the public and the film industry.

Previously, ticket prices ranged from Tk 350 to 1,500. Now, they have surged to between Tk 400 and Tk 1,800, depending on the showtime and seating class. Matinee shows, which were once more affordable, have seen hikes of Tk 50 to 150, while evening and weekend shows have increased by Tk 200 to 300. The most expensive royal seats now cost Tk 1,800, a steep rise from the earlier Tk 1,500.

The sudden price hike drew backlash online, with noted director Dipankar Dipon writing on Facebook that a movie outing for two now costs nearly Tk 2,000—including tickets, snacks, and transport—an amount burdensome for lower-middle-income families.

Saraf Ahmed Zibon, director of the Eid release **Chokkor 302**, starring Mosharraf Karim, voiced



disappointment over limited showtimes and high-ticket prices, which he fears may drive away students and middle-income groups. "We need systemic changes to support young filmmakers and the Bangladeshi film industry," he emphasised.

In response to the backlash, Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, senior

manager of Media and Marketing at Star Cineplex, acknowledged the price adjustments. He explained that the changes were made to align with current circumstances and that the highest-priced tickets are for VIP seats. "We have increased prices slightly to ensure a better experience for our audience," he stated.



### Green Day alters lyrics at Coachella to show solidarity with Palestine

At this year's Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California, Green Day delivered a powerful and politically charged set, spotlighting the Israel-Palestine conflict.

While singing **Jesus of Suburbia**, Billie Joe Armstrong altered a lyric to, "Runnin' away from pain like the kids from Palestine," sparking wvidespread attention online.

Back in 2016 the band, known for blending activism with music, previously take a swipe at US President Donald Trump and MAGA supporters.

Armstrong opened with **American Idiot**, declaring, "I'm not part of the MAGA agenda," and introduced **Holiday** as an "anti-war" anthem. Their set featured hits like **Basket Case**, **Wake Me Up When September Ends**, and **Minority**.



### Priyanka Chopra to reunite with Zac Efron in new comedy flick

Priyanka Chopra is reuniting with **Baywatch** co-star Zac Efron for an upcoming Hollywood comedy directed by Nicholas Stoller (known for **Forgetting Sarah Marshall**).

Produced by Amazon MGM Studios, the film remains untitled, with plot details mostly under wraps, however, Chopra confirmed her role via Instagram.

The cast also includes Will Ferrell, Michael Peña, Regina Hall, Jimmy Tatro, and Billy Eichner.

Formerly titled **Judgment Day**, the upcoming film follows a young ex-convict (Efron) who takes over a courtroom TV show, blaming the judge (Ferrell) for ruining his life. Chopra and Peña's roles are yet to be revealed.

# NEWS

## Arrest warrant issued against Joy too

FROM PAGE 12

Rajuk officials, had six plots allotted to herself, her son Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, younger sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, and Rehana's daughters Azmina Siddiq and Tulip Siddiq in violation of rules.

The ACC filed a total of six cases over alleged irregularities in the allocation of the six plots, each measuring 10 kathas, in the diplomatic zone of Sector-27 in the Purbachal New Town project.

On April 10, the same court issued arrest warrants against 18 people, including Hasina and Saima Wazed, in one of the six cases.

On April 13, it also issued arrest warrants against Hasina, Rehana, and 21 others in three more cases.

Hasina has been made a common accused in all the six cases filed in connection to the irregularities.

Earlier on March 25, the ACC pressed charges against Hasina, Joy and 16 others in two of the cases. On the same day, charges were pressed in the four other cases as well.

**TULIP SUED OVER GULSHAN FLAT**

The ACC has filed a case against British MP and former minister Tulip Rizwana Siddiq and two former Rajuk officials, accusing them of being involved in the illegal transfer of a luxury flat in the capital's Gulshan area by abusing official power and accepting undue privileges from real estate developer Eastern Housing Limited.

The case was lodged yesterday by ACC Deputy Director Monirul Islam at the commission's Dhaka Integrated District Office. The two others named in the case are Shah Md Khasruzzaman and Sardar Mosharraf Hossain, both former assistant legal advisors at Rajuk.

ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain said the accused are charged with criminal conspiracy, breach of trust, and misuse of power to unlawfully gain possession of a flat without any financial transaction.

The flat in question — Flat No. B/201, House No. 5A and 5B (old), now I13 and I1B (new), Road 71, Gulshan-2 — was allegedly handed over to Siddiq as an

illicit benefit and was later registered in her name.

According to the first information report (FIR), Tulip received the flat free of cost as a form of illegal benefit. This allegation is backed by a letter from Eastern Housing stating Siddiq was given the flat without payment. Additionally, a separate letter from the company to Dhaka City Corporation dated May 19, 2001 — during Hasina's tenure — confirms that Siddiq had occupied the flat since then and had been paying holding tax.

**TULIP'S RESPONSE**

Tulip Siddiq said on Monday an arrest warrant issued against her in Bangladesh over allegations she illegally received a plot of land are a "politically motivated smear."

"It's a completely politically motivated smear campaign, trying to harass me. There is no evidence that I've done anything wrong," Siddiq told reporters.

"No one from the Bangladeshi authorities has contacted me. The entire time, they've done trial by media."

## Kuet students break

FROM PAGE 12

banner of 'general students' over the banning of student politics on campus. At least 40 people were injured in the violence.

On Monday night, Kuet's syndicate held an emergency meeting and decided to reopen the residential halls on May 2 and resume academic activities on May 4. It also decided to suspend 37 students for their alleged involvement in the clashes on February 18 and 19.

The students began breaking the locks around 2:00pm yesterday, starting with Fazlul Haque Hall, followed by Amar Ekushey Hall, Dr M A Rashid Hall, and two others.

By the time this report was filed at around 8:30pm, around 250 students were staying in those dormitories.

The students have been staging a sit-in protest since Sunday, demanding the immediate reopening of the halls.

Yesterday, around 1:00pm, the students brought out a procession and requested teachers to unlock the halls. However, the teachers did not respond.

Following this, the students issued a call for the VC's resignation.

The announcement was made at a press briefing held at the Kuet Student Welfare Centre around 1:45pm, where a student representative read out a written statement.

The statement read: "As the VC has failed to ensure the safety of Kuet students, refused to take responsibility for his failure, disconnected internet and water supply, forced students out of the halls, encouraged filing of cases against protesting students, and expelled demonstrating students, we are shifting from our previous six-point demand to a single-point demand. The removal of the VC is now our only demand."

Kuet's Public Relations Officer Shaheduzzaman Sheikh told The Daily Star that the decision to suspend the 37 students was based on findings from a probe committee.

Regarding the breaking of locks, Kuet VC Mohammad Mashud told journalists, "Breaking into the halls is an illegal act. I will place the matter before the syndicate, which will decide the next course of action."

Following the February 18 clash, students began boycotting classes and launched a movement with a six-point demand that included the resignation of the VC, Pro-VC, and the Director of Student Welfare, as well as a complete ban on student politics.

On February 23, students submitted their six-point demand in writing to the Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus. Later, on February 25, the Kuet syndicate decided to indefinitely suspend academic and administrative activities and ordered students to vacate

the dormitories.

A three-member committee was subsequently formed by the university administration to investigate the incident.

On April 10, a local resident filed a case with a court in Khulna against 22 named Kuet students and 15-20 unnamed individuals in connection with the February 18 violence.

**DU, BUET, RUET STUDENTS EXPRESS SOLIDARITY**

At Dhaka University, students yesterday expressed their solidarity with the students of Kuet. Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) held a press conference at around 2:00pm at the Madhur Canteen and demanded the resignation of Kuet VC within 24 hours.

Another section of students under the banner of "Dhaka University Stands with Kuet" held a protest programme at around 4:00pm at the Raju Memorial Sculpture with similar demands.

At Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), students formed a human chain in protest of the recent actions taken by the Kuet administration.

During the protest held at the Central Shaheed Minar on the Buet campus yesterday afternoon, students demanded the immediate withdrawal of the case against Kuet students, accountability from the administration, and punishment of those responsible for the violence.

At Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet), students formed a human chain yesterday afternoon protesting the recent events at Kuet.

The demonstration took place at 5:30pm in front of the Ruet Shaheed Minar, where students raised slogans expressing solidarity with Kuet students and demanding justice.

[Our Correspondents from Khulna, Rajshahi and DU contributed to the report]

### Join hands

FROM PAGE 12

"Let us forget the past year's sorrow and pain and move forward with a new conviction and new enthusiasm," he said.

Urging all to play an active role in protecting the country's culture and heritage and spreading those across the world, the chief adviser said that on this day, the country's people get the opportunity to showcase their tradition to the world in a festive atmosphere.

"Pahela Baishakh is the festival of our lives, the universal festival of Bangladesh. Wherever the Bangladeshis are in the world, today is a day of joy for all of us," he said.

At Baisakhi fairs across the country, Prof Yunus said entrepreneurs can showcase their creativity by making traditional shital pati, clay pots, pans, toys, hand fans, etc., marking this occasion.

He said various ethnic groups in the hills and plain lands are also celebrating Chaitra Sankranti and Bangla Nababarsha on a large scale this time.

The chief adviser hoped that the Bangla new year would usher in good days and joy for everyone.

### Govt settling

FROM PAGE 12

Statistics (BBS).

Usually, the budget size increases every year, but the upcoming budget will be smaller than the previous year's original budget.

The budget size would be about Tk 7,90,000 crore, which is slightly less than the original budget for this fiscal year: Tk 7,97,000 crore.

The smaller budget is in line with the prescription of economists and the International Monetary Fund with a view to narrowing the budget deficit.

If the deficit increases due to low revenue collection as a result of the ongoing economic slowdown, the government would need to borrow from local banks, which can fuel inflation.

A 6.5 percent inflation target is achievable if the budget deficit remains below Tk 220,000 crore next fiscal year, Hussain said.

Finance ministry officials believe the budget deficit in the next fiscal year would be close to this amount.

Out of the total allocation, the size of the annual development programme would be Tk 2,30,000 crore.

In the original budget for this fiscal year, the allocation for ADP was Tk 2,65,000 crore, which was later revised down to Tk 2,16,000 crore.

## Shares worth Tk 17,000cr frozen

FROM PAGE 12

Controversial business conglomerate S Alam Group has been found to be involved in the highest number of irregularities and instances of money laundering, said a taskforce member, seeking anonymity.

So far, evidence has been found of the group owning multiple luxury hotels, land, and other assets in six different countries, said the member,

adding that to seize the assets abroad, cases will have to be filed in the respective countries' courts, and only after a verdict is given in those countries can the assets be officially seized.

The government formed 11 inter-agency probe teams comprising members of the Anti-Corruption Commission, National Board of Revenue, and Criminal Investigation

Department of police.

The move came as the government intensified efforts to recover money allegedly laundered by major corporate giants that thrived during the Awami League regime.

A total of \$234 billion was siphoned off from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023, according to an estimate by a government-commissioned white paper committee on the economy.