

Pritom-Mehazabien pair up for Chorki series 'Cactus'

OTT platform Chorki is set to release its original series *Cactus* this Eid-ul-Fitr, with the teaser unveiled on March 4. Directed by Shihab Shaheen, the series stars Pritom Hasan and Mehazabien Chowdhury in the lead roles.

Pritom plays Manasiv, a highly skilled hacker who, despite being imprisoned, is drawn back into cyber operations to help address a national crisis. Mehazabien appears as Anura, a character who becomes involved in the mission and is shown in a new action-oriented avatar.

The series blends technology, thriller and action elements. Written by Shihab Shaheen alongside Al-Amin Hasan Nirjhor, Ador Rahman, Asaduzzaman Abir and Rezwan Kabir, *Cactus* also features Munira Yusuf Meme, Naziba Basher and Salahuddin Lavlu in key roles.



I read the novel 15 times before facing the camera: SABILA NUR

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After making a grand debut on the silver screens with *Taandob*, Sabila Nur is set to appear in her second film with Tanim Noor's *Bonolota Express*, which will be released this Eid.

The film is based on the novel *Kichukkhon* by acclaimed writer Humayun Ahmed.

Sabila plays Chitra, one of the central roles in the story. Speaking about her preparation, Sabila said, "I've read *Kichukkhon* many times. Initially, I read it multiple times to immerse myself completely in the character. I've read it around fifteen times. I finished reading it before standing in front of the camera."

She added, "Honestly, I never imagined that I would play Chitra. I never even thought that a film would be made based on *Kichukkhon*, or that I would portray this character. However, when I received the offer from the director, I was truly delighted."

When asked about her shooting experience, she said, "It was a

tremendous experience — absolutely wonderful. I would say it was extraordinary."

Regarding acting in a film adapted from a Humayun Ahmed novel, she said, "Humayun Ahmed is a beloved writer for everyone — certainly for me as well. I had read the story long before the film was made. So, acting in a film based on the work of such a distinguished writer is truly remarkable."

Was she nervous? In response, Sabila said, "A little. After all, countless readers have read this novel. Many people are familiar with Chitra and have formed their own impressions of her. So, there was some nervousness about how audiences would receive my portrayal. But above all, I felt immense excitement."

Speaking about her co-stars, she said, "Through *Bonolota Express*, I worked with Sariful Razz on the big screen for the first time. He plays the role of a doctor. It was a good experience working with him. I also acted alongside Mosharraf Karim. The most important thing is that working

with Mosharraf Karim always means learning something — whether about acting or about life."

She continued, "Acting alongside Mosharraf Karim brought a great sense of excitement. More importantly, everyone I worked with became like family."

Regarding her expectations, the actress said, "I'm extremely excited. I believe that audiences will come to watch it. There's a great deal of interest surrounding the film. I'm eager myself — I'm waiting to go to the cinema hall to watch it. The audience will enjoy it. It has emotion, comedy, entertainment and tragedy — everything."

Before the shoot began, she rehearsed for quite some time. On this, she said, "Tanim Noor worked on the project with great care. Once everything was finalised, he arranged rehearsals. We rehearsed for nearly two months."

How much preparation did she take for the character of Chitra? Sabila replied, "I prepared thoroughly. I approached the role accordingly."



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Actors Equity urges members to resolve disputes internally

Actors Equity Bangladesh has warned its members against airing internal disputes on social media or in the press, stating that such actions violate the organisation's code of conduct.

In a statement issued on March 4 and signed by president Azad Abul Kalam and general secretary Rashed Mamun Apu, the guild said any complication or difference of opinion involving its members or affiliated bodies must be reported to the concerned organisation first.

According to the statement, disputes should be resolved through mutual discussion and institutional procedures within the organisation's structure.

The organisation also cautioned that members who violate the code of conduct may face disciplinary action.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Poygam'

Sharp wit meets contemporary Dhaka in a lively staging of Anton Chekhov's comic sensibility through *Poygam*. Director Mohsina Akter crafts an intimate satire of ego, misunderstanding, and fragile civility, where laughter gradually reveals uncomfortable truths about pride, loneliness, and human contradiction.



DATE: FRIDAY | MARCH 6, 2026
TIME: 7:45 PM ONWARDS
VENUE: SPARDHA ATELIER, GULSAN 2

NEWS

Prolonged war can hit remittance hard

FROM PAGE 12
warned that the conflict could hurt remittance inflows if it continues for a long time.

He told The Daily Star that Bangladesh's remittance flow could slow down in the long run or even decline temporarily.

Munier explained that rising oil prices and disruptions to trade routes may increase living costs in Gulf countries. For this, migrant workers may have less money left to send home.

"Workers can still use banking or informal channels to send money. The real issue is whether they will have enough income in hand," he said.

He added that workers in informal sectors such as small shops, daily labour, and temporary contracts will suffer the most. If businesses close for security reasons, they will lose income.

Munier stressed that clear communication and coordinated government action are important to prevent panic.

The crisis is also affecting thousands of workers who were scheduled to leave Bangladesh.

Shariful Hasan, associate director

of BRAC's Migration and Youth Programme, said the impact is "multi-dimensional and potentially severe."

He said that outgoing workers invested Tk 3 to 4 lakh to secure overseas jobs. "Many of them are now stuck, and their visas are nearing expiry."

Hasan warned that if they cannot travel soon, their job opportunities may become uncertain. Employers abroad may change their recruitment plans if the conflict continues.

He added that many Bangladeshis in the Middle East work in temporary or informal jobs. Because of instability, they may not be able to work regularly. If their income drops, remittances will drop.

"The impact begins with the individual worker, then affects the family, the district, and eventually the state," Hasan said.

He added that at least 20 to 25 districts in Bangladesh depend heavily on remittance. If the crisis continues, these areas may face economic hardship.

Shariful warned that Bangladesh, as one of the world's top remittance-receiving countries, could face pressure on foreign currency reserves. "If this situation prolongs, the effects

will only deepen."

Talking to this newspaper, Tipu Sultan, former joint secretary general of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies and president of Recruiting Agencies Oikya Parishad, said that due to the war in the Middle East, Bangladesh's labour market is going through a serious challenge.

He added that if the conflict lingers, current workers may lose their jobs and opportunities for new workers will shrink. "Naturally, remittance inflow will suffer."

Tipu suggested that the government should talk to Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, to extend the duration of Iqama (work permit) and visas for the affected workers.

At an event held recently, PM's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir said the government considers expatriates its top priority.

"In the current crisis, where there are ticket or visa complications, we will take initiatives."

He assured that the government would take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and welfare of Bangladeshis in the affected countries.

State minister finds land office empty

FROM PAGE 12
other offices to ensure accountability. Siddhirganj Union Assistant Land Officer Nasir Uddin could not be reached for comment.

"As far as I have learned, the state minister visited the office and did not find the officials present — he waited there for quite some time," said Devjani Kar, assistant commissioner (Land) of the Siddhirganj region, who was on half-day leave yesterday.

The deputy commissioner and the upazila nirbahi officer have been informed and would take necessary action, she said.

Meanwhile, the cabinet division on Monday issued a circular directing all government officials and employees to mandatorily remain in their respective offices from 9:00am to 9:40am every working day.

In some cases, officials and employees engage in various official or personal activities on their way to the office such as attending seminars,

workshops and symposiums, participating as guest speakers at training institutes, or visiting banks, hospitals and schools.

As a result, they fail to be present at their offices at the stipulated time.

In this context, to ensure public service delivery and expedite official work, all officials and employees of government, semi-government, autonomous, and semi autonomous institutions have been instructed to remain in their respective office chambers from 9:00am to 9:40am.

The other official programmes must also be arranged so that this time period is not disrupted.

The circular states that under the Government Servants (Regular Attendance) Rules, 2019, and the Secretariat Instructions, 2024, it is mandatory for officials and employees of all government, semi-government and autonomous institutions to attend and leave the office at the prescribed time.

The rule will not apply in the case of teachers and faculty members working at educational or training institutions who are not assigned administrative responsibilities.

The time restriction will also not apply to those performing roster duties at hospitals, prisons, media organisations or security-related institutions.

Members of law enforcement agencies directly engaged in emergency services and field-level duties have also been kept outside the purview of the rule.

Except for providing VVIP or VIP protocol, responding to major sudden accidents, attending highly important meetings with development partners or diplomatic missions and approved official tours, no employee will be allowed to leave the workplace without prior approval from the authorities.

Officials and employees have also been instructed not to leave the office during working hours except for official purposes.

Where is the administration heading?

FROM PAGE 12
to grasp the evolving demands and complexities of governance.

Even officers known to be inclined towards the ruling party now express scepticism about the success of the new government's 180-day plan.

An additional secretary, speaking anonymously, said that once these contractual secretaries take charge, their first priority will be seeking the status of "senior secretary".

"It will take them six months just to understand the ministry's departments, agencies, and projects.... By the time a year passes, they will already be lobbying for another contract extension. Therefore, these types of appointments could be a suicidal decision for the current government."

Another additional secretary, known as a former Chhatra Dal activist and an influential officer, said that frustration is spreading throughout the administration. "Even junior officers are worried. These contractual appointments are harmful not only to our careers but also to the country and to the prime minister himself."

The issue of avoiding contractual appointments is also being discussed in the Administrative Service Association's Facebook group.

A leader of the organisation, preferring anonymity, told this correspondent, "Our promotions are coming up, and those deciding them are themselves contractual appointees. We cannot speak against them. We urge the top levels of government to reconsider these matters."

On March 1, the government appointed Munshi Alauddin Al Azad as the secretary of the religious affairs ministry on a one-year contract. He has never worked in this ministry before and has been away from the regular administration for 17 years.

Meanwhile, 69-year-old Rafiqul I Mohamed has been appointed as the secretary of the agriculture ministry, and 66-year-old Kamruzzaman Chowdhury as the secretary of the Health Services Division.

Additionally, it is reported that Abdul Khaleq, the newly appointed 65-year-old secretary for the Secondary and Higher Education Division, has never held any position in this ministry before.

Allen fires NZ into final

FROM PAGE 12
Earlier, spinners Rachin Ravindra and Cole McConchie took two wickets each to restrict South Africa to 169-8 after New Zealand elected to field first.

The 2024 runners-up South Africa, led by Aiden Markram, had been unbeaten in seven matches but slumped to 77-5 before Marco Jansen hit an unbeaten 55 to give the total some respect.

"We knew obviously how good South Africa are... so, to put on a performance like that in a crunch game is obviously pretty pleasing," said New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner.

PM makes 8 state ministers' roles more focused

FROM PAGE 12
and children's affairs ministry.

Nurul Huq Nur has been assigned to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. He was also in charge of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Bobby Hajaj has been appointed as the state minister for the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. Previously, he also held responsibility for the Secondary and Higher Education Division.

'Dramatic change' in ant nests

FROM PAGE 12
signature of ants.

Researchers exposed ants from six species for nearly 20 minutes to an ozone concentration of 100 parts per billion, a level often measured in polluted areas during the summer, and returned them to their colonies.

In five of the six species, the ozone-exposed ants were targeted with aggression by their nestmates.

The findings indicate that even slight increases in ozone pollution can degrade key molecules that ants use to recognise each other and thereby negatively impact numerous species.