

Prioritised the audience's choice this time: Tawsif Mahbub



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As Eid approaches, actor Tawsif Mahbub is pitching up for one of his busiest festive seasons yet. This time, the popular television star returns with the new season of the widely loved series *Bachelor Point*, while also venturing into darker territory with his web debut in *Chokro 2*. Alongside these major releases, he will also appear in several Eid dramas on the small screen. The lineup, he says, reflects a conscious decision to prioritise the audience's taste this year rather than his own.

One of the biggest highlights of his Eid slate is the return of *Bachelor Point*, directed by Kajal Arefin Ome. Over the years, the series has grown into one of Bangladesh's most popular television shows, building a massive fan base that continues to grow with each season.

"*Bachelor Point* is a crazy world – It's extremely energetic, and what you see on screen is very similar to what happens off screen," Tawsif said with a laugh. "I genuinely enjoy the shoot. Every month we usually have five to ten days of shooting, and I actually look forward to the next schedule."

For nearly eight years, he has portrayed the character of Nehal—one of the most recognisable faces of the series. Sustaining a character's popularity for so long, he says, is rare.

He credits director Kajal Arefin Ome for keeping the show fresh despite its long run. Many popular series eventually lose momentum, but *Bachelor Point* has managed to keep audiences hooked.

While *Bachelor Point* continues to bring its signature humour and energy, Tawsif is also stepping into a completely different space with *Chokro 2*, directed by Vicky Zahed and set to release on the OTT platform iScreen. The project marks his first true experience working on an OTT series.

"The original *Chokro* was produced for television, which meant certain elements had to be toned down. This time, however, the creative team had far more freedom. In the first one, we had many limitations—budget constraints, time pressure, and the need to shoot multiple scenes in a single day," he explained. "With *Chokro 2*, those limitations weren't there, and I would consider this my debut in OTT space."

Some scenes proved so intense that even crew members struggled to watch them being filmed. Tawsif recalled moments when members of the unit walked away during certain shots because the visuals were too disturbing. "Filming the project took nearly 20 days, including several late-night shoots, and the team travelled widely for the production. Locations ranged from Dhaka neighbourhoods such as Old Dhaka, Dhanmondi, Uttara and Diabari to destinations outside the capital, including Manikganj and Cox's Bazar. The experience was both demanding and creatively rewarding."

"Quite a few good small screen projects are coming this Eid," he said, referring to titles like *Golapi*, directed by Rubel Hasan and co-starring Tanjin Tisha, *Jokhom*, directed by Imraul Rafat with Tanjin Saiyara Totini, *Prematal*, directed by Hasib Hossain Rakhi

alongside Naznin Niha, and *Beshi Bole Bulbuli* directed by Rubel Hasan, also featuring Tanjin Saiyara Totini, among others. "These are good productions with strong stories, and many talented directors are involved."

"I'm particularly excited about *Lilith*, directed by Ashikur Rahman. While working on it, I had a feeling of what many call the golden era of television dramas—slow, calm, and deeply engaging. I hope audiences will feel that same warmth when it releases," he said.

Despite his excitement about the projects, Tawsif admitted that many of the dramas he chose this year are not the kind of work he would normally gravitate towards. Over time, he realised that his personal taste does not always align with what the mass audience enjoys.

"I've noticed that my own taste can be a little niche," he explained. "Because of that, sometimes I move away from the mass audience. But television drama is completely a mass medium. It's a drawing room medium. You can't just think about your own preferences—you have to think about everyone's."

"Most of the dramas this time are romantic or comedic in tone, which audiences love to watch during Eid," he said. "In a way, these projects are experimental for me because they're not exactly my personal style. But I'm quite confident viewers will accept them well. Otherwise, I wouldn't have taken them."

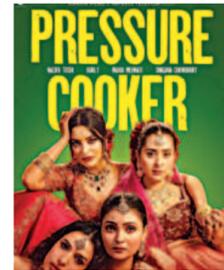
"At the end of the day, our work is for the audience," he said. "If they enjoy watching it, that's the biggest success for us."

Five films receive censor clearance

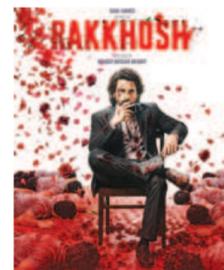
With only a few days remaining until Eid, the Bangladesh Film Certification Board has cleared five films for release, marking the start of final preparations for the festive season. The approved titles include *Domm*, *Rakkhosh*, *Prince: Once Upon a Time in Dhaka*, *Pressure Cooker*, and *Bonolota Express*, spanning a mix of genres and storytelling styles.

Domm and *Pressure Cooker* received uncut clearance, while *Rakkhosh* has

been granted an 18+ rating. Featuring stars such as Afran Nisho, Shakib Khan, Siam Ahmed, and Shobnom Yesmin Bubby, the films bring together both commercial and content-driven narratives. From crime and action to romance and women-centric storytelling, the lineup reflects a diverse Eid slate, as filmmakers gear up for one of the year's most competitive release windows.



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WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Rishka Festival 3: Beyond Cinema'

A three-day celebration of Bangla cinema unfolds with screenings, conversations, and tributes honouring the craft behind the camera. *Rishka Festival 3: Beyond Cinema* gathers filmmakers, performers, and cinephiles to revisit beloved stories while spotlighting new voices through a short film competition and immersive discussions on the future of Bangladeshi cinema.

Date: Thursday-Saturday | March 26-28
Time: 11 am-11 pm
Venue: Aloki, Gulshan

NEWS

PM to launch Farmers' Card

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at a meeting of the Farmers' Card preparing cell held at the Secretariat yesterday afternoon with the premier in the chair, said Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman.

During the meeting, the PM instructed his cabinet members and officials to maintain transparency in identifying farmers and ensure that assistance reaches the actual beneficiaries.

The government is set to roll out the cards under a pre-piloting initiative.

Apart from Tangail, the programme will also cover Panchagarh Sadar and Boda upazila of the district, Shibganj in Bogura, Shaikupa in Jhenaidah, Nesarabad in Pirojpur, Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, Cumilla Adarsha Sadar upazila, Islampur in Jamalpur, Goalanda in Rajbari, and Juri in Moulvibazar.

The additional press secretary said the card will function as a banking debit card. Landless, marginal, and small-scale farmers will receive an annual incentive of Tk 2,500 to purchase agricultural inputs.

Through the card, farmers will be able to buy fertiliser, seeds, pesticides, and animal feed, he added.

Officials concerned believe the initiative would help establish a reliable identification system for farmers across the country. It is also expected to ensure a more transparent and efficient distribution of agricultural

subsidies, loans, seeds, and fertilisers.

The PM directed the authorities concerned to gear up the process to prepare the Farmers' Card to ensure modern and integrated services for farmers across the country, said the additional press secretary.

He stressed on creating a comprehensive database of farmers, ensuring direct delivery of subsidies and incentives, and simplifying agricultural services through digital systems.

Related ministers, state ministers, and advisers, as well as senior officials of the ministries, were present at the meeting.

According to the BNP's election manifesto, through the card, farmers will be able to access fertilisers, seeds, pesticides, government subsidies, and incentives at fair prices, as well as agricultural machinery at low cost.

Besides, they will receive low-cost irrigation services, easy-term agricultural loans, agricultural insurance, facilities to sell farm produce at fair prices, and agriculture-related training.

Farmers will also be able to receive weather and market information on their phones and access mobile-based crop treatment or advisory services using the card.

Fish and livestock farmers will also receive the benefits. Small businesses

linked to the agricultural sector will be included as well.

In every union parishad, a list of genuine farmers eligible for state support will be prepared through discussion.

The BNP-led government, as part of its electoral promises, has launched canal excavation projects, waived agricultural loans up to Tk 10,000, including interest, introduced the Family Card, and begun providing monthly honorariums to religious leaders."

Half of youths

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With global uncertainties rising, it is urgent for the government to undertake the long-pending macro-economic and financial sector reforms that are needed to address foundational bottlenecks to economic growth and job creation, Zutt added.

The WB was among the first development partners to support Bangladesh following its independence and has committed more than \$46 billion in International Development Association financing in the form of grants, interest-free loans, and concessional credits to help the country address its development priorities.

Over 400 killed in Pakistan air strike

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exercise restraint, a spokesperson of its foreign ministry, Lin Jian, said yesterday.

The Pakistani Information and Broadcasting Ministry said the Afghan Taliban claim was "misreporting of facts".

In an overnight post on X, it said that Pakistan targeted military installations and "terrorist support infrastructure" including technical equipment storage and ammunition storage of the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Taliban militants in Kabul and Nangarhar that were being used

against Pakistani civilians.

"Pakistan's targeting is precise and carefully undertaken to ensure no collateral damage is inflicted," the post said. "This misreporting of facts as drug rehabilitation facility seeks to stir sentiments, covering illegitimate support to cross-border terrorism."

Fierce fighting between the South Asian neighbours, who were close allies earlier, erupted last month with Pakistani air strikes in Afghanistan that Islamabad said targeted militant strongholds.

Afghanistan called the strikes a violation of its sovereignty that

targeted civilians and launched its own attacks.

Both sides have claimed to have inflicted heavy damage on the other but independent verification has not been possible.

Islamabad says Kabul provides a safe haven to militants launching attacks on Pakistan. The Taliban deny the allegation, saying tackling militancy is Pakistan's internal problem.

The conflict had ebbed amid attempts by friendly countries, including China, to mediate and end the fighting before flaring up again.

Condition of Kushtia rape victim critical

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Madrasa in Kuthibazar area of Kushtia's Bheramara upazila headquarters; his wife Shamima Khatun, 42; and his colleague Risha Khatun, 20.

They were produced before a court that sent them to jail yesterday, said the police officer.

According to case statement, Saidul raped the girl, while the two others assisted him.

In the case statement, the victim's mother said the girl has been a residential student of the madrasa since June last year.

"I went to the madrasa on Sunday morning to bring my daughter home for Eid vacation, but I found her severely ill," she said, adding that when she asked the madrasa authorities about her daughter's illness, they did not give proper response.

The girl was first taken to a local health complex where doctors provided her primary treatment and referred her to RMCH.

"Then, I took my daughter to RMCH on Monday morning," said the mother.

"My daughter has told me that she was raped by Saidul while the two other accused beat and tortured

her so that she does not disclose the incident," she also said in the case statement.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday at RMCH, the mother said, "My daughter is frightened and traumatised. In the madrasa, I found her in severe condition with a swollen abdomen and bruised left leg."

"I want justice," she demanded. She also alleged that associates of the madrasa authorities tried to settle the issue with money and threats.

[Our correspondents from Kushtia and Rajshahi contributed to the report.]

Fuel shortage forces buses to limit Eid trips

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Mojibur Rahman, a pharmacist who had gone to the Mohakhali bus terminal with his wife and daughter yesterday to travel to Bogura on an Ekota Paribahan bus scheduled for 12:00pm, said they were waiting for over an hour and a half, but the bus had not yet arrived.

On the start of a seven-day government holiday for Eid-ul-Fitr yesterday, long queues were seen at filling stations across the capital.

This newspaper visited at least 16 fuel pumps in Dhaka on the day. At least four stations had run out of octane by the afternoon, including two on the outskirts on the Banasree-Demra road.

In the Tejgaon area, Southern Automobiles was sold out of octane in the afternoon. Only diesel-run vehicles were seen in lines.

With fresh supplies, there was a long queue at Satata & Co, which was found shut a day earlier.

In the Mohakhali area, there are six to seven refuelling stations. Most were

open, but there was a long queue only outside Clean Fuel Filling Station. In the Mohakhali railway gate area, Eureka Enterprise had a usual queue.

The Trust Filling Station in the Bijoy Sarani area had huge queues, as motorcycles stretched near the Prime Minister's Office while cars extended past the BAF Officers' Mess gate in the afternoon.

Earlier in the morning, at Sonar Bangla Service Station in Asad Gate, a visit around 10:00am revealed a line of vehicles stretching for over a kilometre. Motorcycles, cars, minibuses and pickup trucks were all waiting for fuel.

However, the queue for motorcycles and cars was comparatively shorter than the previous couple of days, said the staff members at the station.

As of 10:30am, the station appeared to be supplying fuel in line with demand.

The situation was different at nearby Talukdar Filling Station, where fuel supply was suspended shortly before 10:00am after stocks ran out. By

10:30am, more than a hundred vehicles were seen lined up.

"We have run out of fuel for now," said cashier Md Azam, adding that supply may resume around 2:00pm once new stock arrives.

After 2:00pm, the supply resumed, but the customers were complaining that they were not getting fuel as per their demand. Rather, the pump was rationing: for bikes, up to Tk 500, and for cars, Tk 1,500 worth of fuel.

A similar situation was found at another pump, Purbachal Traders in Paribagh, which followed a similar rationing system.

As of yesterday, diesel stock stood at 1.20 lakh tonnes, while petrol and octane stocks were 15,000 tonnes each, with more shipments in the pipeline, data from Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation shows.

Officials said BPC has increased the supply ahead of the Eid rush, and the supply would be adequate to satisfy demand for this month.

Govt to import 2 lakh tonnes

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major rainfed Aman rice crop.

Aman rice, which is grown in a season beginning after June, accounts for 40 percent of the total annual rice crop, estimated at around 4 crore tonnes in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

"We want to complete the procedures of imports before the start of the Aman season. So, we have floated the tenders," said a top BCIC official, adding that the corporation operates state fertiliser factories and imports urea on behalf of the government to distribute among farmers at subsidised rates.

In its notifications, BCIC sought submission of quotations to purchase the urea – to be supplied through Chatogram and Mongla ports – by April 8.

The official said the procurement

process needs to start three to four months in advance to complete the import process within the stipulated time.

The peak season for fertiliser demand is November to March, mainly for Boro rice cultivation when Bangladesh uses 60 percent of the crop production input.

Apart from urea, the government also plans to sign a contract with Egypt to import Diammonium Phosphate and Triple Super Phosphate fertilisers.

Contacted by The Daily Star recently, Ahmed Faisal Imam, additional secretary for the fertiliser management and monitoring branch at the agriculture ministry, said the country currently has urea stocks until June, while non-urea fertiliser stocks will last until October. "There is no fertiliser crisis at present."

Molten alien planet

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"The planet lacks distinct structure within its magma ocean, so there is no crust, upper mantle and lower mantle. The magma ocean is a single deep, mushy layer," said Harrison Nicholls, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Cambridge Institute of Astronomy and lead author of the research published on Monday in the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

Small crystals of solid rock may be trapped within the turbulent fluid magma comprising the mantle, Nicholls said.

The planet's metallic core appears to be relatively small, with the magma ocean comprising 70-90 percent of the planetary interior radius – reaching a depth between 2,775 and 3,565 miles (4,465-5,740 km). Its thick atmosphere is composed primarily of hydrogen, but has a very high sulfur content.