

COVER STORY

A BUNDLE OF JOY

Popular actor, model, television show host and lawyer Peya Jannatul came to the limelight in 2007 after winning the title of 'Miss Bangladesh' that year. In October, she revealed that she is expecting her first child, who is to arrive on February. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, she opens up about her pregnancy, how she maintains the balance between her personal and professional lives, and how she is where she is today.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we are here with one of our favourite guests, Peya Jannatul. How are you doing, Peya?

Peya Jannatul: I'm doing well. As many may already know, I am going to be a mother soon. I will begin a new phase of life in a very turbulent situation, so I would say that I'm both happy and slightly unnerved.

Rafi Hossain: Have you given your baby a name yet?

Peya Jannatul: As my baby is a boy, I have decided to name him Eros, after the Greek God.

Rafi Hossain: I recently saw your beautiful pregnancy photo shoot. Are you working much at this time?

Peya Jannatul: The photo shoot was a collaboration with Zurhem. As for work, I'm doing some photo shoots, mostly motherhood related. I'm trying not to do much work because it's quite difficult to maintain hygiene at the sets. Other than that, I'm also going to the court and looking after my businesses.

Rafi Hossain: How are you managing all this?

Peya Jannatul: As I have not been having any complication related to pregnancy, this doesn't seem like too much for me. Pregnancy is different for everybody, but it hasn't been very difficult for me since I had the mindset that pregnancy is a beautiful thing and that I should enjoy the time instead of putting a pause on everything.

Rafi Hossain: During this time, have you ever thought that it would have been better if you had decided to give birth at a later period in time since having children is a little stigmatised in the modelling and glamour industries?

Peya Jannatul: I have been modelling for a while now, and I have never let that interfere with my personal life. I've always tried to maintain a balance between my personal and professional lives and not excelled at one at the expense of the other. It's been six and a half years since I got married, so I want to expand my family and I think that this is the right time for me. There is this pressure that society creates for women to marry and have children early, but I think that it is completely fine if they don't want to do either. It should be their choice. Regarding my work, I think



that they can simply avoid seeing. Everybody is entitled to their opinion but that doesn't give them the right to harass someone else over it. I think that these people can't handle the fact that there can be strong independent women. With my work, I can't distance myself from social media, similar to others coming from my place. So, it's high time we speak up against these and take action.

Rafi Hossain: If we talk about modelling, where do you think the industry is headed towards?

Peya Jannatul: The pandemic made progress slow for all industries. If I'm talking about modelling, I think that it's headed in the right path. Many local brands are coming up that hire models to promote their products which didn't happen a few years ago.

Rafi Hossain: Is there something you want to tell *The Daily Star* family?

Peya Jannatul: If there is a column in *The Daily Star* where women can ask questions, legal advice or counselling and public figures can answer those questions and help them, I would love to extend my services to that column.

Rafi Hossain: Has it ever been that you haven't been asked a specific question you wanted to answer in an interview for a newspaper or similar platforms?

Peya Jannatul: It has never been that I haven't been asked a question, rather they failed to put forward something specific to the audience fearing backlash and negative reactions. I understand that the society we live in cannot accept certain things, but I feel that if newspapers were bolder in publishing such content, it would help to make people more open-minded.

Rafi Hossain: Thank you for being here today, Peya. It was great talking to you like always. I wish you all the best in your career and hope you can reach new heights. Best of luck with your motherhood. Do you have a parting message?

Peya Jannatul: Thank you for having me here today and all the sweet wishes. I think the conversation we had today is very important, so I would encourage everyone to give it a listen. Take care and maintain good hygiene.

Amina Hossain

WARDROBE: CHANTILLY BY SELINA NUSRAT
JEWELLERY: JARWA HOUSE
STYLING: SELINA NUSRAT
LOCATION COURTESY: FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

that beauty should be embraced at all stages and pregnancy is also one of those stages.

Rafi Hossain: It takes courage and confidence to be where you are today and express yourself in the way you choose to do. What is courage and confidence to you?

Peya Jannatul: I was asked once what the bravest thing I've ever done is and I answered that it was leaving my house at sixteen after having a fight with my family. When I have a clear goal in mind and I am focused, everything falls into place. Being focused and working hard toward a goal is how one can achieve what they desire. The path won't always be smooth. There will be failures, but we have to learn from those and build our confidence. That is what courage and confidence is to me.

Rafi Hossain: It is still very difficult for a woman to be where you are today living in a society that is historically oppressive towards women. How did you find the courage to move out at sixteen?

Peya Jannatul: At that age, I wasn't as experienced as I am now, so I didn't entirely understand what I was doing and what the consequences of my actions would be. This is probably why I had the courage to do such a thing which I wouldn't have done if I had to at this age.

Rafi Hossain: This industry, like many others, tends to exploit naïve young women. How did you manage to keep yourself away from that?

Peya Jannatul: I was a little distanced from my family after moving to Dhaka, so my friends were my biggest guidance. I always mixed with the right crowd, so they kept me from going astray. My husband, boyfriend at that time, also played a huge role in it. Newcomers in the industry and young people, in general, face the issue

of being misguided by peers and people around them. I've received hundreds of messages from people asking for advice in this front and I try my best to help them.

Rafi Hossain: Have you ever thought of officially providing counselling for people like them?

Peya Jannatul: I have plans on starting something like that but establishing such welfare organisations involves a lot of paperwork. I hope I can do it.

Rafi Hossain: There is a stigma surrounding professions involving media and the entertainment industry as being unrespectable. What are your thoughts on it?

Peya Jannatul: People can do less than respectable things coming from any profession, so I don't understand the stigma. There's prejudice against people working in the entertainment industry in our country, causing people to have a negative attitude towards them no matter what they do. If you check the comment section of the pictures I upload on my socials, you'll see many people leave terrible comments regardless of what I'm wearing or doing. I don't understand why they have to leave nasty comments on something



New year new Mim



On the first day of the new year, actor Bidya Sinha Mim starring drama, *Hello Baby*, was released. The drama was directed by Kajal Arefin Ome, and Tahsan Khan starred alongside Mim. She will also be seen in a web film, *What The Fry*, which will be shown on the streaming platform ZEE5. This project was directed by Anam Biswas. Mim also began shooting for a Raihan Rafi film, *Damal*, in which Siam will be seen alongside her. Aside from this, the actor is also awaiting the release of her film *Poran*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

Imran's new songs

At the beginning of the new year, musician Imran Mahmudul released two new songs. One of them, *Tumi Pashe Thakle*, was written by Faisal Rabbikin and was released through *G Series*. The other song, titled *Jodi Ekdin*, was written by Robiul Islam Jibon. It was released through *Laser Vision*. Imran said, "I am delighted at the support my fans have given me throughout the pandemic. I received love for my music on different platforms, be it in audio or in movies. I hope that the audiences will like the two new songs."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub



Shibli's new venture

Latiful Islam Shibli has been someone behind a lot of Bangla music hits from the 90s. He has worked with some of the country's top musicians from that time, including the likes of James, Ayub Bachchu and Tapan Chowdhury among many others. Now, he is busy with a different venture as he will be acting as the goodwill ambassador for *Fight Club BD* for the next two years. Aside from this, his fifth novel, *Frontline*, will also be released in the next *Boi Mela*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub



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