

Bangladesh will always be my first priority

Jaya Ahsan

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Jaya Ahsan is undoubtedly one of the most beloved film and television stars in our country. The National Award winner is also extremely popular in Tollywood, and is the recipient of many Indian film awards as well. The diva is currently busy with multiple projects, and is presently residing in Kolkata for work. In a conversation with The Daily Star, she shared her upcoming plans and ventures.

There have been discussions about Tollywood actresses not getting enough roles because of the high demand for Bangladeshi artistes in the industry. What do you have to say about it?
This is absolutely not true, and I haven't heard anyone talking about this. Everyone is bound to receive praise if they make earnest endeavors, and I think good efforts should be appreciated.
Recognition is always given to those who truly deserve them. Tollywood has equally praised me and assigned me the work that I deserve. The producer of "Bishorjon" and "Bijoya" said that I had deserved those roles and this is why he worked with me.

People from Kolkata cherish me greatly, and they have invited me to go there. However, as I am first and foremost a representative of my country, Bangladesh will always be my first priority.

Film stars are often subject to various rumours surrounding their personal lives. How do you react when you are faced with baseless rumours as such?
I do get upset by such false news, as both an artist and a human being. However, I have learned to ignore such rumours. It is everyone's responsibility to be mindful of such news.
From Babita apa's era, an amicable relationship between journalists and artistes has persisted, and it should always be that way. A country's cultural image is harmed if an artist's image is tarnished, so it is necessary that journalists are more mindful of what they report.

According to you what are the qualities of an accomplished director?
I don't have the perfect definition of an 'accomplished' director.
If one can stay true to their culture and can reach their audience sincerely, he or she is an accomplished director in my opinion. In the end, it does not matter how many people have watched the movie, or how much money the movie has earned.

All that matters is that the movie has a compelling story and is able to make history. For example, even after decades, we still tell the story of Ritwik Ghatak. Only time will tell whether the work of a director will be remembered or not.

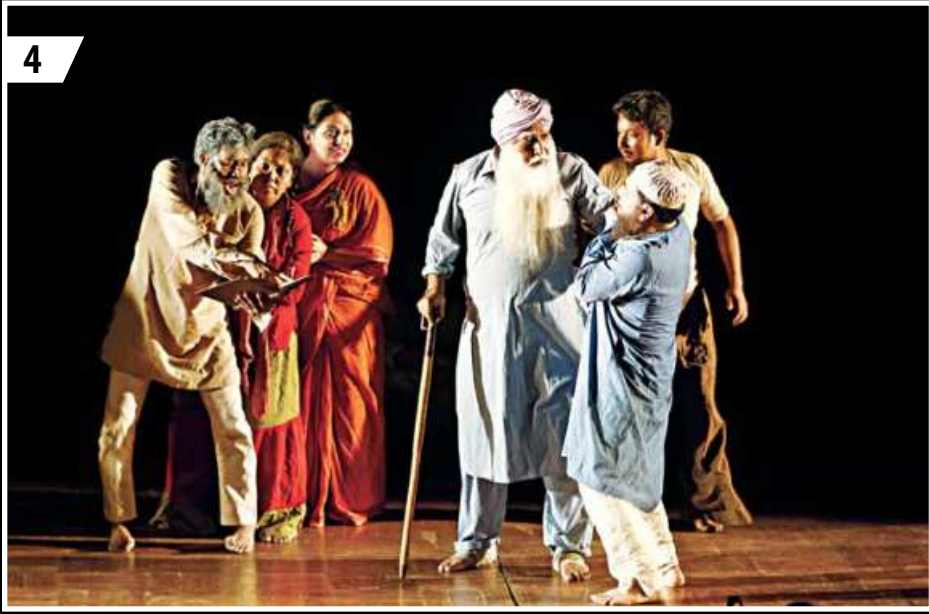
The Bengali film industries on both sides of the border are going through tough times. Many cinema halls have already shut down. Do you think that the scarcity of good movies and the introduction of other platforms have anything to do with this?
I actually think the primary reason behind this crisis is the pandemic. It has not only affected our country, but the whole world has come to a standstill because of Covid-19.

I will not say that there aren't any good movies, but priorities change during such an intensely worrying situation.
People firstly need to fulfil their fundamental needs such as food, accommodation, clothes, before they can enjoy entertainment.

I am an optimistic person and I do believe that everything will gradually become normal. I have a lot of projects under my belt, and I'm currently trying to concentrate on those.
"Bini Sutoy" is being shown here in numerous cinema halls in Kolkata for the past 50 days. Though it is not a commercial movie, the audience is has received the film with open arms.



PHOTO: JAYA AHSAN'S FACEBOOK



The ninth installment of the Ganga Jamuna Cultural Festival kicked off at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on October 1. Even though the event could not feature theatre troupes from India this year owing to the pandemic, renowned and upcoming troupes from all over the country are showcasing their talent in the festival. Here is a photo gallery from the event, which will run till October 12.



"Jonoker Mrittu Nei" by Zela Shilpakala Academy paid homage to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

(1) "Jyotisongita" by Jibon Sonket Natya Goshti. (2) After months of inactivity, the audience got to enjoy live theatre in a major capacity. (3) Swapnadal performing "Hellen Keller". (4) Bhager Manush" by Somoy. (5) "Shoto Nari Ek Purush" by Rangana Natya Goshti. (6) "Bornochora" by Moitri Natya Goshti. (7) Aranyak Natya Dal's "Kohe Facebook".

PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

Translating Sultan through medium and philosophy

MORMEE MAHTAB

Dinar Sultana Putul is a contemporary artist based in Bangladesh whose art practices focus on the quasi-scientific research and documentation of organic mediums and materials that explore various themes surrounding the nature. In the ongoing exhibition "Imaginary of the Common: 50 years of Sultan's Oeuvre" at Bengal Shipalay, Dinar is exhibiting an installation project, which provides a unique tool to delve into the psyche of the revered artist, S M Sultan. Her project, "Madhyom O Darshon" (Medium and Philosophy) consists of a repertoire of organic elements extracted from nature, including clay, jute, and charcoal, which S M Sultan extensively used for his art.

"Not much has been recounted about the specific materials and mediums that Sultan used for his paintings in the available films or interviews. Bearing that in mind, I have attempted to provide a visual representation of these elements to help the viewers understand the depths of his colour-making process," says Dinar. "His unique philosophy of opting for elements available in nature to overcome the barrier of the limitations of medium and material is evident in the earthen colour palette that is central in most of this works. His use of flower extracts and jute define his simplistic approach to life along with his relationship with the ordinary people of Bengal."

The installation provides an essence of the process and philosophy of Sultan's greatest art works, making his paintings more alive while stretching the parameters of imagination of its viewers.

"Through this project, I didn't aim to provide my own interpretation of Sultan's work; rather, I merely consider myself as a translator of his practice, philosophy, and beliefs to the viewers," adds Dinar. Owing to his earlier influence her



Dinar Sultana Putul. PHOTO: COURTESY

my work, she began revisiting Sultan upon coming back to Bangladesh, going through his paintings and his interviews as his philosophy aptly resonated with hers.

"I noticed that the inherent value of art didn't require me to look for external subjects. Rather, it was present in nature itself. Believing in the philosophy that nature cannot be tamed by humans and that nature that holds power over us, I began translating the materiality of nature into my work taking exploring within the richness of my own history and culture," she explains.

After finishing her Bachelor's in Painting from Visva Bharati University of Santiniketon and her Post-Graduate at Maharaja Sayajirao University in Gujrat, she researched and experimented in the preparation of organic colours extracted from nature, including seeds, barks, roots and flowers. Using the same organic techniques, she learned to make paper from different natural filers from flower-based pulp, agricultural crops, paper pulp, earth colours and the wasted parts after extraction of colour. Moreover, using the motifs from

Kantha and Terracotta, she developed a process of researching the various hues, textures, surfaces that is found in nature documenting it all in her work.

"During my years at Santiniketon, the co-relationship that I formed with the nature automatically generated ideas in my mind that influenced the subjects for my painting. My gradual pursuit towards preparing organic art materials developed into an art movement that stood against using material and medium that went against the nature."

Dinar has exhibited her work in Korean Youth Festival, Asian Art Biennale, National Art Exhibition at Shilpakala Academy, Kochi Art Biennale, Pune Art Biennale and



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many more events. Along with that, she has participated in the Sonalika Residency Programme at Delhi, Kalakriti Art Programme in Hyderabad, and International Environmental art camp at Rajasthan. She has also received the Lalit Kala Gujarat State Art Award in 2016.

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