

Motherhood is rewarding, but difficult: Pori Moni

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Ever since Pori Moni and Sariful Razz had their son, Shaheem Mohammad Rajya, he has been the centrepiece of their lives. The actress, who is busy with her blissful motherhood, was last seen with her family at Chorki Carnival, a celebration of the platform's first year.

The actress talks to The Daily Star about her life, return to acting, and more.

How are you doing?

By the grace of the Almighty, I am doing very well. He has been very kind to me, and that is why I was given the biggest blessing of my life, my son Rajya. I am on cloud nine with Razz and Rajya.

How do you spend your time nowadays?

I have devoted all my time to Rajya. I am talking to you just after I put him to sleep. Even though I don't remember much from my own childhood, when I see him play, smile and infectiously laugh, I feel like my mother must have felt the same way when I was little. I always miss my mother, but after Rajya was born, I started to miss her even more. However, I feel like she is always watching over me.

Your son is two months old now.

Razz and I want to spend his 'birthday' every month, so we will be spending his second 'birthday' today. We will do the same for the 10th day of every month. After he

is a year old, we will have a grand celebration with our loved ones from both sides of the family, and I am already excited for that!

Have you thought about returning to acting?

I don't plan on returning before he is a bit older. After he is at least a year old, I will



definitely return, but until then, I want to spend all my time with him.

What do you call your son?

I call him Rajya, but sometimes when I call him that, Razz answers! I am always amused when that happens, but I do call him Shaheem sometimes, to avoid confusion.



Ishita's mother passes away after battle with cancer


ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Jahanara Rashid, the mother of renowned actress Rumana Rashid Ishita, is no more. She passed away round 7:30 am yesterday at her residence in Uttara. Ahsan Habib Nasim, President of Actors' Equity

Bangladesh confirmed the news to the media.

For almost 3 years, Ishita's mother was fighting with cancer. According to Nasim, she will be buried at their family cemetery in Savar.



For nearly 60 years, Dove has encouraged women to see beauty as a source of confidence and not anxiety. Dove firmly believes that beauty is not defined by narrow definitions of shape, size or color, but is unique to each individual. But in most of the world, women still suffer from their own – and others' – preconceived misconceptions of beauty.

This is what led to the creation of the Dove Self-Esteem Project, which began in 2004; the embodiment of Dove's beliefs put into action. And by 2022, Dove has reached 1 lac contacts through its self-esteem modules, which were co-developed with international experts.

On October 11th on International Day of the Girl Child 2021, Dove partnered with PLAN International to launch the Dove Self Esteem Project in Bangladeshi schools, aiming to educate students, parents and peer leaders about the importance of having high self-esteem and building the next generation with full confidence.

Dove Bangladesh will send Unilever Employees to different schools to help build the self-esteem of the young generation, keeping this year's theme **"Our time is now – our rights, our future"** in mind.

By 2030, Dove Bangladesh aims to reach 5 million Bangladeshi young people with self-esteem education, helping them become more confident about themselves and, in turn, feel as beautiful as they really are.

NEWS

Violence ahead of polls raising concerns

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Asaduzzaman said police have some regular duties to carry out, for which they sometimes have to visit the homes of citizens. This is mostly done by members of the Special Branch of the police.

"When they get reports that some people have gone missing, the members of the Special Branch visit their families to investigate. It's their routine work, nothing else."

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the government has "no intention to violate human rights".

"[But] The government has the right to protect property and human lives. It has the right to take action if anyone, in the name of human rights, destroys property, gets involved in arson and kills people," he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The New York-based global rights watchdog called for the government to respect the rule of law and protect opposition supporters' right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

It said election campaigns in Bangladesh are often accompanied

by violence, but the authorities have failed to properly investigate and prosecute members and supporters of the ruling Awami League, who have targeted the opposition's public meetings and assaulted participants.

Meenakshi Ganguly, HRW's South Asia director, said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has repeatedly said that Bangladesh is a mature democracy capable of conducting elections and a peaceful transition of power, but instead previous polls have been marked by violence, attacks on the opposition, and voter intimidation.

"These recent cases of political attacks and arrests set an ominous tone for the upcoming parliamentary election."

The HRW said at least four people have reportedly died and hundreds have been injured in clashes between police, supporters of the BNP, and those of the AL, since August 22, 2022 -- when the opposition began a series of protests over fuel and commodity price hikes.

Quoting BNP leaders, the rights body said at least 20,000 cases have been filed against its supporters, in many of which the accused are

unnamed. "Law enforcers have used these open cases as warrants to raid the homes of the opposition members in what appears to be overt political harassment and intimidation."

The authorities are also increasingly targeting relatives of expatriate dissidents as a means to threaten critics into silence, it said.

The HRW said Bangladesh authorities appear poised to further extend the reach of their repression beyond the country's borders.

International human rights laws call for the authorities to uphold free expression and peaceful assembly.

In case "an assembly provokes or may provoke a hostile reaction from members of the public against participants", the state has a duty to allow the assembly to go ahead and to protect the participants.

"Bangladesh law enforcement is under increased scrutiny following the US's human rights sanctions and with the parliamentary elections on the horizon," Ganguly said.

"Diplomats in Bangladesh should raise concerns publicly and privately [saying] that such repression threatens the conditions for a free and fair election."

EC to lose NID job to home ministry

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the cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

There are 32 sections in the existing law. However, some of them have been left out of the proposed act, said Anwarul.

He said a unique identity will be issued to each citizen. Once the NID job is transferred to the Security Services Division, a unique ID number will be issued to each newborn at the time of birth, which will be their NID numbers, he added.

According to the cabinet secretary, it may take another two to three years to start issuing IDs to newborns.

He said fingerprints and iris scans will be collected from the newborns for the issuance of NID and those will be updated from time to time.

The cabinet yesterday asked the Legislative Division of the law ministry to review the draft law and place it again before the cabinet

after adding a few provisions, if needed.

Replying to a question, the cabinet secretary said the EC could use the NID of Security Services Division for preparing voter ID cards or it can develop its own mechanism.

Anwarul said there will be interoperability between the systems of different government organisations to use NID data from the Security Services Division. "It will not be open to all... only some selected organisations will get access to the data."

Currently, the Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration under the Local Government Division issues birth and death certificates.

Asked what would happen to the registrar general's office after the NID service job is given to the home ministry, the cabinet secretary said the officials concerned would sit to find a solution.

The environment, forest and climate change ministry placed the draft of the National Adaptation Plan (2023-2050) before the cabinet, incorporating 90 high priorities and 23 medium priorities in it to address climate change.

But the cabinet sent back the draft saying that it needed changes, said Anwarul.

The meeting also approved the draft of a bilateral agreement on direct flight operation between Bangladesh and Brunei.

The cabinet endorsed a proposal, placed by the foreign ministry, for Bangladesh's joining the Global Methane Pledge.

Anwarul said 50 countries have so far signed the pledge.

The Global Methane Pledge is a commitment to take voluntary actions to contribute to a collective effort to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030.

Gunfire, shelling again on Myanmar

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There have been reports of shelling and heavy gunfire in Myanmar close to the Bangladesh border over the last two months, as tensions between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army escalated into violent conflicts in Myanmar's Rakhine and southern Chin in June.

Earlier in November 2020, the two sides had reached a temporary ceasefire.

Talking to reporters yesterday, Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed, director general of the Border Guard Bangladesh, said the border guards have been on high alert along the border with Myanmar.

"The BGB has remained very watchful and taken up positions [along the border]," he said after visiting Tambru and other border outposts in Naikhongchhari upazila of Bandarban.

"Since this is an internal issue of Myanmar, it's their concern to deal with."

The BGB chief further said Myanmar's border guards agreed to

hold a flag meeting with them.

"The flag meeting is expected to take place very soon," he added.

Meanwhile, the local administration has formed committees with the ward members and councillors of the bordering areas as their heads to prevent any Rohingya from entering Bangladesh illegally.

"We have formed the committees based on blocks," Erfanul Hoque Chowdhury, acting upazila nirbahi officer of Teknaf, told this newspaper yesterday.

As a tense situation prevails in the bordering areas, these committees will be vigilant so that no Rohingya can enter Bangladesh crossing the Naf River, he said.

He further said the local administration is also keeping a watch over the families in the bordering areas.

GUNSHOTS, SHELLING

Jalal Ahmed, a member of ward no-1 of Whaikhyang union parishad, said the sound of gunfire was heard from

the Myanmar side around 11:00pm on Sunday. It continued till 8:30am yesterday.

"The people in the bordering area are now in a state of panic..." he said yesterday.

Those living close to the Tambru border also heard gunfire and shelling around 1:15am yesterday, said Dil Mohammad, chairman of the management committee at the Rohingya camp in no-man's land of the border.

Firing continued till 7:30am yesterday, he added.

Sayed Bashar, a resident of Konapara in Tambru bordering area, said he woke up to the sound of heavy gunfire around 3:30am yesterday.

AK Jahangir Aziz, chairman of Ghumdhum union parishad in Naikhongchhari upazila, said life in the bordering area was getting back to normal after gunfire and shelling in Myanmar stopped about 11 days ago.

But tensions again flared up in the area since Sunday night, he added.

Work together to overcome

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Bridge as it was built over the Madhumati while the third Shitalakkhya Bridge was named after AKM Nasim Osman as he was a valiant freedom fighter and he made great efforts to construct the bridge.

Hasina said the Awami League government also constructed the Shitalakkhya-1 and -2 bridges.

She said her government gave priority to developing the communication system, generating employment and expand trade and commerce to ensure the overall progress of Bangladesh.

With the opening of the newly constructed bridges, international links particularly with South Asian countries including Nepal, Bhutan and India would be strengthened further, the PM said, adding that this would help boost trade and commerce and the deprived areas of the country's south and south-western regions would also be developed further.

Hasina said her government has opened the country's Chattogram and Mongla seaports alongside the

international airports in Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet to friendly countries for mutual benefits.

She said her government with the help of the almighty Allah and courage from the people built the Padma Bridge with own finance, confronting all conspiracies including false allegations of corruption.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said her party always comes to power winning people's mandate through elections. "We were voted to power and we engaged ourselves in serving the people."

She said her party maintained the democratic process in the country.

The PM later exchanged views virtually with the people, local representatives and government officials from Narail, Gopalganj and Narayanganj.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki and Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh Essa Youssef Essa Al Duhaian also spoke at the function, moderated by PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus.