

Our love for all creation makes us humane: Jaya Ahsan

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SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Jaya Ahsan's exceptional talent and contributions to cinema have propelled her to widespread acclaim and popularity, solidifying her status as a celebrated actress in both Bangladeshi and Indian Bengali film industries. With an impressive record of receiving the National Film Award five times in Bangladesh and the Filmfare Award three times in India, she has firmly established herself as a powerhouse performer. Not confined to regional success, she has also made notable forays into Bollywood, further expanding her reach. Her international recognition soared with a memorable role in an Iranian film, marking her noteworthy debut on the global stage.

In addendum to her acting career, the actress is known for her deep affection for animals and is actively involved in advocating for their rights. She has been vocal about the welfare of animals and has campaigned for their rights. Due to her pronounced efforts, the High Court recently issued orders regarding the prohibition of the use of elephants in

recreational activities.

In a recent interview, Jaya Ahsan elaborated more about these issues with The Daily Star.

Urging people to consider issues often overlooked, the actress stated, "It is important to be mindful of our surroundings. I have confidence in the newer generation, in their inherent humane qualities. After all, humane qualities make a person human. Displaying compassion and care towards animals, including the stray dogs and cats found on the streets, is a shared responsibility that aligns with our humanity."

"If you look at the streets, you will often find elephants being mistreated, particularly in the context of extortion. For over a year and a half, I have been trying to address this issue. The culmination of my efforts resulted in a significant decision, notably due to the crucial verdict handed down by the High Court—thanks to Amil bhai and Saqeb."

"The stunts or labour that elephants are usually exploited for are extremely challenging and unethical. These animals get separated from their mothers at a young age and are subjected to harsh training methods, reminiscent of medieval practices. Such barbarism has no place in modern Bangladesh. Employing elephants to extort money, perform tricks, and engage in other various activities is not only illegal but also morally reprehensible," conveyed Jaya.

"Many a time, elephants have tragically lost their lives due to being exploited. In response, we appealed to the Forest Department and pursued legal action through the court. Obtaining the verdict was essential, and we



are pleased with the outcome. Barrister Saqeb Mahbub and his team, along with Rakibul Haque Amil, have played instrumental roles in this effort. Now, the next step is to ensure that the verdict is effectively implemented," the actress asserted.

The use of elephants, even under personal licenses, is now prohibited. Licenses for such purposes will not be granted, the

artiste further informed.

Elephants have even been utilised for weddings, commercial ventures, and political events. However, with the recent prohibition, these practices will come to an end. "The collaboration between the Forest Department and various NGOs has been instrumental in this change. Many countries, including Thailand and Bhutan, have established elephant sanctuaries, which serve as models for conservation efforts. Such initiatives are deemed necessary to protect these majestic animals," she continued.

"Some may question the source of livelihood for those who work with elephants. With the establishment of elephant sanctuaries, they can transition to working in these protected establishments. These sanctuaries can provide opportunities for mahouts, who work with, ride, and tend elephants, to continue their work more ethically and sustainably."

"It is imperative to protect nature for our well-being. Failure to do so could lead to disastrous consequences for humanity. Loving and respecting animals is not just a moral imperative but also essential for our collective survival," concluded the impassioned actress.



'90s sensation Ark returns, set to embark on world tour

Ark, the iconic '90s band renowned for chart-topping hits like *Sweetie*, *Taj Mahal*, *Ekaki*, and *Eto Kosto Keno Valobashay*, is making a triumphant return to the music scene after a hiatus.

The band is scheduled to headline a concert in Mymensingh, signaling the beginning of their much-anticipated world tour. Ark's global tour will kick off in the provincial city of Ajman, United Arab Emirates, expanding to United Kingdom, Canada, and various European countries, according to reports from Ajker Patrika.

The band is set to perform at the *Boishakhi Eid Anondo-2024* event organised by the UAE Youth Bangla Cultural Forum and Joy Bangla Cultural Alliance on April 20.

Chirkutt's Sumi to speak at University of South Florida

Chirkutt's Sharmin Sultana Sumi has gained recognition in the international music scene, promoting Bangladeshi culture and music on global platforms.

Recently, the singer shared good news for her fans, where she revealed that she will be organising a special class for music enthusiasts in Florida, USA.

She has been invited as a guest lecturer in a class of the School of Music Department of the University of South Florida, USA, on March 22. The class will be online, i.e. Zoom, in front of the participants.

Recently, Chirkutt mesmerised thousands of audiences at the Joy Bangla concert in Chittagong with their uplifting songs, drawing a large crowd.



NEWS

Govt moves to relax

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new section under section 98 (Ka) of the law so that vehicle owners get their vehicles insured.

According to section 60(1) of the existing act, it is optional for a vehicle owner to have the lives and assets of the passengers insured as per the capacity of the vehicle. However, making such insurance was mandatory under the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983 that became defunct following the enforcement of the Road Transport Act 2018.

As per section 81 of the existing act, an offender will face up to six months in jail or a fine of Tk 50,000 or both for manipulation of a vehicle's milometer. Once the amendment is approved, the punishment for the offence would be three-month jail or a Tk 20,000 fine or both.

Section 89 of the act stipulates that a lawbreaker will face up to three months in jail or a fine of Tk 25,000 or both for operating a vehicle that pollutes environment. Once the law is amended, the punishment would be one month's jail or a fine of Tk 10,000 or both.

As per section 92 (1) of the act, an offender will face three months' jail sentence or a fine of Tk 10,000 for violating some traffic rules, including ban on drunk driving, operating vehicles against traffic, and operating bikes without wearing helmets.

Once the law is amended, the punishment for these offences would be one month's jail sentence or a fine of Tk 10,000 or both.

The amendment also proposes cutting the fines for operating vehicles with fake licence and without licence, not displaying fare charts inside commercial vehicles, disobeying traffic signs and lights and illegal parking.

Currently, the offences stipulated under sections 84, 98, and 105 of the act are non bailable. Once the law is amended, the offences under sections 84 and 98 would be bailable.

Section 84 deals with the punishment for illegally changing the technical specifications of a vehicle, while section 98 stipulates the punishment for accidents due to overloading of vehicles and reckless driving.

Illegal and unscientific modification of vehicles and

overloading are considered major reasons for road accidents and mobile courts do not have the jurisdiction to check such offences. Overloading is also a major reason for damages to roads and bridges.

Jatiya Sangsad passed the Road Transport Act in September 2018 following a student movement for road safety. But the law did not come into force until November 2019.

Immediately after the act was passed, transport workers called strikes twice demanding changes in the law.

Against this backdrop, a committee consisting of the ministers of law, home and railways ministries was formed in February 17, 2019, to look into how the act can be implemented.

When the government took the initiative to enforce the law in November 2019, transport associations called strikes again demanding changes to several sections of the law.

Their main demands include making all offences under the law bailable and reducing the fines stipulated under different sections.

The government then decided not to make several sections of the act effective.

The Road Transport and Highways Division in April 2021 prepared a draft of the amended law following recommendations from the three-minister committee.

Although leaders of the transport owners' and workers' platforms have been demanding amendments to the law, the government took time, sources at the associations and the ministries said.

As per the April 2021 draft, at least 29 out of the total 126 sections of the act were supposed to be amended considering at least eight things, including the definition of heavy or medium vehicles.

Fines stipulated under 11 sections and sentences under four sections were supposed to be reduced as per the draft.

The Daily Star could not confirm whether any changes were made to the previous draft.

Yesterday, the prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to build one cold storage in each of the eight divisions to preserve agricultural products, said the cabinet secretary.

6 Bangladeshis

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a complaint with the police to get back our original passports from the employer and filing a claim with the labour department for their arrears," Jahurul said.

According to the Malaysian newspaper Free Malaysia Today, Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Human Resources Minister Steven Sim last month said that employers who withhold workers' passports and fail to pay them wages must face legal action under the Immigration Act 1959/63 and the Employment Act 1955.

The comments came after a report that a company in Cheras, which recruited 94 Bangladeshi workers, had failed to provide them with jobs, proper living quarters or adequate food.

A leading light

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was found hanging inside the room, his brother and celebrated dancer Shibli Mohammad told the daily Prothom Alo.

Renowned dancer Shamim Ara Nipa told The Daily Star that Sadi died by suicide.

His demise marks a profound loss to the world of music, leaving behind a legacy of timeless melodies that will forever resonate in the hearts of his admirers.

Sadi was the recipient of the Channel i Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012 and Bangla Academy's Rabindra Award in 2015.

Shibli, who was recently awarded Ekushey Padak, credited his brother Sadi as one of his greatest inspirations to his life.

"As a family, we were all inclined to different cultural practices, and my brother is one of my biggest inspirations after my mother," he told this newspaper earlier this week.

"He is one of the finest Rabindra Sangeet exponents of our time, and I used to sing with him too."

Sadi, who pursued his studies in Rabindra Sangeet at Visva-Bharati University in India, was the son of Liberation War martyr Salimullah and Jebunnesa Salimullah.

His body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Amendment bill in next JS session

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trade unions because of stringent conditions. The rules for trade union registration are also tough, they said.

For instance, 20 percent of workers' signatures are required for the formation of a trade union in any factory, which is quite a tall task amid intimidation of losing their jobs from their employers.

The labour law was amended in the parliament in November last year and was sent to President Mohammed Shahabuddin for his approval.

But the president returned the amended labour law as some clauses were objectionable. So, the law was not amended.

The labour law will be amended in consultation with the members of the tripartite committee that includes the representatives of workers, owners and government, said Anisul Huq, the law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister.

In response to the criticism, Huq said the number of workers required

for trade union registration has been reduced from 20 percent to 15 percent in the industrial sector and from 30 percent for other sectors in the proposed labour law amendment bill.

Rules have been incorporated in the proposed amendment for doubling the penalty for unfair treatment towards trade unions, tripling the penalty for illegally closing factories and quadrupling the penalty for child labour.

The government is determined to create a labour friendly environment and is taking all necessary steps, Huq said.

He also highlighted the progress of Bangladesh in four areas: legal reforms, trade union registration, labour-related inspections and other rights of workers in light of the road map (2021-26) adopted by the government to improve the lives and livelihoods of the working people of Bangladesh.

The posts of factory inspectors

have been increased by two and a half times, while inspection modules have been introduced with the help of digital technology.

The quality of inspectors has visibly improved as they were provided with standard training.

More than 20,000 inspections were conducted in factories and establishments in the last six months of 2023 alone, Huq told the ILO meeting.

Moreover, despite having its own advanced inspection system in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs), the directorate of factory inspection under the ministry of labour has also started inspections to improve standards.

A total of 13 labour courts are now functioning.

Apart from this, a high-powered alternative dispute resolution cell has been launched. The cell has disposed of more than 90 percent of arbitration applications so far, Huq added.

Bhutto's formula for transfer of power

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be transferred to the Awami League in the East and the PPP in the West. He was quoted as saying, "Idhar hum, Udhar tum" (we here, you there).

He added that the rule of the majority for the whole country would become applicable only if the six-point demand was dropped. Since that is not being done, the rationale and logic of this six-point demand necessitates agreement of the majority parties of both the wings, said Bhutto.

Bhutto outright dismissed the Awami League's allegation that the date of the National Assembly's session was set by president General Yahya Khan after consulting him. He swore by the "Kalima" and his children that the president did not consult him about convening the National Assembly session.

On the same day, Bhutto met Yahya in Karachi. Commenting on the incident, Bhutto wrote in his book "The Great Tragedy" that he told Yahya that Mujib's demands for transfer of power and the lifting of

martial law were acceptable to his party, but the modalities of these had to be worked out on the basis of a common agreement.

MUJIB'S NEW DIRECTIVES

Bangabandhu, in his new directive issued on March 14, 1971, called upon the people to continue the non-cooperation movement. He further stated that the people showed how to resist the oppressors' conspiracy.

Referring to the new martial law order, Bangabandhu mentioned that the people would persist in their struggle despite such attempts at intimidation, as they knew that no force could withstand the united strength of the people.

Bangabandhu issued 35-point directives on the future course of the non-cooperation movement. He suspended the collection of income taxes by the central government and prohibited the remittance of customs and excise duties and sales taxes, which were usually sent to the central government.

KISSINGER'S ASSESSMENT

Henry Kissinger, the US president's

assistant for national security affairs, wrote in his memorandum to president Nixon: "It is not necessary for us to shift to a more activist approach now, since Yahya knows we favor unity and is doing everything possible to achieve a political settlement."

Referring to Yahya's upcoming visit to East Pakistan, Kissinger suggested three possible outcomes: 1) Yahya could decide not to take Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's challenge lying down and retaliate, perhaps to the extent of arresting Rahman and other leaders, and attempting to clamp a military lid on East Pakistan. 2) A static waiting game could develop, with neither the army nor the civilians prepared to take a bold initiative to break the deadlock, each hoping the other will break first. 3) There might be more tactical political moves by Yahya, Rahman, or Bhutto designed to probe for areas of accommodation and buy more time without giving up anything.