

I am not afraid to voice out:

SADIA AYMAN



PHOTOS:
SHEIKH MEHEDI
MORSHED

In the vibrant landscape of Bangladesh's entertainment industry, a new voice of courage and conviction has emerged. Sadia Aymán, a talented young actress, has not only captivated audiences with her performances but has also become an inspiration for many with her outspoken nature and commitment to truth.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Sadia Aymán first gained recognition through her roles in various television dramas. Her performance in the film *Kajol Rekha* earned her critical acclaim. However, it's not just her acting prowess that has caught the public's attention. Recently, the rising star has come into the spotlight for her bold stance on social issues, particularly during the recent anti-discrimination student movement in the country.

"From childhood, I cannot tolerate injustice," Sadia states, explaining her propensity to speak out. "I've always been straightforward. Everyone close to me knows this. I am not afraid to speak the truth."

This courage was evident when Sadia posted about the death of Abu Sayed, despite warnings from those close to her. "Many people close to me said not to post such things, that it could cause problems later. But there's nothing to fear in telling the truth. So, I posted courageously, expressing my feelings," she explains.

Sadia's outspokenness extended to the student movement, where she actively supported the protesters through social media. When asked about her expectations from the new interim government, she doesn't mince words: "I have many expectations. Let the country be free from corruption. Let society be free from corruption. Those who have been punished in false cases, those who have disappeared—let there be justice for them."

Her advocacy hasn't been without risks. During the height of the protests, Sadia's parents



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were concerned for her safety. "My parents were afraid. They told me to delete the statuses I had posted. I explained to them that I hadn't written anything wrong. I wrote the truth," she recounts.

When some senior artistes from the industry visited the state television station BTV after it was vandalised, Sadia didn't hesitate to criticise their actions (crying for inanimate objects) on social media. "I always respect and honour them as seniors," she clarifies, "but I felt compelled to speak out."

The actress is also committed to her profession as she attended her last shooting on July 18, amidst the protests. "We were all scared and anxious throughout the shooting day," she remembers. "When returning home late at night, people appeared in front of my car and checked it. However, they were not students."

Currently, Sadia is spending time at home, reading books and watching television with her family. "I'm reading Humayun Ahmed's books. I have a collection of his works at home. I have also collected Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's books yesterday. I'll read those too," she shares.

Liaquat Ali Lucky resigns from Shilpakala Academy



Following the recent downfall of the former government following the anti-discrimination student movement, many heads of different public organisations, including universities, Bangladesh Bank, and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, have resigned from their longstanding posts.

In lieu of that, Liaquat Ali Lucky, who served as the director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) for over a decade, stepped down from his position yesterday (August 12).

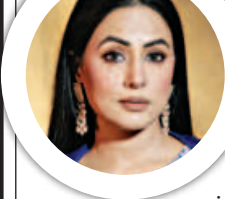
On Monday, Lucky submitted his resignation to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, as confirmed by Salahuddin Ahmed, secretary, BSA. The resignation was submitted via WhatsApp, the secretary informed The Daily Star.

Liaquat Ali Lucky was first appointed as director general of BSA on April 7, 2011.

His tenure was extended for the seventh time on March 29, 2023. No one else has held this position for such an extended period in the institution's history.

I pray for the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh: Hina Khan

Indian actress Hina Khan has spoken out about the violence against Bangladeshi Hindus following the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime.



Amid the unrest, Hina Khan tweeted about the violence targeting "Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh."

The actor, currently receiving treatment for breast cancer, expressed, "Every innocent death is the death of humanity, and it is beyond any caste or religion. No community should go through such horrific acts, what's wrong is wrong. Preserving the minorities of any country is the symbol of their collective community nature."

"My heart goes out to every individual who's suffering all around the world. Because, for me, humanity comes first. I pray that the Hindus and other minorities of Bangladesh remain safe in their own country," she added.

NEWS

'Let's begin anew from the ruins'

FROM PAGE 1
deprivation instead of rights, persecution instead of justice, and torture instead of protection have become normal affairs. But we did not want such a society and state. Standing on the ruins, we have to start a new journey," he said.

"We need to reestablish the destroyed, distorted and polluted values. This challenge is very big. From today, everyone will find the judiciary on your side in every good, auspicious and benevolent work," the chief justice added.

A minute's silence in memory of those killed in recent violence was observed at the beginning of the reception, organised by Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman and Supreme Court Bar Association President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon at the Appellate Division's Courtroom-1.

Appellate Division's Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, judges of the High Court Division and SC lawyers were present on the occasion in the packed courtroom.

At the beginning of his speech, the chief justice expressed his

gratitude and deep respect to those who sacrificed their lives in the mass upsurge, including students Abu Sayed, Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho and Md Wasim Akram.

He also prayed for the salvation of their souls and wished the injured students and others a speedy recovery.

The chief justice congratulated people from all walks of life, who gave their full support to the student movement.

Speaking about the judicial system, he said preserving integrity and preventing injustice are the eternal responsibility of the judiciary, one of the three organs of the state.

He assured his colleagues of all-out support. "Whoever does good will be rewarded. But no deviation will be tolerated," he remarked.

"I am aware that I've been given the responsibility of the chief justice. Apart from the Supreme Court, the district judiciary is the largest and most extensive field of the judicial system. My greatest strength is my fellow judges working in the subordinate judiciary. The general public usually perceive the district courts as the judiciary.

"I'm telling my colleagues, 'I am with you'. You should not be wary of any unfair pressure and intimidation. Discharge your duties sincerely without any fear.

"We are all aware that the judiciary is not free from the state of crisis in the country. But this historic moment of students' victory has brought us a golden opportunity to stand by the oppressed and tortured people. We must always see to it that we take full advantage of this opportunity," he added.

Earlier, Attorney General Asaduzzaman said the souls of all the victims of murder, disappearance, torture and oppression are looking at the new chief justice and waiting for justice. "Like the entire country, I also hope you [chief justice] will not frustrate them," he said.

"The brave students, their parents, and their well-wishers raised their demands from the streets to make you the chief justice. This love is rare, this love is priceless. I can be proud of this love, isn't it right?" the attorney general said.

SCBA President Khokon in his speech urged the chief justice to ensure an independent judiciary.

Scrap cases under CSA, DSA

FROM PAGE 12
incidents. At the same time, the Editors' Council believes that unethical and sycophantic journalism should be avoided in favour of professionalism," it said.

The statement also highlighted that the previous government had taken various steps to stifle and regulate freedom of speech, creativity, and the independent press industry, enacting several restrictive laws.

"These laws include the Data Protection Act (Draft) 2022, Digital, Social Media and OTT Regulation 2021 (Draft), Media Workers (Conditions of Service) Act 2022 (Draft), National Online Media Policy 2017, and The Press Council (Amendment) Act, 2022 (Draft), all of which should be repealed immediately," the statement read.

As in the past, efforts to impose restrictions on public and private advertisements in newspapers should be stopped, the statement said, adding that all activities of the Department of Films and Publications (DFP), a government agency, must be transparent and made public.

It further called for the Press Council to be reconstituted and made an effective body and for the removal of all obstacles to independent journalism.

These calls were made during a meeting of the Editors' Council on August 10, presided over by its President, Mahfuz Anam, also the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

The meeting was attended by Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Prothom Alo;

Tasmima Hossain, editor of Ittefaq; Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age and senior vice-president of the Editors' Council; Shamsul Huq Zahid, editor of The Financial Express; Altamash Kabir, editor of Sangbad; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor and publisher of Bonik Barta; Zafar Sobhan, editor of Dhaka Tribune and also a joint secretary of the Editors' Council; Alamgir Mohiuddin, editor of Naya Diganta; Alamgir Hossain, editor of Samakal; Mostafa Mamun, editor of Desh Rupantor; Mostafiz Shafi, editor of Pravidiner Bangladesh; and Shahriar Karim, executive editor of Sangbad.

Daily Purbokone Editor Dr M Ramiz Uddin Chowdhury and Suprobhat Bangladesh Editor Rusho Mahmud also attended the meeting virtually.

BB loses Tk 55cr in forex deals

FROM PAGE 12
bank inspection report.

When Bangladesh Bank announced the crawling peg exchange rate system, the exchange rate of the dollar jumped to Tk 117 from Tk 110.

The loss occurred because the central bank sold dollars at Tk 110 to Islami Bank but bought them from the bank for Tk 117 per dollar, the report said.

The forex deals were done by two BB officials to help Islami Bank, The Daily Star has learnt from officials informed with the proceedings.

The two officials sold and bought

dollars after the crawling peg system kicked in, the officials said on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media.

The reserve management and investment unit of the central bank could not provide any proper explanation for the forex deals, the inspection report said.

The inspection also unearthed that the signatures of the additional director and director of the Forex Reserve & Treasury Management Department were missing on documents of the deals.

This is a violation of the "reserve

management operation manual" of the central bank, the report said.

As per the manual, a copy of the note of the forex deals has to be sent to the mid-office and back-office branches, which was not done.

Contacted, BB spokesman Md Mezbaul Haque said, "The officials of the Forex Reserve & Treasury Management Department of BB are not interested in talking about the issue right now."

Islami Bank Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mohammed Monirul Moula did not respond to phone calls.

Controversial provisions

FROM PAGE 12
freedom of expression in the country.

The act replaced the much-criticised Digital Security Act of 2018, but many of the controversial provisions were retained or rephrased, raising questions about its implications for journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens.

In addition, Nahid said the youth must be actively involved in the ICT ministry.

"We are thinking about putting

together a specialised team with IT experts from home and abroad who are willing to work on novel ideas."

He said that it would be beneficial to reach out to Bangladeshi youths studying abroad and developing specific skill sets in order for them to return home and participate in the nation-building process.

"We are talking about overall structural reforms, which I hope will be implemented in all ministries."

The ICT adviser further said the ministry would start working again with startups whose funding was halted due to their support of the student movement.

He also said legal action would be taken against those involved in the countrywide shutdown of the internet during the student movement.

"Access to the free flow of information is a basic human right. Those involved in the internet shutdown committed human rights violations."

FROM PAGE 12
"There is no reason that our relationship with India will be affected for anyone's stay in India."

Touhid said the government will make sincere efforts to promote national reconciliation through inclusive dialogue and accountability.

The former foreign secretary said in a drastically changed scenario, all political parties are now free to express their views and opinions.

He said the government will ensure justice and accountability for all deaths and violence committed during the recent mass uprising through independent investigations and judicial process.

"In the process, the government will remain engaged with the international partners, including the UN, to avail itself of appropriate support for facilitating such processes in a sound and seamless manner."

The adviser said the interim government will work on essential policies and institutional reforms towards ensuring a democratic and prosperous future for the country.

He said the previous Awami League government in its efforts to suppress the popular movement committed gross human rights violations by abusing and misusing state power.

However, the sheer force of "people's power" added momentum to the movement, leading to the fall of the authoritarian regime, led by Sheikh Hasina, he added.

Touhid said the most pressing task before the interim government is to bring normalcy in the overall law and order situation, and the government is working towards that end.

Some diplomats expressed concern over the safety of their citizens and diplomatic premises.

He said ensuring safety and security of the diplomatic and consular premises and personnel is a core priority for the government.

The government is pledge-bound to ensure safety and security of all religious and ethnic groups, and it will not tolerate any violence or intimidation against them, he added.

"We said they [diplomats] should

not be frustrated about the current situation. Competent people are in charge of the economic sector. We assured them of protecting their investments and profits."

A diplomat told the adviser that young people brought a change in the country and they should have more representatives in the next parliament.

"I said there would be more young and women representatives in parliament in future."

About fake news in the media on religious minorities, Touhid said propaganda should be countered with facts.

"But we will not allow any violence or damages to occur. All those committing such crimes will be investigated."

Meanwhile, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong yesterday wrote on X that her country looks forward to working with Prof Yunus' interim government. She welcomed Yunus' calls for peace, order and justice.

"Australia will continue to support a democratic and inclusive future for all Bangladeshis," she said.