

# Would have gone myself if not for my two children: Pori Moni

**Pori Moni, who is one of the most vocal actresses in the country and a humanitarian by her own merits, has recently made a heartfelt plea to the nation, urging everyone to support those affected by the devastating floods that have ravaged parts of Bangladesh.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

While Pori Moni initially planned to visit the affected areas herself, she decided against it due to concerns for her two young children. Instead, she sent a team with essential supplies, including clothes, medicine, and food, to those in need.

"My heart aches for the flood victims," Pori Moni shared with The Daily Star in an exclusive interview. "These people are suffering through no fault of their own."

Pori Moni, who was always seen supporting the underprivileged, explained her decision to send a team rather than visit personally, citing concerns for her children. "With two small kids at home, I couldn't take the risk of travelling to the flood-hit areas."

However, the actress assembled a team of ten people who travelled to the affected regions to distribute aid. "My main concern was ensuring the assistance reached those who needed it directly. The team has been staying with the victims, providing clothes, medicine, and food."

Although initially hesitant to speak publicly about her efforts, the *Swapnajaal* famed actress decided to share her story to inspire others, who can come forward to help those in need. "I didn't want to make this public, but then I thought, if people see what I'm doing, it might encourage them to help as well."

If I were a flood victim, I would be desperate for any kind of assistance." She continued, "This is not the time to sit at home. We must all stand by the flood victims and offer whatever support we can, no matter how small."

The actress also expressed her admiration for the students and people who have been actively collecting and distributing aid at Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre (TSC). "The student community has shown incredible spirit in gathering supplies and

standing by the flood victims. This is the true essence of Bangladesh—everyone rushing to help in times of need."

Amid these challenging times, Pori Moni took a brief respite to celebrate her son Shahim Mohammad Punyo's second birthday in the Sundarbans, far from the ongoing unrest. Reflecting on the celebration, she said, "After the recent mass movement, we've all been through some tough days. I wanted to celebrate my son's birthday in a special way. Although I initially planned to invite journalists and close friends, we ended up having a quiet celebration in the Sundarbans."

She described the experience as deeply memorable. "In the Sundarbans, we explored the jungle, and my son and I had a wonderful time together. We even had matching outfits made, and Punyo was so happy. These are memories that will last a lifetime."

Despite the joyous occasion, Pori Moni faced criticism after sharing photos from the celebration. Addressing the negativity, she remarked, "No matter how much good you do, there will always be a small fraction of people who will criticise. But the majority, I would say 90%, will say positive things. If we focus on the negativity, we won't be able to move forward."

Reflecting on the state of the nation, Pori Moni acknowledged the gravity of the recent events, "The recent mass movement felt like an uprising. We've only gained independence once, and uprisings might have happened before, but it has happened successfully now. The credit goes to the students. My respect goes out to those who lost their lives, and may their souls rest in peace. We

will never forget their sacrifice."

As for her professional life, Pori Moni is cautious about returning to work. "I'll think about resuming work once the current political situation calms down. For now, I'm waiting for a more peaceful environment. The projects I've already worked on will be released soon."



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## Zayed Khan shocked by lawsuit

A lawsuit was filed against 50 people on Sunday, including three celebrities: Zayed Khan, Shariar Nazim Joy, and Sazu Khadem. The charges stem from an alleged attack on the motorcade of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the Fakirapool intersection in April 2015.



Upon discovering the news, Zayed spoke to the Daily Prothom Alo, from Canada, where he expressed, "I am shocked. The abrupt involvement of my name in this false case is deliberate."

In response to the case, he stated, "Every artist is entitled to their political beliefs; they should be personal and subjective. However, I have never engaged in anything improper or controversial."

## Bangladeshi short film 'Darkak' wins award at Shimla Int'l Film Festival

Zayed Siddiqui directorial short film *Darkak* has earned the Special Critics' Award at the 10th Shimla International Film Festival, India.

The festival took place from August 16 to 18 at the historic Gaity Theatre Cultural Complex in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India, where Siddiqui personally received the award on its concluding day.

Previously, *Darkak* also vied for the Best International Short Film Award at the festival.

On August 18, the award-winning filmmakers were honoured during the closing ceremony by the festival's chief guest, Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, according to a press release issued by the production company.

Adding to its success, *Darkak* has secured global distribution deals with Australia-based Screen Scope and US-based Seven Palms Entertainment, expanding its reach to international audiences.



# NEWS

## Cases against Hasina

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According to the case statement, Manju joined the protest called by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement on the road in front of Borobari Bazar on July 20. When some of the accused, being instructed by others, attacked and shot at the protesters, Manju suffered bullet wounds and died.

In Rangpur, another murder case has been filed against Hasina, along with 29 others, over the death of Merajul Islam, a fruit vendor, during the student movement on July 19.

Merajul's wife, Nazmim Islam, filed the case with the Metropolitan Magistrate Court. The court directed Kotwali Police Station to investigate the matter alongside the ongoing investigation into the incident, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Quader, Asaduzzaman, former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, former Commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police Md Moniruzzaman and former DIG of Rangpur Range Abdul Baten were among the accused.

Meanwhile, a case has been filed against 30 named persons, including M Iqbalur Rahim, a former AL lawmaker of Dinajpur-3 (Sadar) also a former whip of Jatiya Sangsad, over the death of a student during a protest in Dinajpur on August 4.

Faridul Islam, brother of deceased Rabiul Islam Rahul, filed the case with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station, accusing 300/400 unidentified persons too.

Rahul, 17, a student at Raniganj Ahiya Hossain School and College in Sadar upazila, received bullet wounds during a protest on August 4. He died from his injuries on August 10.

## Niaz Ahmed Khan

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Prof Niaz, who will be 30th VC of DU, has a distinguished career in academia and development management. He holds a PhD with distinction from the University of Wales Swansea and has earned numerous scholarships, including the UK Commonwealth Scholarship, according to IUB website.

He studied public (forest) policy studies at University of Oxford and natural resource management at Asian Institute of Technology.

Prof Niaz also served as the Bangladesh Country Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

## Roadmap for transition

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He said the chief adviser hinted at some reforms, but those cannot be implemented in a short time.

Fakhrul, however, expressed optimism that things are moving in a positive direction for the benefit of the people.

He said Yunus correctly stated that the timing of the election is a matter of political decision. "It will surely be a political decision. But for this decision to be made, the government needs to engage in discussions with political parties and politicians."

He hoped that the chief adviser would soon begin talks with the political parties.

Jatiya Party (Zafar) organised the discussion at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the ninth death anniversary of its founder Kazi Zafar Ahmed.

On Sunday evening, Yunus in his address to the nation assured that a free, fair, and participatory election would be arranged after completing necessary reforms in the administration, the judiciary, the Election Commission and electoral system.

Fakhrul yesterday said the BNP aims to give the interim government the opportunity to perform its duties.

He said people will not accept a return to the previous situation when they had lost all their rights.

"So, we are waiting with patience,

and the people are waiting. But it must happen within a reasonable time. I believe that within this reasonable time, there will definitely be an election and a government will be formed by the people."

Fakhrul appreciated Yunus for his remark that the interim government will create an environment where no one would be able to turn the country into a police state.

"This is exactly what we have always wanted... If they do this, we will fully support their efforts."

He said Yunus assured that justice must be ensured for all extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. "This is what we want, and we repeatedly state that this justice must be served."

Fakhrul said the interim government must withdraw the false cases filed against BNP and other party leaders and activists filed during the Awami League regime.

"We have seen in the newspaper reports that cases against the chief adviser and an adviser have been withdrawn... We hope that the 145,000 cases against us will also be withdrawn immediately."

Supporting the chief adviser's statement on police reform, Fakhrul said they want the police to be transformed into an ideal force for the people. "We want it to happen very quickly."

He said students along with the ordinary people thwarted an attempt

by a group of Ansar members to create chaos by laying siege to the Secretariat. "It's an ominous sign as the defeated forces are trying to undermine the victory of the people by hatching conspiracies."

He called upon the people to stay alert to such plots.

Fakhrul urged different aggrieved groups of people to have patience and refrain from laying siege to the Secretariat and other government establishments.

He also urged the students not to create situations with unnecessary use of force that could disrupt administrative functions.

"We have seen that students in some schools and colleges are putting pressure on teachers to resign. There are proper procedures for this; you can lodge complaints, and if proven, action will be taken. But teachers should be allowed to continue their work."

He said people in the administration who supported and aided the ousted AL government, and were involved in killings are still holding their posts.

"We don't want to see their faces anymore. Please remove those individuals as soon as possible and bring in patriotic people who want to work and those who have been deprived. Ensure that the administration is run by them. Otherwise, the nation will not forgive you for this," Fakhrul said.

have always been a difficult side, especially against Bangladesh," Maruf said at the post-match press conference.

"India played matured football, creating a lot of chances," the UEFA A licenced coach said. "For us, everything was in the right direction after taking the lead but there one thing that is our national crisis (going defensive) -- the players must learn to play attacking football after taking the lead."

"We are now hopeful about the final against Nepal, who are a strong opponent on their home ground but we are optimistic about play a good match against them," Maruf said.

## Ansarullah

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objection from the court and the prison authorities," said Farhad.

Rajib, a blogger and activist of the Gonojagoron Mancha movement, was hacked to death on February 15, 2013, near his home in the capital's Mirpur.

He was the first victim of a series of similar attacks on secular writers and bloggers at that time.

A Dhaka court in the case handed death penalties to two people, life-term imprisonment to another, and five-year imprisonment to Rahmani on December 31, 2015.

The convicts other than Rahmani

had vowed to kill "atheist bloggers" after reading Rahmani's books and listening to his sermons, the investigation officer said in the charge sheet. They targeted Rajib "for his blog posts under the pseudonym 'Thabababa'".

Rahmani earlier came out of Kashimpur High-Security Jail on January 21 after securing bail in five cases. He was arrested two days later in connection with another case after police, citing a suspected member of the Al Qaeda-linked group, alleged that Rahmani had started plotting sabotage immediately after his release.

## Nazrul's 48th death anniversary

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Kazi Nazrul was born on 11 Joishthha, 1306 Bonggabdlo in the village Churulia, West Bengal of India's Bardhaman district. His father's name was Kazi Faqeer Ahmed and mother was Zahida Khatun. His nickname was 'Dukhu Mia'.

The nation got inspirations from Nazrul's poems and songs during the great Liberation War in 1971 and

all other democratic movements and struggles.

Nazrul wrote nearly 3,000 songs and composed many of them which are known as Nazrul-Geeti or Nazrul Sangeet.

After the independence of Bangladesh, Nazrul was brought to Dhaka from Kolkata along with his family.

The family was given a home in Dhanmondi.

## Protecting rights

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the birth of Lord Sri Krishna.

Professor Yunus expressed his vision for a Bangladesh where everyone can practice their faith without fear and where religious sites, like temples, do not need to be guarded, said a press release sent by the chief adviser's office.

"Our responsibility is to safeguard the rights of every citizen. It is our duty to ensure justice for all," the chief adviser told Hindu leaders at State Guest House Jamuna.

"There can be no divisions among the people of our country. We are all equal citizens, and this interim government is committed to protecting the rights of every individual," he added.

Hindu leaders, in turn, greeted the chief adviser on the auspicious occasion, sharing that they had prayed for the harmony and prosperity of the nation, as well as for the success of the interim government.

They also noted that Janmashtami celebrations had been suspended in flood-affected regions, and they had focused on sending food and relief to those areas instead.

The Hindu leaders praised Prof Yunus's recent comments at the Dhakeshwari temple, stating that his words would contribute to fostering a non-communal society and ensuring religious harmony across the nation.

During the meeting, the issue of land grabbing, including the seizure of property belonging to Hindu temples, was raised by the leaders.

Among the Hindu leaders present were Kajal Debnath and Monindra Kumar Nath of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, Charu Charan Brahmachari of ISKCON, Basudeb Dhar and Santosh Sharma of the Bangladesh Puja Udjapon Parishad, and Priti Chakraborty, chairperson of Universal Medical College and Hospital.