

# My conscience drove me:

## JEETU AHSAN

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Actor Jeetu Ahsan, renowned for his powerful performances in film and television, found himself in the midst of protests during the recent anti-discrimination student movement. On August 4, Jeetu joined the student protesters at Shaheed Minar, standing in solidarity with those fighting against the violence and injustice gripping the country. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Jeetu shared the profound impact recent events had on him, compelling him to take a stand. "I was deeply disturbed by a photo circulating on social media—a bloodied female student from Dhaka University. The image hit me hard, especially because I have a daughter. I couldn't help but think, what if that had been



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

place meant for healing. How could that be acceptable? My conscience wouldn't let me stay silent."

Despite his family's advice to remain cautious, Jeetu felt a moral obligation to act. "There was a clash at Dhanmondi 27, where a student from Residential Model College lost his life. His birthday was the same as mine, September 12. I couldn't help but think about how many dreams he and his parents must have had, now all shattered," he reflected.

Driven by his conscience, Jeetu visited the scene at Dhanmondi 27 and later shared his thoughts on Facebook. "Everything I've done has been guided by my conscience. No one pressured me, and I wasn't afraid. Some friends warned me that speaking out could cause problems, but I did it anyway," he said.

Jeetu also spoke about the tragic incident involving Mugdho, a young student whose video distributing water during the protests went viral. "That video haunted me. I couldn't sleep that night. I just couldn't shake the scenes from my mind. After that, we faced an internet shutdown, and social media became inaccessible," he recalled. Jeetu was one of the artistes who gathered in

front of the Abahani Field on Sat Masjid Road, defying the downpour on August 2 to protest under the banner **Artistes Against Genocide and Oppression**. He voiced his concerns to the media, condemning the oppression carried out by the former AL-led government. The following day, he participated in protests at Shaheed Minar, driven not by a desire for heroism but by a deep sense of responsibility. "Thousands of students and citizens were out there, and I stood with them," he shared.

It's been a few weeks since the interim government assumed leadership of the country's administration. Regarding this, Jeetu shared, "I want to see a beautiful Bangladesh, one that is free from discrimination. I understand that change won't happen overnight. It will take time, but the effort must begin now."

He further emphasised, "The country, our motherland, must always come first. If we prioritise patriotism, our nation will progress and become more beautiful."

He also expressed concern for those affected by the severe floods in several districts, where millions are stranded. "It's heartbreaking to witness the suffering of the flood victims. These people are enduring immense pain, and while this is a natural disaster, it doesn't lessen their hardship. I sincerely hope the water recedes quickly."

Reflecting on his career, Jeetu noted that he has been acting for over two decades, having made significant contributions to television dramas during his career. His work has been widely praised, following in the footsteps of his father, the esteemed actor Syed Ahsan Ali Sydney.

Jeetu remains active in the industry, performing in dramas, on OTT platforms, and in films. His portrayal of Hanif Sikdar in the film **Gohin Baluchor**, directed by Badrul Anam Saud, received widespread acclaim and left a lasting impression on audiences.

When asked about his natural acting style, Jeetu replied, "I have a deep love for acting. This love is intertwined with my craft. I simply put in the effort; the rest is the audience's love. It's the quality work that stays in their hearts."

"I was deeply disturbed by a photo circulating on social media—a bloodied female student from Dhaka University. The image hit me hard, especially because I have a daughter."



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

her? The thought of such violence against women was unbearable," he recalled.

This sense of outrage prompted Jeetu to voice his concerns on social media. "Shortly after, I learned that Abu Sayed from Rangpur was shot dead during the protests. His death, captured on video, spread rapidly online. No sane person can accept what had happened. I kept wondering why people were being shot when these issues could be resolved through dialogue," he said.

Jeetu's frustration grew when he heard about students being attacked while receiving treatment at hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). "It was sheer madness," he remarked. "Students, already critically injured, were being assaulted in a

# Badhan calls for midnight women's march against rape and violence



Azmeri Haque Badhan has been a vocal advocate against injustice since the start of the anti-discrimination student movement.

Now, she is organising a protest against rape and violence against women, calling for justice for the victims. Badhan urges all women to join the **Shekol Bhangar Padayatra** (March to Break the Chains) for women's rights, set to begin on Friday (August 30) at 11:59pm from Shabbagh to the National Parliament.

She emphasised, "I'm going. I urge everyone to join. The more people that come, the stronger this movement will become."



# 'Dushtu Kokil' hits 200m views, sets benchmark for Bengali cinema

**Toofan**, starring Shakib Khan, Mimi Chakraborty, and Nabila, quickly gained attention after its Eid-ul-Azha release.

Directed by Raihan Rafi, the film sparked interest, especially after the song **Dushtu Kokil** launched on June 26 on two major YouTube channels.

The song has set a new record for Bengali movie songs, surpassing 200 million views in just two months. **Dushtu Kokil** garnered over 138 million views on Chorki's YouTube channel and over 67 million on SVF, totaling over 205 million views.

# NEWS

## Journalist's body found floating

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Rahanuma, daughter of Bakhtiar Shikdar of Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila, was staying in a rented flat in Kalyanpur area.

Her husband Sayed Shuvro told Prothom Alo that they got married seven years ago without informing their families.

Rahanuma went to her office on Tuesday and did not return home, but sent the flat rent with a person at night.

"Later, I called her and asked why she sent money by someone else instead of coming home. She replied that she was busy and hung up. Later, around 3:00am, we got news that she had jumped into the Hatirjheel lake," Shuvro said.

He went to DMCH and saw her body there, he added.

"We never had any major fights, but for some time, Rahanuma wanted to live separately. We even went to the

marriage registrar's office for our divorce, but it didn't happen due to the current situation in the country."

At 10:54pm on Tuesday, Rahanuma in a Facebook post, said, "It is better to die than to live a life akin to death."

Soon after, she posted another status at 11:06pm tagging one Fahim Faisal and sharing some photos at Dhaka University. The post read, "Good to have a friend like you. God bless you. I hope all your dreams come true soon. We had a lot of plans. Sorry, I can't fulfill the plans. May God bless you..."

A few hours later, Fahim wrote on his Facebook page that read, "My friend is no more. Last [Tuesday] night, she spoke to me for the last time. If I had known it was our last conversation, I would have never let her go."

Speaking to reporters, Rahanuma's elder sister Rabita Sabah, an assistant professor at Jagannath University, said a girl

like Rahanuma, who was involved in various voluntary organisations, was unlikely to die by suicide.

Rabita said she did not know what led to her sister's death and that police would investigate it.

She claimed that her sister was frustrated with her job and salaries.

Two days ago, Rahanuma wrote on her Facebook page, "Every day, we cover so many protests, but general journalists don't even have the time to fight for their own rights and dues, like salaries and benefits! Our job is just to cover news, even if it means going hungry."

After her death, several of her friends on their Facebook pages wrote that she was looking for a new job.

Asked, Sharif Niazi, inspector (investigation) of Hatirjheel Police Station, told The Daily Star that they were looking into all related issues. An unnatural death case was filed, he added.

## Hasina made accused in 4 more cases

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asked Khilgaon Police Station to register it as a first information report (FIR).

The court asked the OC of the same police station to register an FIR over the death of 14-year-old Ashiqul Islam on the same day. Hasina and 26 others were accused in the case filed by Ashiqul's mother Arisha Afroz.

The third case was filed against

Hasina and 50 others on charges related to the attempted murder of a lawyer of the Dhaka Bar Association during the students' quota reform protest on July 18.

Advocate Abdul Baset Shamim filed the case with the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Tofazzal Hossain. The magistrate asked Mugda Police Station's OC to register the

complainant's statement as an FIR.

In Bogura, Hasina, three local journalists and 130 others were sued in a murder case over the death of Md Shaheed, 35, who was shot dead on August 4, a day before Hasina's fall.

Shimu Begum, 34, the wife of the deceased, filed the case on Tuesday, said Bogura Sadar Police Station OC Saihan Olliuallah.

## Next gen seal elusive silverware

FROM PAGE 1  
weeks of pre-tournament preparation, the charges of coach Maruful Haque flipped the script in commanding fashion..

UEFA A-licenced coach Maruful, concerned about his players' fitness following their gruelling 4-3 penalty shootout win over India in the semi-final, made three changes to the starting lineup: defenders Rajib Hossain and Iltiir Hossain, as well as semifinal hero in goalkeeper Mohammad Asif.

From the outset, the home side applied relentless pressure, coming close to breaking the deadlock several times, but solid defending and Asif's brilliant goalkeeping

kept Bangladesh in the hunt.

After surviving three scares, Bangladesh nearly took the lead in the 24th minute when Rostom Islam headed wide from a perfect free-kick by Rahul. Nepal continued to test Bangladesh from distance, only to be denied by the 17-year-old keeper.

Bangladesh eventually went in front against the run of play in first-half stoppage time, with Mirajul earning a free-kick after being fouled by defender Niraj Karka before expertly curling it into the top-left corner.

Seeking an equaliser, Nepal came out aggressively after the break, while Bangladesh went on to capitalise on counterattacks, striking twice in the

span of 16 minutes.

First, it was Mirajul who doubled the cushion in the 55th minute with a close-range header following a flick on from Asadul Molla. Rahul then joined the party in the 71st minute with a precise finish inside the box after being set up by Mirajul, which led to frustrated home fans throwing water bottles towards the Bangladesh players.

Nepal did pull one back in the 81st minute with a header from Samir Tamang, providing the hosts a glimmer of hope, but Nova struck his side's fourth goal in the sixth minute of added time to cap off a memorable win.

## 'Don't buy any properties of S Alam Group'

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The overall situation will improve after five to six months."

On Islami Bank, Mansur said he has asked the new board to make an action plan within a week. "We will provide all kinds of support to them. If they do not play a supportive role, the board will be changed again."

Asked what Bangladesh Bank will do if S Alam Group tries to sell properties that have not been mortgaged, Mansur said, "It has to be done through legal process. We will ask the government to take action."

On scams involving S Alam, he said S Alam may be the first person in history to rob banks with such meticulous planning. "I have never heard of such a well-planned bank looting using state machinery ... on such a wide scale."

The governor said the scams involving other people will also be investigated and action will be taken. "No one will be spared."

On forming a Banking Commission, Mansur said the commission will be formed within a month, but its exact modus operandi has not been finalised yet.

He said the commission will not act like the previous one. "It will have to be reconstituted brick by brick. It will be a different type of work. We will get assistance from foreign experts who have the expertise on dealing with the banking crisis in other countries. We will also learn from how Sri Lanka has dealt with the issues."

Responding to a query on inflation, Mansur said steps have been taken to control inflation. "We can reduce

interest rate, if we can reduce the inflation rate in next six to seven months. However, the recent flood has caused a bit of concern."

On foreign currency reserves, he said there is no possibility of reduction in reserve. "It will increase in the future. The government's demand for dollar is being met from the interbank market."

He added that if the dollar price remained stable, there would be no reason for the import bill to increase. Oil price is stable in the global market and the prices of other products, including wheat and soybean, have dropped.

Regarding his predecessors, he said there was a lack of good governance. "The central bank also needs to be reformed. Because it also cannot avoid responsibility."

## It won't be prudent to ban AL

FROM PAGE 12  
AL, he said the Attorney General's Office was against it when the High Court's order to ban the AL was sought.

As per the constitution, people have the right to associate.

The AL led the struggle for Bangladesh's independence and it contributed to movements for democracy, he said.

"What they have done in the last 15 years is not in line with their tradition. It does not go with the spirit of the Liberation War. They established the most barbaric fascism in the history of Bangladesh," he added.

When a reporter told him that the Election Commission said its constitutional obligation was to

hold an election within 90 days of dissolution of parliament, Prof Asif said, "The Election Commission should understand what their constitutional obligation was. Was holding a sham election its constitutional obligation too?"

The chief election commissioner in a recent article termed the previous government autocratic, he said.

"There is no reason for us to be guided by the [chief election commissioner's] words. We have enough legal experts."

He then said assaulting people on court premises was not acceptable under any circumstance, but added that Mahmudur Rahman, a senior journalist, was assaulted on court premises and many journalists were

humiliated in many other ways over the last 15 years.

"There are many angry people out there: those who did not have a job for 15 years, people who were on the run fearing for their lives. There are families of people who were murdered and the victims of enforced disappearances. That anger was expressed. But I don't support this. We are thinking about ways to reduce the crowding [on court premises]."

Asked whether too many cases were being filed against key individuals in the previous government, he said, "If a family member of a deceased person files a case, the state has no right to stop them. We will try to ensure the proper process of investigation and prosecution."

## Rescue op yet to begin

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On Tuesday, the eight-member probe body was formed to investigate the fire incident at the factory, owned by former Awami League minister Golam Dastagir Gazi.

Families of many other missing people gathered in front of the factory over the last three days.

Holding a photo of her father, Raisa Akter Mim, 10, was waiting in front of the factory last night.

Mohammad Mamun, the father of the third-grader, has been missing since Sunday night when the factory

was set ablaze.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Raisa said, "We have been waiting here for two days."

Mamun's brother-in-law Mohammad Rana said they looked for Mamun at many hospitals and morgues in Dhaka and Narayanganj, but did not find him. "We believe the bodies of many people, including Mamun, are inside the factory building."

Among those missing is Aman Ullah, 21, a worker at a local battery factory.

His parents Abdul Baten and Rashida Begum were waiting in front of factory building yesterday with their son's photo.

Rashida said her son told them over the phone around 10:00pm on Sunday that he got trapped inside the building. He requested the family members to rescue him.

"No one is giving us any information about my son. Please, give us his body at least," said Rashida.

The factory had been closed since August 5 after it came under a mob attack.