

SILVER JUBILEE SPECIAL

I'm exactly where I should be  
DEEPA KHANDAKAR

Recently, Deepa starred in three one-hour-long dramas, two of which are set to air on BTV. The latest one, *Bristir Moto Jhore Pore Lal Golaper Papri*, aired yesterday.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Deepa Khandakar has been a household name in Bangladeshi television, for over 25 years. Since her debut in 1999 as a listed artiste on BTV, Deepa has lived and breathed acting — a career she describes as her profession and passion. She has acted in numerous television dramas, some of which became audience favourites, while also making her mark in films and OTT platforms.

Recently, Deepa starred in three one-hour-long dramas, two of which are set to air on BTV. The latest one, *Bristir Moto Jhore Pore Lal Golaper Papri*, aired yesterday. "This beautiful story has a profound root," Deepa shared expressing how her enthusiasm for strong storytelling remains as vibrant as ever.

Her film career is equally remarkable. Deepa just finished shooting *Ritu Kamini*, directed by Zahid Hossain, where she plays a mother. "The plot of the films tells a mother's

story with a unique narrative. My character felt different from my usual roles, and I believe the audience will appreciate it."

In addition to her recent work, Deepa's cinematic roles have continued to shine. She starred in three films released during the past two Eids — *Mona: Jinn-2*, *Dark World*, and *Revenge*. "I am proud of the diverse characters I portrayed in each film," she said.

Moreover, she admitted that one of her most fulfilling experiences was working opposite Afzal Hossain in *Oporajeyo*, the final film directed by renowned director Syed Salahuddin Zaki. "Working in a movie



received widespread acclaim.

Deepa is presently busy filming a web-series directed by Mahmudur Rahman Hime for Deepto Play, as well as another series by Zahid Pritom. "Producing web-series requires considerable care and attention. Additionally, many high-quality projects are being released on OTT platforms these days," she stated about her observation of the platforms.

When asked about her goals at this stage in her career, Deepa responded with clarity, "Since the beginning, I've been playing leading roles, now I want to continue doing meaningful roles that offer depth. The characters I choose play must have substance."

Acting has always been her sole profession. "This is my livelihood; I've done nothing else for years," she said. But it's not just work for Deepa—acting is her life's calling. Her love for the craft is evident in the roles she has chosen throughout her career, each one a testament to her dedication.

Deliberating on the love and support

Deepa is presently busy filming two web-series: one directed by Mahmudur Rahman Hime and another by Zahid Pritom.

she has received over the years, the actress expressed nothing but gratitude, "I've been blessed with the audience's love from the very beginning, and I still receive it to this day!"

As for regrets, Deepa confessed to having none. "I don't have any regrets or sorrows. I've had the chance to play some incredible roles. The only thought that crosses my mind is that if the high-quality films being produced today had begun 20 years ago, I might have had the opportunity to accomplish even more."

When inquired about her position in the industry, Deepa replied with confidence, "I'm exactly where I should be."

Ishaa Saha to play Tollywood's latest detective in upcoming series



A new investigator is set to make a mark in Tollywood, and this time, it's a woman determined to uncover the truth. Tollywood actress Ishaa Saha is hence stepping into the role of a female detective in an upcoming web-series titled *BB Bakshi*, directed by Joydeep Mukherjee.

Much like Byomkesh Bakshi, she will face every obstacle in her path in the series scripted by Paramita Munshi. The character BB Bakshi has already generated excitement, as reported by Indian media outlet Sangbad Pratidin.

Although actresses like Koyel Mallick in and as *Mitin Masi* and Tuhina Das as *Damayanti* have previously brought female detective characters to life on screen, BB Bakshi, whose full name is Binodbala Bakshi, is set to fill this gap. She'll be depicted as a police constable from a rural village.

The script is likely to be finalised by the end of this month, and, if all goes as planned, filming will commence in December.

Bangladeshi film wins acclaim at Tasveer Film Festival



Bangladeshi-American filmmaker Zak Mir's first feature film, *The Story of a Rock*, received widespread praise at the 19th Tasveer Film Festival in Seattle, Washington.

Held from October 15 to 20 at the Paccar IMAX Theatre, the festival screened

300 films in total, including 90 short films and 22 feature-length entries. *The Story of a Rock* emerged as one of the standout features, resonating deeply with viewers due to its emotional depth and socially relevant narrative.

The film stars Safana Nomani as the main character, with a supporting cast including Sahana Rahman Sumi, Nafisa Zarin and others.

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Govt sets four criteria for selecting secys

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Education and Family Welfare Division survived the chop as they are known for their commitment to law and regulatory compliance despite being appointed by the Awami League government.

For instance, IMED Secretary Abul Kashem Md. Mohiuddin is cited as a respected figure known for integrity and skills regardless of the party in power.

Similarly, Election Commission Secretary Shafiu Azim took decisive actions by cancelling a foreign trip for the Chief Election Commissioner after the mass uprising.

There is no adviser in charge of the public administration ministry.

"The chief advisor is positive about those who are honest, efficient and professional among the secretaries," Ali Imam Majumder, the special assistant to the chief adviser, told The Daily Star.

If a credible complaint is found against someone, they are removed from office.

"This government has no political organisation, so there is no one to call its own people. The administration will run under the leadership of the secretaries who are working professionally and upholding public interest," he added.

BNP to ensure their presence

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Dhaka cantonment on November 7, 1975, paving the way for his rise to power. Zia subsequently founded the BNP.

BNP leaders said the situation this year is pretty similar as students and mass people ousted the autocratic government of Sheikh Hasina in August. The former premier had to flee in the face of a mass uprising.

"We were prevented from observing the day [November 7] till last year. The day is very important for the nation. In 1975, people were freed from the misrule of the then government. This year, people have been freed again from a fascist regime. So, we want to observe the day with the people of the country," Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, a member of the BNP standing committee, told The Daily Star last night.

Party sources said that the BNP held the last rally on November 7

Secretaries with records of financial misconduct or political misuse of authority have been targeted for forced retirement and, in some cases, are facing legal consequences.

For instance, Home Secretary Jahangir Alam, Health Service Secretary Md Jahangir Alam, and Food Secretary Ismail Hossain were sent on forced retirement.

Similarly, Tofazzel Hossain Miah, principal secretary to the Prime Minister, had his contractual appointment terminated, with all three facing legal proceedings.

The former Home Secretary Jahangir Alam is already detained.

Officials accused of political favouritism but not financial wrongdoing are being reassigned to less significant roles.

For example, former secretary of the public administration ministry Mesbah Uddin Chowdhury has been made OSD.

Several current secretaries might encounter similar assignments if deemed politically partial without financial malfeasance.

The government is considering alternative placements for those without corruption allegations but who lack proven administrative capability.

in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters in presence of Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Since then, the party had to hold a programme on November 8 or a later date instead of November 7.

Khaleda was present at the November 7 rally at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan on November 12, 2017.

This year, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman will address the nation on the occasion of the National Revolution and Solidarity Day. Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has already demanded the reinstatement of the public holiday on November 7.

According to insiders, the BNP's street programmes will continue till the next parliamentary polls so that none can destabilise the interim government.

"Our leaders and activists will be on the streets to press home the

Among these is former ICT Secretary Shamsul Arefin, currently implicated in a homicide case.

In response to the absence of secretaries in six ministries, Public Administration Secretary Mokhles Ur Rahman mentioned the importance of selecting the most qualified officers and ensuring promotion aspirants are assessed on stringent standards.

"Some criteria have to be followed in the selection of officials. We will not tell everything publicly. But good officers should not be worried," he added.

Despite assurances from the government regarding support for honest and competent officials, some secretaries remain concerned, more so over recent comments by two advisers: Sharmeen S Murshid and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan.

Murshid, the adviser for the ministry of women and children affairs, suggested a complete replacement of old teams.

"There was no mass uprising in Bangladesh following the rules. If you don't cooperate, then the government will not follow the rules in the future. If necessary, the system will be broken and new people will be appointed," Bhuiyan said at an event in Chattogram.

demand for holding the next general election within a reasonable time," said a senior BNP leader.

Party leaders said that a quarter was recently trying to create an anarchic situation in the country over the removal of the president. However, the BNP took a firm stance and said that it does not want any situation which may delay the next election.

They said that such attempts may be made again and that is why the party leaders and activists should remain on the streets.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said they were prevented from observing November 7 for more than a decade, but this time they intend to celebrate the day with the people.

"We want to restore democracy in the country just as our party founder Ziaur Rahman introduced multi-party democracy," he told The Daily Star.

CA assures SAFF champions

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victorious players and promised to address them on a priority basis.

"Do not hesitate to write whatever you wish. We will try to fulfil your demands. If anything can be addressed now, we will do it now," Professor Yunus said.

The demands ranged from infrastructure issues in their respective localities to improving practice facilities. The players also brought up financial issues such as regularity of salaries and bonuses. However, the overriding demand from them was arrangement of permanent accommodation in Dhaka.

"Sir asked everyone what demands they have. Everyone said they would prefer to have accommodation in Dhaka. When their family members come, they

have to put them up in hotels, which is not viable for all of them. So, we asked to have accommodation for the families," captain Sabina Khatun told reporters after returning to the BFF House.

"We basically asked for increasing our facilities. We will pose our demands to the new BFF president [Tabitha Awal] because eventually he will be the one working on the matter," Sabina said.

Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud, who was present at the reception, later told reporters that they would discuss the players' unpaid salaries with the new BFF committee members and come up with a solution.

"As far as I know, two months' salary [of the players] are due. Earlier, there was a different committee of Kazi Salahuddin at the BFF. Now, there's a

UK-based lawyer files complaint

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"These forces indiscriminately used firearms, rubber bullets, sound grenades, and lethal weapons like birdshot pellets and live ammunition," read the statement.

Over 1,400 civilians were reportedly killed, and 22,000 injured, it said, adding that at least 92 individuals were blinded and hundreds suffered life-altering injuries.

The then government imposed a nationwide internet blackout and restricted all communications, obstructing efforts to document the violence, it added.

"These systematic extrajudicial

killings, disappearances, and acts of torture, including alleged abuses at secret detention centres like Ayna Ghar, amount to crimes against humanity under international law, reflecting a calculated effort to eliminate political opposition and silence dissent."

There is considerable doubt over the ability of Bangladesh's judicial system to conduct an impartial investigation into these serious offences because a large number of the country's law enforcement and state officials were chosen by the Hasina administration.

Also, the interim government is expected to remain in place until the next parliamentary election, after which

new committee and we will talk to them and resolve the matter so that even in the future no such occurrences take place," he said.

Meanwhile, team's manager Mahmuda lamented not being able to attend the reception with all 31 members of the SAFF winning team.

It has been learnt that the BFF had sent a list of all 31 members, but were asked by the sports ministry to have the 23 players, head coach and team manager attend the event, leaving out six members including assistant coaches, goalkeeping coach and physiotherapist.

"I had told them that we always go to any reception with the full team. This hampers team bonding," Ananya said. "We all want to be in the same frame next time."

a new political government may assume power, potentially compromising justice for political expediency.

"Moreover, with Sheikh Hasina currently residing in India and due to her political ties there, enforcing any domestic conviction remains uncertain. However, an international arrest warrant could exert pressure on India to cooperate with the global community."

In February 2014, British lawyer Toby Cadman filed a request on behalf of the International Coalition for Freedoms of Rights to the ICC, accusing the Awami League government of "committing mass killing and crimes against humanity". The ICC rejected that request.

Israel strikes

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Palestinian militants.

The toll includes 55 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 102,019 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began on October 7, 2023.

"The situation unfolding in north Gaza is apocalyptic," said a joint statement by UN agency heads.

"The area has been under siege for almost a month, denied basic aid and life-saving supplies while bombardment and other attacks continue," the heads of the humanitarian, health, and other agencies said.

"The entire Palestinian population in north Gaza is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine and violence."

Witnesses said Israeli warplanes twice hit Beit Lahia, near Jabalia, overnight.