

Women are not spoils of war, stop letting your inner animals out

JAYA AHSAN

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"Wait, let me move into another room," said Jaya Ahsan over the phone from Kolkata, not wanting the staff in her makeup room to hear what she had to say. "We are turning into animals. I already knew that we are in a male-dominated society, but what happened last Saturday is in no way a reflection of the country that we want Bangladesh to be."

What was supposed to be a conversation on Jaya's spectacular success in both *Taandob* and *Utshob* soon turned into a pseudo-political discussion on the future of women in the country. How could it not? The entire country has meanwhile been shaken to its core after the brutal rape of a woman in Cumilla. A gut-wrenching video of the victim is making rounds on social media, angering every sane citizen who has come across it. "It doesn't even matter which political party is in power; women are always marginalised and treated as spoils of war," she said, insinuating that there are people who change political allegiances to enjoy power and, at times, quench their animalistic desires. "We need to protect our women and minorities, and I am waiting to see what our government does about it."

She continued in anguish, "Women are not spoils of war or objects. We need to treat them with respect, and we need to make sure that our inner animals are controlled. Actually, it's not fair to animals if we compare (the criminals)

to them." When I brought up if women should unite and take to the streets in protest of these actions, Jaya had a different perspective. "When I protest an injustice as a gender, I am automatically conceding that we are perceived to be 'weaker.' We are humans, entities, institutions. I should not have to say it out loud that we deserve respect; it should be a given, especially in this day and age."

Jaya, who is now across the border to promote *Dear Maa*, is redefining herself

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with every role she takes up. After all, 2025 has been one of resurgence for her. "While I was proud of my box office hits during *Purno Doirgho Prem Kahini* and *Debi*, this Eid has been special. I knew *Taandob* would do well at the box office, but none of us—and I really mean that when I say it—none of us thought that it would go on to be so beloved by the audience." At the time of writing, *Utshob* has grossed around a total of Tk 3.5 crores in multiplexes in the country and \$93,000 in its first week in North America.

When the conversation turned to why younger actors aren't consistently stepping up to the plate, the National Award-winning actress shared an interesting observation. "No one really hits their stride in acting before they're 32," she said, while audibly smirking over the phone. "The more you age, the more you see life and mature, both as a person and as an artiste. That being said, so many talents, like Shoumya Joyti and Sadia Aymen—who you've seen in *Utshob*—are doing well. However, it's important to remember to be consistent. An actress like Meryl Streep can come to your screen for the thousandth time, but her work will still feel fresh. A great actor has to reinvent themselves like that if they want to have a serious career."

A lot is yet to come this year for the superstar, the earliest of which is the July 18 release of Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's directorial *Dear Maa*, which claims to 'reimagine' motherhood through the lens of adoption as an act of courage, intimacy, and resistance. If Jaya's track record in 2025 is anything to go by, we are in for another emotional roller-coaster.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSED

NEWS

Govt okays draft MoU

FROM PAGE 12

in Bangladesh. We had a discussion in this connection, and significant progress was made. Today [yesterday], a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) on this issue has been approved in principle in the advisory council meeting."

Prof Nazrul added that the final draft would be sent to Turk after further talks, and it would be signed within the quickest possible time after his consent.

Meanwhile, UNB reports, the law adviser said if the two sides think it is necessary to renew the MoU, it can be considered.

He said a few advisers would further examine the draft MoU before sending the final text of the draft to Turk.

The adviser added that once the UN side agrees, they hope to sign the MoU as soon as possible and based on the signed MoU, an office will be established here.

Prof Nazrul hopes that Bangladesh's local agencies, which deals with the human

rights issues, together with the UN office, will play an important role if there is any case of severe human rights violation in the country.

A milestone was the interim government's invitation to the OHCHR for an independent fact-finding mission following the July-August uprising last year.

The UN Fact Finding Mission in February published its report on human rights violations during the period.

The report said about 1,400 people were killed during the July-August uprising and in the aftermath.

The UN Human Rights Office will establish its office in Bangladesh to support the country that is going through reforms in various sectors, including political, bureaucratic, police, and judicial ones.

"We understand from the government that a MoU is finalised. We are waiting for signing it soon. That means we will be able to open an office of the human

commissioner for human rights soon to support a lot of processes that are underway," said UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis on June 4.

Since becoming a UN member in 1974, Bangladesh has consistently demonstrated strong support for peace and international cooperation.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam was also present at the briefing.

The Cabinet Division said several other decisions were approved at yesterday's advisory council meeting.

These include the "Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025".

In addition, the council approved a proposal to operationalise an MoU titled "Counter-Terrorism and Security Cooperation" between Bangladesh and Turkey.

The council, as part of a supplementary agenda, okayed the proposal for implementing the "National Rooftop Solar Programme.

FROM PAGE 2

firm message that such barbarity has no place in this country," ASK urged, calling on the government to take decisive and transparent action in this case and uphold the safety and rights of all citizens.

Meanwhile, MJF also demanded the swift trial and maximum punishment of all individuals involved in this heinous crime.

In its statement, the organisation said that it vehemently condemns the inhumane and reprehensible act of filming and circulating videos of such brutal crimes on social media. Recording and spreading the footage of rape constitutes a second assault on the survivor, causing severe damage to her psychological and social

well-being, and is itself a punishable offence.

"Such acts only fuel a culture of violence," it said, urging all citizens to refrain from such cruelty.

Citing data from Ain O Salish Kendra, MJF said that it is deeply alarmed by the rising trend of violence against women and calls on the interim government to take more proactive legal measures.

"Effective enforcement of existing laws, increased public awareness, and collective efforts to essential to combat gender-based violence," it said.

MJF also urged the interim government to ensure all necessary support for the woman.

The organisation said it firmly believes that such

heinous crimes severely disrupt social stability and gravely violate women's safety and dignity.

"Justice must be served by uncovering the truth and ensuring exemplary punishment for the perpetrators," it said.

Naripokkho, a women's rights organisation, also expressed outrage and called for immediate and effective action from the government and law enforcement to ensure justice.

It said such incidents continue to occur across the country, yet effective state measures to prevent or respond to them remain grossly inadequate, according to its statement.

"We are deeply angered, disheartened, and alarmed," the statement read.

Draft polls code

FROM PAGE 12

chief election agent, or individual conducting election campaigning on social media must submit the name, account ID, email ID, and other identifying details of the relevant social media accounts to the returning officer before beginning such activities.

The draft strictly prohibits the creation and dissemination of harmful contents, including hate speech, misinformation, and fabricated election-related information. Banning of personal attacks or inflammatory language targeting opponents, minorities, or any group has been proposed. Disallowing the use of religious or ethnic sentiments for electoral gain has been proposed.

All election-related contents shared on social media must be fact checked prior to publication. Furthermore, all forms of digital campaigning must stop 48 hours before the start of voting, the draft says.

All expenses related to digital campaigns, including content creation, advertising, boosting, and sponsorship, by a registered political party, its nominated candidate, an independent candidate, or any individual acting on their behalf, must be reported to the EC, it says. These expenses will be added to the candidate's total election expenditure.

The draft also prohibits any foreign funded advertising or promotional activities on social media platforms during the campaign period.

If the use of social media violates the polls code, it will be a punishable offence in line with law that deals with cyber security issues.

Candidates can join televised election dialogue, but no one will be allowed to attack their opponents personally, according to the draft.

that allows the EC to cancel candidature in line with the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

According to article 91 (1) of the RPO, if the EC receives information that a candidate, their agent, or someone acting on their behalf has committed a serious offence or violated election rules — directly or with their consent — the EC can launch an investigation. The candidate will get a fair chance to respond to the allegation.

If the probe finds the candidate guilty, the EC can cancel that individual's candidacy.

As of now, the highest punishment for violation of the electoral code of conduct is six months in prison and a fine of Tk 50,000. For a political party, the highest fine is Tk 50,000.

The provision for imprisonment remains unchanged, Sanaullah said, but the fine will be raised to Tk 1.5 lakh.

"This was one of the recommendations from the Electoral Reform Commission," Sanaullah said.

Campaign posters will be prohibited, according to the draft code, which also bans the use of plastic or any other environmentally harmful materials for wrapping banners and other campaign items.

The draft makes it mandatory for all political parties and candidates to formally commit to abide by the code while submitting their nomination papers.

Besides, members of the advisory council will not be able to take part in any election campaign as the advisers, ministers, and lawmakers are now in a category of "very important persons".

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UP member hacked to death

FROM PAGE 12

The incident took place in the courtyard of his house in the remote char area that is surrounded by the Jamuna river, said Kulkandu union parishad Chairman Anisur Rahman.

Quoting family members, AFM Atiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Islampur Police Station, said, "Pretending to be members of law enforcement, a group of 10-12 assailants called Rahim out of his house around

2:00am. As soon as he stepped into the courtyard, the attackers began stabbing him with sharp weapons indiscriminately.

"Hearing screams, Rahim's wife and other family members rushed out and tried to intervene but failed. Rahim died on the spot due to excessive bleeding."

Informed, a team of Islampur police rushed to the char area on a trawler and recovered his body around 2:30am.

Adviser from Muradnagar

FROM PAGE 12

Condemning the Muradnagar rape incident and demanding exemplary punishment, he said there is a dangerous conspiracy afoot to damage the reputation of the BNP.

"It is because they have the blessings from powerful quarters that the miscreants are being encouraged to carry out acts of violence."

Mentioning that criminals who harm women do not belong to any political party, Fakhrul described the

rape incident in Muradnagar as inhumane, cruel, and politically motivated.

A vested quarter is attempting to politicise the incident for their own gains, he said.

However, hinting at the incident, Asif said those sheltering and endorsing Awami League men are responsible for the current situation.

"They have unleashed these criminals on the general public for repression,

extortion and rape," he wrote in a Facebook post.

Previously, when an extortioneer was caught red-handed, a mafia gang attacked and vandalised the police station to snatch him away, he said.

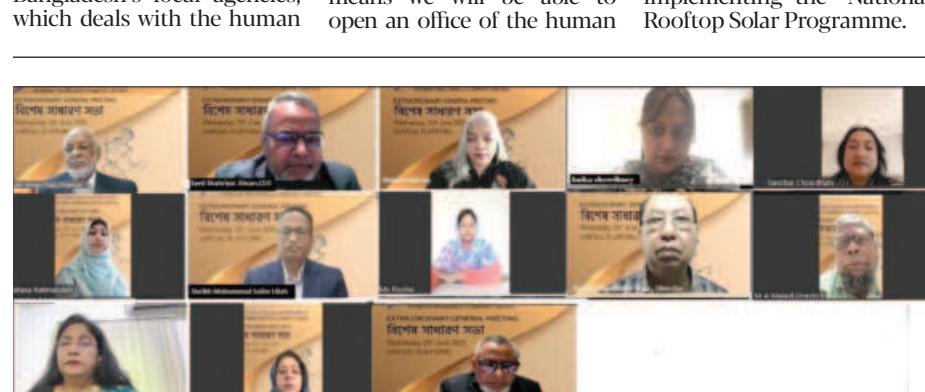
"Today, I am ashamed — I have no words. Whenever I meet locals, they say that the country may have been freed through a mass uprising, but Muradnagar has fallen into the hands of an even bigger mafia."

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If the use of social media violates the polls code, it will be a punishable offence in line with law that deals with cyber security issues.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Abul Fazal Sanaullah said the provision to cancel the candidacy is being included for the first time.

The draft has a provision



PIONEER INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED HOLDS EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING VIRTUALLY ON 25 JUNE 2025

"Pioneer Insurance Company Limited held an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on 25th June 2025 via digital platform, approving the change of its name to "Pioneer Insurance PLC" and an increase in authorized share capital from 100 Crore to 200 Crore."

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Zakir Ahmed Khan, with board directors, Chief Executive Officer, Company Secretary and shareholders in attendance. The Chairman thanked shareholders for their support and praised employees for their dedication."

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