



The voice of love is gone

KK passes away after last performance



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

“I will never stand outside someone’s door for work, because I know I am good at what I do,” these words said by KK stuck with me. “I knew the day I got a chance, was the day I would make it happen.”

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Hum Rahein Ya Na Rahein Kal Kal, Yaad Aayenge Yeh Pal
Trans: Whether or not we remain, These memories will always pertain

When KK was singing these lines at Kolkata’s Nazrul Mancha on Tuesday, no one could foresee the irony of these words. Later in the night, the beloved singer would be declared deceased at Calcutta Medical Research Institute (CMRI) hospital, after suffering from a suspected heart attack.

Outrage has spread in social media regarding the circumstances of his death – with many claiming that the organisers were not reactive enough when the singer complained about feeling ill. Some accounts also said that the air conditioning at the venue was not working due to the excess crowd, causing KK to sweat profusely.

When referring to the musical wonder that is Krishnakumar Kunnath, some will say that, “he was a singer who sang till his last breath”. As a heartbroken fan, I am sceptical of this highly romanticised take on a death that could have been prevented. Meanwhile, Kolkata Police have filed an unnatural death case over the incident.

For the ones who grew up in the 2000’s, KK was the voice of love. When Sony Music launched in 1999, the artiste was scouted and chosen to be the voice of the programme, giving birth to the “Pal”, a fresh-sounding album composed by Leslie Lewis.

It wasn’t long before Bollywood picked up on his talent, as he got his big break in Ismail Darbar’s timeless “Tadap Tadap” from the movie “Hum Dil De Chukein Sanam”. By then, however, he had already voiced over 3,500 jingles.

His legacy was solidified as the “voice of the youth” in the mid 2000’s, as he gifted us with one hit after the other, including songs like “Tu Hi Meri Shab Hain”, “Aashayen”, “Khuda Jaane”, “Dil Ibadat”, “Kya Mujhe Pyar Hain”, “Aankhon Mein Teri” and “Labon Ko”, among countless hits.

KK’s voice was outstandingly crisp, and his attitude was defiantly humble. As a teenager, I had spent hours not only listening to his music, but watching his interviews online. On

multiple occasions, he had said that he did not think that he was ‘popular’, and that music was there to be heard, not ‘seen’.

I had tried to emulate his voice and demeanour, even avoiding enrolling in music school for a long time, telling my insistent father that if KK didn’t need classes, neither did I.

“I will never stand outside someone’s door for work, because I know I am good at what I do,” these words said by KK stuck with me. “I knew the day I got a chance, was the day I would make it happen.”

The artiste stayed true to his words – he did not care about fame, just his music. He did not care about recognition, even after being snubbed countless times to other singers in various award shows, despite being nominated every year in his prime, not a single complaint came out of him.

With his demise, an inspiration for an entire generation is gone – gone too soon, without even saying “Alvida”. So is the voice of love, which we can now only rewind and remark, “gone too soon.”



A snippet from ‘Stranger Things’

‘Stranger Things’ smashes Netflix opening record

Netflix original “Stranger Things” is currently airing a critically acclaimed season 4, which according to the platform, is breaking their all-time opening weekend record.

Beating the past record holder, which is season two of “Bridgerton”, the streaming giant says that almost 287 million hours have been spent in watching the sci-fi drama.

While the popularity of the series has fluctuated over the years, “Stranger Things” is now one of the trending projects available for streaming right now.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ferdous-Nipun back on screen

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The duo of Ferdous and Nipun, popular for their films “Bayanno Theke Ekator”, “Shorgo Theke Norok”, “Obujh Bou” and “Ontordhan”, among others, are coming back yet again to the silver screen with “Sujon Majhi”. The film, which has been directed by Delowar Jahan Jhontu, will shoot till July 15. In the project, Ferdous will play a rural boatman, whereas Nipun will don the role of an educated, urban girl.

NEWS

No progress after MoU

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in September 2018 following allegations of malpractice and high recruitment cost of up to Tk 4 lakh.

In 2016, under government to government (G-2-G) plus mechanism the Malaysian government selected only 10 Bangladeshi agents to recruit workers, although the Bangladesh government had proposed 745 names.

After the latest MoU, recruiting agencies raised allegations that members of the previous “syndicate” have been active to interfere in the process again and create a “market oligopoly”.

The agencies under different banners organised a number of events in Dhaka over the past few months including roundtable discussion, press conference and human chain demanding an open market for all licensed agencies.

They also placed the issue before different government authorities, including the expatriates’ welfare ministry.

Expatriates’ Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad on a number of occasions said his priority is to create opportunity for all valid agencies and protect

workers’ rights.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, former general secretary of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said there should be better options for migrant workers to migrate at a minimum cost.

Besides, there should be better choices for Malaysian employers to approach the “best” agencies in Bangladesh, he said.

“The market should open immediately. However, a lack of proper planning in this regard is apparent,” he added.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, another former secretary general of Baira, said Bangladeshi recruiting agencies are ready to start sending workers to Malaysia anytime.

As per the new MoU, Malaysia will bear Bangladeshi workers’ migration costs incurred in that country, the expatriates’ welfare ministry said in a release following the MoU.

The costs employers will cover include the service charge of the Malaysian recruiting agency, travel to and from Malaysia, and accommodation.

Moreover, employers will pay the immigration, visa, medical test, insurance, Covid-19 test, and quarantine fees in Malaysia.

The presence of Malaysian recruiting agencies will be a new inclusion in the labour-sending process. Previously, recruitments were operated by Bangladeshi agencies.

Its implementation will be regulated by the JWG. Bangladeshi workers are expected to be hired in various sectors including plantation, agriculture, manufacturing, services, mining, quarrying, and construction.

Labour migration expert Shariful Hasan, now working at Brac, said Bangladesh needs to look at a number of issues, including migration cost, before sending workers abroad.

Migration cost should not exceed the amount of a worker’s wage for three months. However, a Bangladeshi male migrant worker needs about one-and-a-half years to recover his migration cost, he said.

There should also be monitoring to protect migrant workers’ rights such as living and work environment and

working hours to prevent exploitation.

Malaysia is the fourth largest labour market for Bangladesh after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Since 1978, Bangladesh has sent about 10.57 lakh workers to Malaysia, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

Before the market suspension in September 2018, Bangladesh sent 1.75 lakh workers there in that year alone, says BMET data.

In the previous three years, 1.7 lakh Bangladeshi workers went there with jobs, it says.

According to the “Cost of Migration Survey-2020” of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the average recruitment cost of a Bangladeshi worker in Malaysia is Tk 4.04 lakh and their average monthly income is Tk 25,600.

At this rate, a worker needs more than 15 months to recover the migration cost.

Until April this year from FY 2017-18, Bangladeshi migrants sent \$6.3 billion in remittance from Malaysia, Bangladesh Bank data show.

Mitali on its maiden run

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Bangladeshi one, which started for Dhaka at 2:45pm.

It reached Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station at 10:55pm, with the 12 passengers, railway sources said. Bangladesh Railway officials and staffers welcomed the passengers with flowers at the station, they said.

BM Shahidul Islam and Md Shahjahan Ali operated the train inside Bangladesh, which was scheduled to reach Dhaka cantonment station at 10:30pm.

It will leave cantonment station at 9:50pm on Thursday and is scheduled to reach New Jalpaiguri

station in India at 7:15am on Friday.

Earlier in the day, Rail Minister Nurul Islam Sujan, who is now in India, and Indian Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnav jointly flagged off the train virtually from the Rail Bhavan in New Delhi at 10:10am.

The programme was telecast live online.

The fully air-conditioned direct train with 10 coaches started from New Jalpaiguri around 11:45am.

Speaking at the programme, Rail Minister Sujan asked the authorities concerned to increase the frequency of the train to five days per week, instead

of two, as the route is likely to become popular.

He sought India’s assistance in the development of Bangladesh’s railway infrastructure, particularly in the conversion of the rail tracks into broad gauge.

The Indian rail minister assured Bangladesh of all cooperation in toning up the latter’s rail infrastructure and said, “India will never go back on its word in this endeavour.”

He described the Mitali Express as “yet another milestone” in enhancing the friendship between the two countries.

The Mitali was

inaugurated by the prime ministers of both countries on March 26 last year. But its operations, however, did not start due to the pandemic.

At minister-level talks afterwards, Sujan requested his Indian counterpart to ease the billing of projects, being implemented with Indian Line of Credits, and also requested them to supply 20 locomotives.

Earlier, India supplied 10 locomotives as a grant in early 2020, but it’s not clear whether the minister sought the new locomotives as a grant or on rent.

(Our New Delhi and Niphamari Correspondents contributed the report.)

More tax hike for the well-off

FROM PAGE 1
any time of the year; for balance between Tk 3 lakh and Tk 5 lakh, the excise duty is Tk 150.

For balance between Tk 5 lakh and Tk 10 lakh, the excise duty is Tk 500. Accounts that have more than Tk 10 lakh but less than Tk 1 crore any time during a year face a Tk 3,000 deduction as excise duty by banks.

Bank accounts are the biggest source of excise duty, which saw the second-highest growth in

collection in the first 10 months of the fiscal year, according to data from the National Board of Revenue.

Between July last year and April this year, Tk 2,811.6 crore was collected as excise duty, up 23.6 percent year-on-year.

The NBR is hoping to collect Tk 3,685.7 crore in excise duty this fiscal year.

Given the elevated inflation level and the recuperating economy, the NBR’s options for tax hikes to meet fiscal 2022-23’s collection target of

Tk 370,000 crore – its biggest yet – are down to squeezing the rich.

The government is already planning a hike in duty for luxury items.

And the planned hike in excise duty on high balance accounts is not welcome by bankers.

“The receipts from imports would see a jump because of the spike in value and there has been decent growth this year too. So what was the need for this?” said a chairman of a bank asking not to be

named.

The high-value accounts are mostly savings accounts and given people’s purchasing power has decreased, a hike in excise duty would be a fresh blow.

“I would urge the government not to do this,” he added.

BCL faction

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Chakraborty and Mohammad Rashed, leaders of the BCL faction, were assaulted near Madan Fakir Mazar Gate around 3:30am by several locals over previous enmity.

Pradeep said the men who assaulted them were drug dealers, they attacked him and Rashed.

The attackers also vandalised a motorcycle Pradeep and Rashed were riding, he added.

Soon after the incident, BCL activists blocked roads across the campus demanding arrest of the attackers.

Police arrested local Mohammad Hanif and were looking for others.

HC illegally entertained

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561A and stayed further proceedings of the case,” a four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC led by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique observed in the 16-page verdict released yesterday.

On April 13 this year, the bench of the apex court upheld a High Court verdict that in 2017 had cleared the way for the lower court to resume the trial of the corruption case against Zubaida.

On September 26, 2008, the ACC filed the case with Kafrul Police Station against Tarique and Zubaida, who are in London, and her mother Iqbal Mand Banu for amassing assets illegally and concealing information in their wealth statement.

Following the petition filed by Zubaida, the HC on April 8, 2009, stayed the proceedings of the case against her and issued a rule asking the ACC to explain why the

proceedings against her should not be scrapped.

After holding a hearing on the rule, the HC on April 12, 2017, rejected the petition, lifted the stay order and asked Zubaida to surrender before the court concerned in eight weeks.

In the full text of the verdict, the Appellate Division scrapped the stay order delivered by the HC in 2009.

ACC’s lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the apex court’s

observation indicates that the HC bench had violated the constitution.

The SC observed, “The judiciary should not create a precedent which cannot be applicable to all...”

In the premises above, we are of the view that the petitioner was a fugitive in the eye of law when she filed the application...”

Barrister Kayser Kamal, a lawyer for Zubaida, could not say anything about the apex court’s full verdict and its observations.