

Meet the man behind ‘OBAK BHALOBASHA’

Warfaze’s Babna Karim opens up to The Daily Star

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AAQIB HASIB

Legacy. It’s often an arbitrary word that is thrown around. But very few can truly say that their legacies have been solidified in the stars. Babna Karim is one such individual. The original bassist of Warfaze, Babna Karim has been the man behind some of the band’s most iconic songs.

While Babna *bhai* currently resides in the US, he visited Bangladesh for a short trip this January. Having loved his Warfaze songs for years, I had to sit down for an interview with the man himself.

How did you start out composing songs for Warfaze?

While I joined the band in 1986, I was not really composing music at that time. In 1987, Warfaze was really taking off. However, in the same year, my immediate older brother—who was in the air force—passed away in an

accident. At this time, I took a break from everything. I was only 18 at that point.

During this period of seclusion, I began composing music. However, I was not really composing for Warfaze, rather for myself.

Bicchunno Abeg was my first composition. After that came songs like *Ekti Chele* and *Boshe Achi*. Back then, I did write a lot of songs for Warfaze, but it was how the band came together, arranged the songs and added their own flavours to it that made them such great hits.

Is it true that you composed ‘Obak Bhalobasha’ on a BUET batch trip?

I had the tune for *Obak Bhalobasha* already, but I don’t think I had the lyrics. At that time, 17 of us from BUET had gone to Cox’s Bazar. This was my first time there. When my friends went to the beach, I stayed back because I wanted to work on the song.

Funnily enough, I had not taken my own guitar, because I was a little embarrassed about

what people would think. Thankfully, my friend Shuvo had brought his guitar. So, I continued writing the song that evening with his guitar.

It was on the roof of that Tnt resthouse that my friends heard the first version of *Obak Bhalobasha*, fresh out of the oven.

How do you feel about the fact that ‘Obak Bhalobasha’ has become such a phenomenon in Bangladesh? To this day, it is a song that resonates with people of all ages.

Every song has a statement, but I think some people might like it because they think it is a love song. But really, the song is about the love of existence. How we have been given this gift of life. I am extremely grateful to God for giving me this life, where in some ways every moment is a gift.

It was inspired by seeing how wonderful life can be, mostly when you see something enormous and beautiful like Cox’s Bazar. At the end of the day, I am extremely humbled by people’s love for this song. When I was writing it, I could never have imagined it would get to this level.

Could you tell us about your upcoming projects?

Romel Ali and I have many compositions in the pipeline for RBR’s next album. Right now, we are shortlisting songs for the album. I have also worked on something with Warfaze, which should be released soon. Personally, I want to continue working on my flamenco playing skills.



‘Black War’ to release in Australia

Arifin Shuvoo starrer *Black War*, which was released in theatres on January 13 locally, is all set to screen in Australia on February 10. Bongoz Films Australia, will be distributing the film across the country.

Director Sunny Sarwar said, “The international release of *Black War* is going to start with the release in Australia on February 10. I really hope the film will win the hearts of Bangladeshi audiences there.”

The film has been jointly directed by Sunny Sarwar and Foysal Ahmed. It also stars Taskin Rahman, Sadia Nabila, Jannatul Ferdous Oishee, Raisul Islam Asad, Sumit Sengupta, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Misha Sawdagar, Shatabdi Wadud, Manoj Pramanik, Iresh Zaker and Maznun Mizan.

Ben Affleck’s sports film on Nike to release on April 5



AIR, an upcoming sports drama starring Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, will premiere in theatres worldwide on April 5, prior to its release on Amazon Prime Video.

Amazon Studios, Skydance Sports, and Mandalay Pictures are financing the drama about popular sports brand Nike.

The film revolves around the story of Nike’s long-shot campaign to recruit emerging superstar basketball player Michael Jordan, for a shoe contract in the mid-80’s.

Damon portrays former Nike executive Sonny Vaccaro, while Affleck plays Nike co-founder Phil Knight.

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New outfit planned entry with a bang

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of the activities of the outfit and role of its military wing chief Mashukur Rahman, arrested on Monday.

According to Rab, Mashukur was an employee of a post office until 2007. He then started committing robberies.

In the following years, he was arrested several times on charges of robbery and sent to jail, where he came in contact with some leaders of militant group Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

According to Rab, he was radicalised in prison. After being released on bail, he became a JMB militant.

In 2017, he joined the Jama’atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, which was not known to law enforcers at the time.

Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s legal and media wing director, revealed Mashukur’s descent into militancy at the press conference.

On Monday, after a gunfight between a Rab team and militants, officers arrested Mashukur, who goes by the alias Ronobir, and another militant named Abul Bashar Mridha near Kutupalong Rohingya camp in Cox’s Bazar.

Moin said Rab found the video on Mashukur’s smartphone.

Mashukur, an expert on improvised explosive devices, became the military wing chief of the outfit a year ago, Moin said.

Under the direction of the ameer, he organised several “shura committee” meetings in Cumilla and different

other places.

The Rab official said Mashukur along with the other shura members was present at the signing of an agreement between Jama’atul Ansar and insurgents in the hills in 2021, regarding training of the military wing members.

“He visited the hill tracts on several occasions and supervised the training of the outfit’s military wing members,” Moin said.

The other arrestee, Bashar, who goes by the alias Alam, was an operative of Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh before joining the Jama’atul Ansar in 2016 or 2017. He was on Rab’s list of 55 youths who left their home in the last two years to become militants.

Keep economy in mind

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She directed the DCs to ensure safe use of information technology and the internet and prevent the misuse of social media.

Ensure law and order and be vigilant so that no one can disrupt communal harmony by spreading rumours, she said.

Hasina asked the DCs to conduct regular mobile courts to prevent child marriage, sexual harassment, food adulteration and manufacture of counterfeit goods.

Work towards building a developed, prosperous and Smart Bangladesh by 2041, she said.

Referring to a speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina told the DCs to serve the public as their salary and benefits come from taxpayers’ money.

“Devote yourself to the people and you will get the mental satisfaction.”

The DCs presented 245 proposals that include demands for more power and benefits.

However, government officials from different departments said some of those proposals, if approved, may aggravate them.

The Gopalganj DC proposed forming of a coordination committee to identify new sources of revenue in districts and upazilas. Before the Covid pandemic, this particular proposal was made by a DC at the annual conference and it aggrieved

the customs officials.

The DC also proposed formation of upazila-level health committees to ensure that the health department is properly doing its activities, said sources.

The job of maintaining buildings constructed by the public works department should be decentralised and funds should be directly allocated to the deputy commissioners, the DC demanded.

The Jhalakathi DC said development projects in an upazila should be implemented by the upazila parishad.

The DCs of Pirojpur and Jhalakathi said the DCs should be given the power to spend the development budget allocated by the public administration ministry to ensure efficient use of government resources.

The Khagrachhari DC proposed that the local administration be allowed to make inquiries in firearms use by the border guards eight kilometres away from the border.

The Barishal DC proposed that DCs be allowed to recommend individuals to be appointed as public prosecutors.

The Joypurhat DC said organ trafficking could be tackled by increasing the punishment for violations of the Human Organ Transplantation Act.

The Cumilla DC recommended

recognition of Cumilla city as an expensive area to live in.

The Mymensingh DC said executive magistrates conducting mobile courts should be empowered to deliver sentences under the Bangladesh Water Act in order to tackle pollution and encroachment.

The Moulvibazar DC said prison inmates should be allowed to make video calls to their families.

The Narsingdi DC proposed increasing of the health allowance for government officials and educational support stipend given to their children.

He also recommended construction of studio apartment complexes in each district for officers who live alone.

They treat us

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brought the current junta to power.

“They (the army) don’t think of us as people and treat us like animals,” said Thi Da, a 35-year-old ethnic Chin.

Her husband disappeared in September, following the 2021 army coup.

The 215-page complaint alleges the military “systematically killed, raped, tortured, imprisoned, disappeared, persecuted, and committed other acts that amount to genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes,” the campaign group Fortify Rights, which is leading the legal case, said in a statement.

BNP plans to get back

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will be staged to protest these counter programmes.

Three senior leaders told The Daily Star that they are likely to make an announcement at the February 4 rally about programmes like marches in Dhaka.

BNP standing committee members are also considering whether to announce similar programmes in the districts.

The standing committee, the highest policy-making body of the BNP, sat in a meeting on Monday night and discussed how the coming protest programmes can be diversified.

The top leaders also discussed how the simultaneous movement lacked pace and it may frustrate the activists, sources said.

“There was an excitement over the divisional rallies that was unprecedented. It is difficult to take the movement to that stage. But we are trying to find a way to bring back that excitement,” said a standing committee member.

Some of the programmes they

talked about included a long-march towards Dhaka, a road march, laying siege to the Secretariat and the Prime Minister’s Office. None of the events were finalised.

Contacted, standing committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said before the BNP started holding protest rallies in divisions, it organised rallies in upazilas.

“There was momentum in the Dhaka rally and it was successful. It was our plan to bring a large crowd and to announce the next phase of movement. At the Dhaka rally, we announced a 10-point demand and started an agitation programme,” he said.

“Every movement has phases and every phase has characteristics. So, it is not true that the movement lost pace. Rather, the strategy is set that way.”

The BNP started holding divisional rallies in October protesting the price hike of daily essentials, electricity and fuel and killing of the party men.

The party later launched a simultaneous movement with 38 like-minded political parties.

Nominations for Oscars

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After a short break came the nominations for “Original Song”. The first nomination went to “Applause” from film “Tell It Like a Woman”, after which “Hold My Hand” from “Top Gun: Maverick” was announced as a nominee. Third on the list was “Lift Me Up” from “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever”.

However, this side of the world was particularly expectant of one name, which was soon read out by Allison Williams – “Naatu Naatu” from Telugu film “RRR” – making history as the first ever South Indian film to ever be included in the prestigious Oscars.

The final nomination in the category went to “This Is a Life” from “Everything Everywhere All at Once”.

Following this, the nominees for categories like “Documentary Feature Film”, “Documentary Short Film”, “International Feature Film”, “Animated Feature Film”, “Makeup and Hairstyling”, “Production Design”, “Film Editing”, “Cinematography” and “Visual Effects” were announced.

It was then finally time for the “Actor in a Leading Role” category.

Austin Butler for “Elvis”, Colin Farrell for “The Banshees of Inisherin”,

Brendan Fraser for “The Whale”, Paul Mescal for “Aftersun” and Bill Nighy for “Living” received the nominations.

Then came the nominations for “Best Actress in a Leading Role”.

The first went to Cate Blanchett for “Tár”, followed by Ana de Armas for “Blonde”, Andrea Riseborough for “To Leslie”, Michelle Williams for “The Fabelmans” and Michelle Yeoh for “Everything Everywhere All at Once”.

Up next were the nominations for “Directing”, which was spearheaded by Martin McDonagh for “The Banshees of Inisherin”. Then came Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert for “Everything Everywhere All at Once”, Steven Spielberg for “The Fabelmans”, Todd Field for “Tár” and Ruben Östlund for “Triangle of Sadness”.

Finally, the night came to an end with the announcement of the nominees for the coveted “Best Picture” category.

Leading the nominations was “All Quiet on the Western Front”, followed by “Avatar: The Way of Water”, “The Banshees of Inisherin”, “Elvis”, “Everything Everywhere All at Once”, “The Fabelmans”, “Tár”, “Top Gun: Maverick”, “Triangle of Sadness”, and “Women Talking”.

Govt to form 2 probe bodies

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She said the expert committee will also review whether science was reflected correctly in textbooks and if there were any objections to the uses of photos.

The minister said students would get all textbooks by the end of this month.

Speaking at the briefing, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain said they have already announced scrapping of the Primary Education Completion Examination for class-V students.

He said they have arranged scholarship exams for the fifth graders to encourage the meritorious students.

Many errors in the new school textbooks were reported earlier this month after books were distributed among students. An allegation of plagiarism in the seventh-grade science textbooks was also raised.

Climate change makes Bangladesh more vulnerable

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“disproportionally” affected poor farming, fishing and other communities mainly relying on the extraction of natural resources for their livelihoods, the report said.

Once “deprived of their means of subsistence and forced to flee their community,” people were becoming easy prey for traffickers, Fabrizio Sarrica, the report’s main author told a press briefing.

In 2021 alone, climate-related disasters internally displaced more than 23.7 million people, while many others fled their countries altogether.

As entire regions of the world are at risk of becoming “increasingly uninhabitable,” millions will face “high risk of exploitation along migration routes,” the UN report said.

For the first time since data collection began in 2003, the number of victims detected worldwide fell in 2020, dropping by eleven percent compared to 2019, the Vienna-based UNODC said.