



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

## THE MELODY OF THE POLLS

### Sometimes genius, sometimes obnoxious

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DOWEL BISWAS

As the 12th National Parliamentary Election is only a few days ahead, aspirants are going above and beyond with their promotional activities to showcase what they can bring to the table. While every alleyway, street and locality has been adorned with posters, the most impressive promotion of this election is perhaps the innovative and catchy songs that are being played at political stalls, through mikes, moving vans and rickshaws.

One of the most popular songs in this category is *Joy Bangla, Jitbe Abar Nouka*, voiced by GM Ashraf and others. The timely and catchy lyrics, tonality and energy that the song ensues made it an instant hit in the 2018 parliamentary election, and it resurfaces with all its old glory with its new version released in November.

The producer of the song, Towhid Hossain, said in an interview they did not think that this song would become this successful, they wanted to make a song that would resonate with the youth of the country. “I and my team tried to create something that not only be

Aleya Sarwar Daisy, which became an instant hit after its initial release. The rap song, made by an artiste named Qpid, is comprised of the lyrics *Daisy Apa'r Dui Noyon, 31 er Unnoyon*, which instantly resonated with the people. Meme-makers on Facebook had a field day with the video.

On a more serious note, this election's top picks will be one of Bangladesh Awami League's theme songs, *Ekti Doler Jonno*, composed and arranged by Pavel Areen and sung by Pantha Kanai, Chandana Mojumdar, Dilshad Nahar Kona, and Masha Islam, amongst others. Another is *Amra Joy Banglar Louk*, composed by Emon Chowdhury.

Other popular songs include *Noukar Pale Legeche Hava, Teknaf Theke Tetulia, Bar Bar Dorkar Sheikh Hasinar Sorkar, Sheikh Hasinar Sarker Barbar Dorkar, Khela Hobe*, which are making waves across the country with AL followers flaunting their dance moves and support in poster-filled caravans.

Prominent singer Momotaz is probably having the most effective campaign as she is utilising her musical talents with prose

*Nouka Paiyachhe*, inspired from a *puthi* song, to further their campaigns.

Songs like *Bolo Heiya, Truck Markai Vote Chai*, and *Jonotar Prarthi Kamarul Bhai*, amongst others, are being played loudly through rickshaws, vans and in campaign stalls around Dhaka-06 constituency.

Although Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is not participating in the upcoming elections, followers of the party have not backed down from showing their love to the party by playing, *Khaleda Zia Jindabad*, Baby Naznin's *Gonotrner Maa Khaleda Zia* and Asif Akbar's *Jonno Tomar Juddhe Jawar* and *Jailer Bhetor Maa Ke Ar Thakte Debo Na*, in a relatively more subdued manner.

A notable trend within these songs is the fact that they are often based on other popular songs, and these templates are reused constantly. Politicians often depend on local sound mixing studios to make their own songs from a varied number of previously recorded templates. The Daily Star spoke to one of these studios, Kallyanpur's Komol Media. “We provide these services at every election, from national to regional. Our songs get used across the country over the years,” said the owner, Masum Rana.

“Most of our customers want modified versions of the old with their names and electoral symbols, as those are the most familiar and relevant to the voters, and also less costly. We also make new songs, but we take one or two days for that and in that case, we charge extra,” said Masum.

He informed that as they have their singers and sound designers ready during the election time, they only need 20 minutes and around Tk 2,000 to Tk 5,000 per song, based on the requirements of their clients. “Once the song is ready, we provide the song via a pen drive or links so that they can play them in any medium they want. We also upload it to our YouTube channel to attract clients,” he added.

Masum Rana also adds this practice has been going on for years and, he has never faced any hurdles or problems from the concerned authority ever regarding copyrights.

Speaking to followers in several stalls across the Farmgate and Panthapath area of the capital, The Daily Star found that the followers mostly played these songs from YouTube, and downloaded files provided by the senior members of the concerned political leader. In case of soundbox-laden rickshaws, or vans, they operate as per day allowances in their respective locality.

The Copyright Act 2000 and Copyright Rules 2006 in Bangladesh provide legal protection for musical work. A musician's copyright is seen as being just as valuable as an author's right in legalese. Nonetheless, in terms of these political songs, no consequence has been noted whenever they lift the tune or music from a preexisting popular song.

As the 2024 parliamentary elections are just around the corner, expect to be hearing more creative, catchy and sometimes obnoxious songs around your locality. However, there are some real musical gems hidden everywhere, even in songs used as political tools.

## Souls releases impromptu single on YouTube

Souls, a revered band in the country, has recently surprised fans with the release of their latest single, *Notun Shohor*, marking a fresh start for the new year. The song, crafted by London-based lyricist Sheikh Rana, was brought to life musically by Partha Barua.

According to an official statement from



Souls, the band spontaneously launched *Notun Shohor* on both their official YouTube channel and Partha Barua's personal channel on Tuesday night. The origin of this track dates back to Souls' commemorative trip to London last year, coinciding with their fifty-year milestone.

During an event in Birmingham, Sheikh Rana's presence sparked the conception of *Notun Shohor*. The song's accompanying visuals were filmed across diverse locations in Birmingham.

The recording of this new song took place at Be The Sound Studio in Birmingham, with Janis Krauklis assuming the role of recording engineer. Additionally, Ittehar, a consultant from TendT Consultancy, significantly contributed to the collaboration process.

This release adds to Souls' collection of seven songs, including *Kita Bhaishab, Rickshaw, Jodi Dekho, Hawai Mithai, Shagorer Prantore, Bondho Hoye Geche*, and *Joto Prem*, all part of the band's commemorative celebration of fifty years.

## Elvis Presley to come alive through AI for new immersive show



A forthcoming immersive Elvis Presley show is set to launch in central London later this year, utilising artificial intelligence (AI) to resurrect the king of rock 'n' roll, as announced by organisers yesterday.

*Elvis Evolution* showcasing a life-size digital Elvis performing on stage, is planned as the inaugural instalment in a series of shows set to take place in cities, such as Las Vegas, Tokyo, and Berlin.

The British company Layered Reality is using AI, holographic projections, augmented reality, live theatre, and multi-sensory effects to celebrate the life and legacy of the singer.

The event, which will open in November, will utilise advanced technology to tell the tale of Elvis' leap to fame along with his significance during the eras 1950s and 1960s.



promotional but will engage and mobilise people, mostly the younger generation, that's all.”

“The song became so popular that even Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met us and praised it. It's an achievement in itself. We added the new success stories, such as the inauguration of Metro Rail, Padma Multipurpose Bridge and Sheikh Hasina's leadership in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, to the song to make it even more relevant,” said Towhid.

While the aforementioned song got over on its quality itself, many others have used the Internet to become viral, as did the eccentric rap song by Nadif Sani, *Manik Bhai er Salam nin, Guys Be Careful*, to promote politician Hasibur Rahman Manik. Nadif, an Old Dhaka resident, became the talk of the town when various videos became subject to memes on the internet. The singer has gone on to make various renditions of this song.

The same happened to *Daisy Apar Salam Nin*, meant to promote Awami League-backed

to mobilise the people in her Manikganj-02 constituency. She has been seen readily making new songs and singing them at her electoral campaigns across the region. She also sang in Pritom Hasan's composition *Amra Nouka Chalai Re* and other favourites such as *Sob Natar Chaite Amar Sheikh Hasinai Bhala*, which are also being used in her and several others' campaigns. Emon Chowdhury makes yet another return to this list with *Amra Achhi Mathe*.

Followers of popular politician, Sheikh Tonmoy of Bagerhat-02 constituency are using *Tonmoy Bhaikhe Vote Dile Hobe Unnoyon*, Mahiya Mahi's Rajshahi-1 constituency *MP Nayika Mahire Truck Markai Ekta Vote Diye Ja* adapted from the famous Fifa World Cup'18 theme song *Ale Ale*, Ferdous Ahmed's Dhaka-10 constituency, *Sheikh Hasinar Nayok Ferdous Jitbe Re*, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan's *Kamal Bhai Er Hobe Joy* and politician Momin Munzil's followers are using *Momin Munzil Bhai Abar*

## ‘SWAPNER THIKANA’ director MA Khaleq no more

In a tragic turn of events, MA Khaleq, acclaimed director of the film *Swapner Thikana* and a distinguished freedom fighter, passed away, after a month of suffering from the aftermath of an unfortunate accident in Motijheel, in the capital.

Tragically, on Wednesday night, a sudden deterioration in Khaleq's physical condition occurred. His daughter, Fatema Tuz Johora, reported that he passed away around 3am before being taken back to the hospital. MA Khaleq was 73 years old.



MA Khaleq's illustrious career included the production of the much-anticipated film *Swapner Thikana* (1995), a cinematic masterpiece starring Salman Shah and Shabnur. The movie, which received widespread acclaim, marked a significant achievement in Bangladeshi cinema.

After achieving success in the film industry, Khaleq distanced himself from film direction for nearly one and a half decades.

Honouring his contributions as a freedom fighter, he was posthumously awarded the Guard of Honour. The final resting place for the esteemed director will be the intellectual cemetery in Mirpur.

## The love that people are showing me makes me emotional: Ferdous

**In a recent development, the renowned four-time National Film Award-winning actor, Ferdous, has transitioned from the glitz of the silver screen to the gritty streets of Dhaka-10 constituency. Nominated as a candidate for the Awami League, remains committed to being not just a reel hero but a true hero for the people he aims to represent.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Ferdous opened up about his new journey, his heartfelt experiences with ordinary citizens, and his aspirations for both his political career and continued success in acting.

“When people hear the name Ferdous, I want to be known as a hero of the people, not just a hero on screen. I want to work for their trust,” Ferdous passionately expressed, setting the tone for his unconventional foray into politics.

With an illustrious career spanning 25 years and a collection of National Film Awards, Ferdous has now shifted his focus to the political arena and is tirelessly campaigning for votes, reaching every nook and corner of his constituency.

“This is different for me. A new experience. But I am enjoying it. Inside me, a beautiful dream is building to be close to the people,” Ferdous shared, highlighting the genuine joy he finds in connecting with the citizens. His dream, he hopes, will grow as he endeavours to

work for and serve the people.

Ferdous's campaign has been marked by an outpouring of love and affection from ordinary citizens. For Ferdous, the essence of his political journey lies in the emotional connection with ordinary, hardworking people. He revealed, “Ordinary people show me love, affection, and blessings in a way that makes me emotional.” From receiving gifts like kites and flowers to heartfelt prayers from a rickshaw puller, Ferdous is touched by the genuine warmth of the people.

As for his future plans, he is determined to maintain his image intact, vowing not to play characters or work in films that diminish his standing. “As long as I can act in central characters, I will continue to do so,” Ferdous asserted.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED