

I'll never forget the ones who supported me

APURBA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The television drama industry has been abuzz for the past few days, with much discussion surrounding actor Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Alpha i Managing Director Shahriar Shakil, who found themselves in the limelight due to a 'misunderstanding'. During this period, artistes actively showed their support for Apurba on social media. Notably, producers, cameramen, makeup artistes, and others also rallied behind him.

Recently, in the presence of Apurba and Shahriar Shakil, members of the Television and Digital Programme Producers Association of Bangladesh (Telepab) and Actors Equity Bangladesh came together to resolve the issue. By the end of the meeting, both parties reached a consensus that, despite being initially labelled as embezzlement, the issue stemmed from a contractual dispute between them.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Apurba expressed his gratitude to the entire industry, while discussing the matter.

"I am deeply thankful to the entire industry. Till my last breath, I

will remember everyone who supported me during this time. Each expression of love, every word uttered in solidarity, will be cherished for a lifetime. These past few days have been memorable for me. I've been moved by the overwhelming outpour of love and the invaluable mental support extended to me. It's truly humbling," shared the actor.

Acknowledging the collective support from not only fellow artistes but also technicians, producers, makeup artistes, and cameramen, he continued, "I am indebted to each and every one of them. The depth of their affection is overwhelming, and it's a challenge to adequately reciprocate. Hence, I find myself expressing my gratitude repeatedly."

Having spent 20 eventful years in the industry, Apurba attributed his achievements to the collective efforts of everyone involved. "From tea boy to production head, everyone has contributed to my journey this far. This achievement cannot be taken away abruptly. I deeply trust the creator. My love for the artistes is deep, and I consider everyone dear to me."

"In my lifetime, I have devoted all my intelligence, effort, and time to acting. The world of acting has also given me a lot. It's not just a day's achievement, but years of hard work. I am the beloved son of the industry. Everyone respects me, and loves me. And I love them immensely too," the actor added.

Preferring not to dwell on past disputes, Apurba hinted that everything that needed

to be addressed was already communicated. He reflected on the camaraderie shared amongst colleagues during their recent gathering.

Having acted in numerous dramas throughout his career, Apurba expressed gratitude for the courage and love displayed by his co-actors, whom he considered akin to fellow artistes.

Earlier on March 14, Apurba was accused of embezzlement, breach of contract, and schedule manipulation. This complaint was made by the production company Alpha i Studios Limited.

According to the production company, after signing a contract for 24 dramas on the remuneration of Tk 50 lakh, Apurba participated in the shoots of only nine fictions, and received Tk 33 lakh from the company in advance. They also claimed that after receiving the advance money, Apurba suspended all kinds of communication with the company.

However, all litigations against the actor, including breach of contract and embezzlement, were resolved after a meeting with the members of Telepab and Actors Equity, which took place on Saturday (March 16).

The meeting, which lasted approximately six hours, was attended by key figures including Alpha i Managing Director Shahriar Karim Bhuiyan (also known as Shahriar Shakil), actor Ziaul Faruq Apurba, Actors Equity President Ahsan Habib Nasim, Actors Equity General Secretary Rawan Hasan, Telepab President Monowar Pathan, and Telepab General Secretary Sazu Muntasir.



PHOTO: SAKIB MUHTASIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Bangladeshi director Furukh dead in London car crash

Bangladeshi director GM Furukh, known for his work in TV series, passed away in a car crash in London on Sunday.



He was taken to the Royal London Hospital after being severely injured in the accident. Tragically, the artiste succumbed to death after nearly four hours of surgery.

Shahhin Khosru, another expatriate filmmaker in London, confirmed the news via a post on Facebook.

London expatriate Furukh was a resident of Sylhet's Beanibazar area. He used to direct local dramas in London in his regional language. He was also a member of Bangladesh Film Directors Association.

Drama inspired by Bailey Road fire tragedy coming this Eid



The event of the capital's Bailey Road fire tragedy — that took the lives of 46 people on February 29 — is going to be reprised through a drama loosely inspired by the event.

The television, **Ekti Khola Chithi**,

directed by Rejanur Rahman, will centre around a school teacher and his journalist daughter. Popular actors Jayanta Chattopadhyay and Ashna Habib Bhabna will play the lead roles.

Regarding the project, the director said, "The drama is not directly about the tragedy, but the story is somewhat inspired by the event. The characters are completely fictional."

The drama will be broadcast on the day before Eid at 7:50pm on Channel i.

NEWS

JnU student, asst proctor remanded

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Abontika's mother alleged that Amman sexually harassed her daughter both online and offline, while the assistant proctor reportedly verbally abused her when Abontika informed him about the matter.

Before her death by suicide on Friday night, Abontika wrote down the allegations on her Facebook profile.

Meanwhile in Dhaka, the JnU law department has declared a suspension of all academic activities for two days, protesting the incident.

The declaration was followed by a human chain in front of the vice-chancellor's office building around 11:00am, demanding justice for Abontika.

Sumaiya Soma, a student of JnU's theatre department, said, "A culture of impunity has been prevailing in the university for a long time, leading to the deaths of Abontika and others."

"The university administration is responsible for this. If it had kept the anti-sexual harassment cell functional and taken action based on a fair investigation, then no student would have lost their life."

She added, "We lost Abontika and others due to the lack of a fair trial in previous incidents and the absence of proper action. We demand justice for all such incidents, including Abontika's death."

Taukir Ahmed, another protesting student, said, "We demand the punishment to the culprits as soon as possible. Without a fair trial, there is no guarantee that such incidents will not recur."

Following the human chain, the protesters also staged a sit-in in front of the VC office until 3:00pm.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Advocate Nurur Rahman, former president of BLAST (Cumilla unit), said, "The culture of bullying has been on the rise. The Jagannath University administration cannot avoid the responsibility for Abontika's death due to bullying. Exemplary punishment should be meted out to the culprits."

(Our Correspondent in Cumilla contributed to this report.)

PSC to be revived

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Besides, to ensure consistency in recruitment practices, the report suggested establishing a research unit to assess district quotas, pay grades, recruitment rules, and qualifications for various positions.

"This unit will help identify any discrepancies and streamline the recruitment process," it said.

Several officials involved in the process, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star that the Constitution tasked the PSC with the recruitment of all government employees.

They said that a separate PSC was used to recruit employees of classes three and four after independence, but then the process went to the government's hands.

The Constitution mandates the PSC to appoint employees at all levels of the government.

Article 140(1)(a) says the PSC is "to conduct tests and examinations for the selection of suitable persons for appointment to the service of the Republic".

Regarding the formation of multiple PSCs to recruit government employees, Article 137 of the Constitution says that "provision shall be made by law for establishing one or more public service commissions

for Bangladesh, each of which shall consist of a chairman and such other members as shall be prescribed by law".

Public administration expert and a former additional secretary Firoz Mia lauded the government initiative.

"I think it's the best way. However, class four employee recruitment can be kept at the divisional level, and if the PSC thinks they can appoint them as well, then I don't see any problem," he told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain said the plan, however, was yet to be finalised.

"Maybe the employees of classes one and two will be recruited under PSC-1, and those of classes three and four under PSC-2. Maybe the recruitment will be done after strengthening the existing PSC. Everything will be confirmed when this plan goes to the implementation stage."

A senior official of the public administration ministry said that the report would be submitted to the secretary committee on administrative development, headed by the cabinet secretary.

"Subsequently, it will be forwarded to the prime minister for final approval."

Firing at Joydevpur

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Emerging from the discussion with president Yahya, Sheikh Mujib told reporters that talks with the president would continue and that his advisers would meet tonight with the president's aides to try to work out a "formula". He further informed that tomorrow morning he and six of his party leaders and advisers would meet with the president and his advisers.

He further said Awami League's stand regarding the formulation of the constitution was clear, and the whole world knew why the people of Bengal had made sacrifices. However, he pointed out that it was not an easy problem and sufficient time was needed to solve it. Later in the evening, three advisers of the Awami

League chief had a meeting with the advisers of the president.

On the 18th day of the non-cooperation movement, most of the schools, private offices, and institutions remained closed in East Pakistan. Black flags were hoisted at top houses and offices.

'HANDOVER POWER TO MUJIB'
NAP (Bhashani) chief Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani urged Yahya to immediately hand over power to the leader of the majority party, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He added that this is the only solution left to keep the two wings united. Speaking at a meeting with journalists in Chattogram, Bhashani said that if Yahya did not accept this proposal, Sheikh Mujib should immediately declare independence.

No plan to raise train fares soon

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travelling over 100km.

Currently, the BR gives a 20-30 percent rebate for those travelling over 100km. Once the BR cancels the facility that has been in place since 1992, the fares will go up, said officials.

Talking to The Daily Star on Saturday, Sardar Shahadat Ali, who is serving as BR director general as part of additional charges, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina already gave the go-ahead to BR's proposal to cancel the rebate.

He added that they were planning to implement the decision from April 1 and once the rebate facility is scrapped, train fares would increase.

Besides, this correspondent has obtained a document that is actually the synopsis of the rail ministry's proposal.

Zillul and Railways Ministry Secretary Humayun Kabir signed the proposal on February 13 and the prime minister on March 2, shows the document.

At yesterday's meeting, the minister, however, said the news on the move to hike the train fares is a "rumour". "People know who spread rumours ... who torch trains and destroy railway lines."

"The BNP is hatching conspiracies, and the party killed people by setting fire to train in Gopibagh recently. The entire nation knows it."

Although the minister held the BNP responsible for the fire, probe committee of railways authorities is yet to identify the culprits behind the arson attack on Benapole Express on January 5 that killed four people.

Talking about the derailment of Bijoy Express in Cumilla on Sunday, Zillul said the man who uprooted fishplates of the rail line fled the spot leaving an ID card and a bag after being chased.

"He did it in exchange for some money. BNP and its ally Jamaat usually do such things," the minister said, without giving any details.

BR has formed a committee, led by Anisur Rahman, divisional transport officer (Chattogram), to investigate the incident and asked it to submit the report within seven working days.

HC scraps stay

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The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadat Hossain said the bail of the accused will remain in force as per order of the Labour Appellate Tribunal and they must inform the tribunal if they go abroad.

The bench also stayed the labour court's directive that asked Yunus and others to comply with relevant rules in respect of the jobs of the workers till disposal of the appeals.

The HC delivered the verdict after holding a hearing on the rule that questioned the legality of the Labour Appellate Tribunal's stay order on the sentences of the accused.

DIFE lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told the HC bench that the US Ambassador Peter Haas has made a contemptuous remark when he said that the cases against Prof Yunus may represent a misuse of the labour law to harass and intimidate him, which is contradictory to a Vienna Convention.

Khurshid, however, could not place any media report to support the claim and said that he read the comment online.

The HC bench then said foreign diplomats should be careful while commenting on sub-judice matters.

According to media reports, the comment Khurshid talked about was made by US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller on February 12.

During the HC proceedings yesterday, Prof Yunus' lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun opposed Khurshid's move before the bench.

He told the HC that the United Nations and many Nobel laureates have made different statements about the cases and trial proceedings against Prof Yunus.

He asked whether all of them

Death toll

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Motaleb's daughter Monira Khatun told The Daily Star that her father was a day labourer. Her mother Ramisa Begum, 38, was admitted to the hospital with burn injuries.

Towhid's three-year-old sister Tayaba, who was injured in the fire, died earlier, said his uncle Md Asad.

On March 13, at least 32 people, including women and children, were injured after a gas cylinder caught fire following a leak.

Seventeen people are currently undergoing treatment at the hospital, while four others have been discharged.

would be brought to the book of law for making statements. He added that lawyer Khurshid lacked training, and therefore, he was causing harm to the court and the government.

Following a criminal revision petition filed by DIFE, the HC bench on February 5 issued a rule asking the state to explain why the Labour Appellate Tribunal's stay order should not be scrapped and halted the stay order until disposal of the rule.

That day, the HC said as Prof Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, and its directors Ashrafal Hassan, Nurjahan Begum, and M Shahjahan are on bail, their sentences will remain suspended.

On January 28, the Labour Appellate Tribunal granted bail to the accused following separate appeals filed by them.

On March 3, the tribunal extended the bail of the accused and set April 16 to hold another hearing on their appeals.

Singer Khalid

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proven when he was just in the first grade, inspired by Bhupen Hazarika's "Ganga Amar Ma".

At a fairly tender age, he began doing live shows for different events. He was one of the founders of Chime — one of the pioneering bands in Bangladesh during the 80s.

Beginning the band's journey with Ashiquzzaman Tulu, Shawquat Ali Emon and others, Chime held its first show in 1983 with an audience of 30,000 in Gulistan.

They did not have to look back after that.

In an earlier interview with The Daily Star, Khalid had said, "For our first album, I spent the money that was given to me by my family for food. I used it for recording ... We never compromised on quality. From the very beginning, we opted for the best recording instruments for our self-titled album."

His major albums with his band Chime are the self-titled "Chime", "Nari", "Jonmo", and "Kirtokhola".

For the last decade, Khalid had been living and doing shows in the US.

The singer visited The Daily Star office in November 2023, where he shared that he was planning to work on more albums soon.

The renowned singer is survived by his wife and son, who are currently in the US.

His namaz-e-janaza was held around 11:00pm, after which his body was sent to his hometown in Gopalganj for burial.