

FDC has now become a grazing field: Uzzal

“The previous government has inflicted wounds on every part of the state, and BFDC (Bangladesh Film Development Corporation) is no exception,” remarked veteran actor Uzzal. He has spoken to The Daily Star about various issues, including the censor board, the grant committee, and his expectations from the new government.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Some people say that the FDC of the past no longer exists.

Just as the former ruling party had destroyed the state, they also ruined all the institutions related to the arts and literature of the country by politicising them. BFDC has now become a grazing field. The floors of BFDC have been demolished, even though it was possible to develop the place, while keeping the floors intact. We have countless memories associated with each of these floors. The film industry has been heavily factionalised.

What do you think about the grants received all over these years?

Many undeserving artistes have received grants over the years. There has been politicisation here as well. Why have films been made by various ministries? This has led to a waste of public money.

Despite your illustrious career in the film industry for over five decades, you haven't been awarded a lifetime achievement honour or the Ekushey Padak.

If I wanted, I could have received major awards during the BNP government, but I did not. It is not in my nature. However, the previous government did not do so. There has been lobbying in grants, the censor board, national film awards, Ekushey Padak, and Independence awards. Yet, it was martyred President Ziaur Rahman who introduced the National Film Awards.

Could you elaborate on the establishment of the National Film Awards?

Probably in 1978, during the presidency of Ziaur Rahman, he was scheduled to visit the BFDC. Everyone was a bit surprised since there was no preparation or decoration for his visit. Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, who was then a minister, asked me to arrange a later event. However, we found out that the President was



Shah Rukh Khan honoured with Lifetime Award at Locarno



Last Saturday (August 10), Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan captivated Piazza Grande in Locarno, Switzerland, as he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, known as the Pardo alla Carriera or Career Leopard, at the 77th Locarno Film Festival.

On stage, while accepting the award, Khan expressed gratitude for his career and fans, saying, “For 35 years, I've had the chance to be a villain, a champ, a superhero, a zero, a detective, and a resilient lover. I usually don't attend events like this. I'm not great at interacting with people, just at acting a little – not too much.”

As per The Hollywood Reporter, Locarno organisers said the Lifetime Achievement Award honours his “outstanding career in Indian cinema, including over 100 films across diverse genres.”

Ongoing unrest casts doubt on Farin's upcoming film

In early August, it was revealed that Bangladeshi actress Tasnia Farin is set to co-star with Kolkata's megastar Dev. The actress shared her excitement about this new project titled *Pratiksha*, to be directed by Atanu Roy Chowdhury.

The future of the Dev-Farin starrer project has become uncertain following the recent change in the Bangladeshi government, brought about by a successful student movement.

Due to the current political climate, visas to India have been temporarily suspended too. This



has raised concerns about Farin's ability to travel to India for the film's shooting.

Speaking about her upcoming film with Dev, Farin recently shared, “I've finalised a project titled *Pratiksha* where I'll be acting opposite Dev. The shoot is set to begin in November. However, the current situation of the country has led the Indian government to indefinitely suspend visas.”

The actress further added, “I have no idea when the visa process will resume. This has made the entire film project uncertain. It feels like luck isn't on my side right now.”

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Besides being a cultural personality, you have direct involvement with politics. What kind of Bangladesh do you want at this moment?

There is significant inequality in Bangladesh. It is this inequality that led students to protest and achieve success. Just as the youth desire an egalitarian Bangladesh, I also want the same. The students have shown the way forward. Discrimination was the reason Bangladesh was created from Pakistan, at the cost of much bloodshed. There was a disparity in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres. I do not want that inequality anymore. I want to see a beautiful Bangladesh free from inequality.

The students aimed to end quotas and give merit its rightful place. Many young people, including Abu Sayed, lost their lives for this cause. In the new Bangladesh, I hope that the talented can fully develop their abilities.

What are your expectations from the new government?

We are fortunate to have a Nobel laureate as the head of the interim government. He has

global acceptance. The students brought about a significant revolution by ending autocracy. After that, the new government, referred to as the interim government, has taken charge. They are expected to bring about reforms and then hand over power to a government elected by the people through a fair election. I am optimistic about the new government, and hope they will deliver a free and fair election.

Widespread violence has been occurring throughout the country. What do you have to say about this?

For the last 15 years, there has been politicisation and repression. This has become known internationally, which has led to a strong stance in international politics. The police have not been on duty for some time, and some individuals are taking advantage of the situation, engaging in vandalism, arson, and looting. We do not support such actions. Our party has clearly warned against it. I want peace to prevail regardless of religion or ethnicity. We are all Bangladeshis.

already on his way.

He arrived and on that very day announced the National Film Awards. He also made announcements for the support of distressed artistes and grants. However, the previous government did not remember this. At no point during the National Film Awards was his name mentioned.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Ilias Kanchan commends students for traffic management

For nearly a week, the streets of Dhaka have been operating without the proper traffic police force. In their absence, students have taken it upon themselves to manage traffic regulations across the capital, earning widespread praise from the city's residents. Among those joining the students in this effort is the renowned actor and chairman of the Nirapad Sarak Chai (NISCHA), Ilias Kanchan.

“I've observed that none of the students are sitting idle, even for a moment,” said Kanchan. “They have taken to the streets with a commitment to ensuring the safety of the public. Everyone should love and respect the work they are doing.”

Kanchan also noted that while traffic chaos is often observed even with traffic police present, the streets have remained orderly under the volunteering students' supervision.



“I've also noticed that drivers are strictly following the students' instructions. They do so out of respect,” Kanchan remarked.

Meanwhile, the actor himself took to the roads to control traffic as NISCHA has announced that in this time of national crisis, with traffic police absent, they are supporting the students' efforts. The organisation has also launched simultaneous traffic management initiatives through its branches across the country.



PHOTO: RATUL CHOWDHURY

‘AWAAZ UDA-KOTHA KO’ Chobir Hat reopens after a decade

TASRIEFA TRISHA

Chobir Hat, a longstanding hub for students and progressives, reopened after a decade-long closure, symbolising much more than a physical space—it embodies a cultural spirit. The inaugural concert of the “newly independent Bangladesh”, titled *Awaaz Uda-Kotha Ko*, has recently taken place at Chobir Hat in Suhrawardy Udyan.

The concert was organised by students and cultural activists on Saturday (August 10).

Closed during the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's regime, Chobir Hat regained life following widespread student protests demanding quota reform, leading to the resignation of Sheikh Hasina on August 5. This cultural revival culminated in the *Awaaz Uda-Kotha Ko* concert.

Commencing at 4pm, the open platform welcomed musicians, poets, filmmakers, photographers, artists, and liberal-minded individuals, enriching the event's atmosphere. The programme opened with Tulkalam band's rendition of *Mone Pore Jay*, honouring martyrs of the anti discrimination student movement. Faria, from Tulkalam and an event organiser, highlighted their commitment to rebuilding Bangladesh. She emphasised the need for societal justice and well being.

The newly formed band, HO3DiVE, performed Janis Joplin's *Me and Bobby McG*, celebrating student sacrifices and freedom from the dictatorship's grip.

Jahir Rayhan's band presented *Pakhi Ure*, echoing student-government tensions, advocating for free speech and rights in the digital age. Rapper Hannan captivated the crowd with his rebellious anthem

Awaaz Utha, reflecting on his recent imprisonment for speaking truth to power. Shezan followed with *Kotha Ko*, another stirring anthem.

Musician and photographer Avishekh Bhattacharjee, invoking *Inquilab Zindabad*, praised Generation Z for their resilience during the protests, shifting his perceptions and affirming their vital role in shaping Bangladesh's future.

Popular singer Ahmed Hasan Sunny, along with R Bashar Lisan, Akil Ashraf, and Muiz Mahfuz, also graced the stage, each adding their unique voice to the concert's powerful message.

Syeda Nilima Dola, one of the event organisers of *Awaaz Uda-Kotha Ko*, emphasised to The Daily Star the importance of preserving Chobir Hat as a cultural beacon, advocating for an inclusive Bangladesh free of discrimination.