



I was ‘banned’ for seven years KANAK CHAPA

SAHID AKBAR

Kanak Chapa, a renowned singer of Bangladesh, is a three-time National Award winner. Despite her accolades, she faced years of exclusion from state-run media and events, including Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar. She was even barred from performing in stage shows across the country.

You were blocked from various platforms for many years due to your political involvement. How do you reflect on this now?

I was banned for a full seven years due to my political identity. Although it may seem irrelevant, the Covid pandemic taught me a lot. I realised that one can survive with fewer possessions. Excessive food and luxuries are unnecessary, and true peace comes from standing closely with people in need.

Similarly, the restrictions on my artistic expression have actually benefited me. Since birth, I've been immersed in music, barely having time for self-reflection. I never had the chance to consider which songs I should or shouldn't have sung. During this period, I found time to think and listen, especially during flights. I would read letters from my family, listen to Quran recitations, and watch good movies. In real life, I never had any personal time. During this ban, I read many valuable books.

As I have already sung the songs I could afford to, what was the point of restricting me? It doesn't matter whether they play on TV channels or not, my songs have reached the audience and remained. I've never participated in the rat race of life. Instead, I focused on caring for my mother and spending time with my husband and children.

As an artiste beloved by millions, how do you feel about the treatment you've received?

My country has always neglected me. I've rarely been invited to major stage programmes and have never been part of government delegations. I'm used to this. The National Award jury knows how many times I've been deprived of the award. Although I've

won it three times, the audience knows how many songs I should have been recognised for but wasn't. I have no regrets. Recently, the value of this award has diminished so much that I'm actually glad I didn't receive it. The love from the people has always been my strength.

An interim government has been formed following the ousting of the former AL-led regime. What's your opinion on this victory?



PHOTOS: STAR

After Almighty, I've always had faith in the youth. They are the strength and power. Fearless and extraordinary, they've shown that they aren't ignorant. While middle-aged people remained silent for years even when pushed to the wall, the youth demonstrated that tolerating injustice is also a crime. I often said on social media that the darker the night, the closer the dawn. They truly brought a new dawn, sacrificing their lives! May Allah reward them abundantly.

Can you share your thoughts on becoming active in politics?

I will continue to serve humanity as I have

done throughout my life. I can't say more than that. The political landscape is vast. I have the honesty and love required to work there, perhaps even more, but I'm just a politically minded person, not a political figure. I've realised how much knowledge a seasoned political personality possesses. I don't want to act ignorantly. Being active in politics requires in-depth study.

However, if ordinary people want to see me as their representative, I'll try to fulfil that role with my honesty and dedication.

As a singer, what are your expectations from the interim government?

My only demand from the country and the newly formed interim government is a Bangladesh free from deceit. I hope the new government will keep commodity prices tolerable, automatically deduct appropriate taxes at the source of income, eliminate bribery, and end street extortion. I also dream of a special lounge for our remittance-sending expatriates, similar to the VIP lounges. The allocated allowance for the elderly should reach them directly. People of all faiths should be able to live in this country with their full rights secured. I also want words like "underprivileged children" and "minority groups" to disappear from our dictionary and practical language use. Every school and college should have comfortable, usable bathrooms with soap and sanitary towels. I hope these hopes of mine get fulfilled.

What are your thoughts on the current music scene? When do you think the golden days of music will return?

Music is still being created. Artists are releasing their own songs, posting about them on social media, and others are reposting them. Artists are satisfied with this. Meanwhile, songs are getting millions and billions of views on YouTube as well! The entire music world (I don't call it the music industry) seems extremely content with this. I believe this contentment is one of the main reasons music has lost its way. When our celebrity stars (we're not producing artistes anymore, everyone's either a king or queen!) move beyond this race for billions of views and start quenching the real thirst for music, only then will music return to its rightful place. Not a day sooner.



Farhan Akhtar marks acting return with war drama

Farhan Akhtar, who last starred in the 2021 film *Toofaan*, shared the first poster of the upcoming war epic *120 Bahadur* featuring himself in the titular role.

In an Instagram post, he wrote, "It's an honour to share the story of Maj Shaitan Singh PVC and the soldiers of Charlie Company, 13 Kumaon Regiment. Their legacy showcases their remarkable courage and heroism against all odds."

Directed by Razneesh "Razy" Ghai, known for *Dhaakad* (2022), *120 Bahadur* has begun filming in Ladakh.

Sabnam Faria calls out bias in award recognition



Actress Sabnam Faria, who was led to believe she would certainly win the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress in the 2018 film *Debi*, was ultimately let down.

Directed by Anam Biswas, the film features Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury and Sabnam Faria in pivotal roles.

Yesterday, Sabnam Faria has finally addressed the issue on her social media, stating, "Everyone talks about power and influence. How far does it really go, how big is its reach?"

"When the gazette listed someone else as the winner, I didn't lose sleep over it, but it's interesting how nature reveals injustices happening right before our eyes."

She concluded by expressing hope that all forms of recognition, including the National Award, be based on merit and skill rather than insincere flattery.

COUNTRYWIDE

BAGERHAT TOWN

Rain exposes poor drainage system

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY

The recent rainfall has once again exposed Bagerhat municipality's woefully inadequate drainage system and the sufferings it can cause to town dwellers.

Residents living in the municipality town always remain in constant fear as even a brief shower of one or two hours could once again submerge the town.

The drainage system of the municipality is so inadequate that even normal rainfall exceeds its capacity, local residents said.

They also urged the authorities concerned to take immediate step to prevent future flooding.

Last week, several hours of continuous rainfall flooded the entire town brought the daily life to a standstill.

Several important roads, including Khan Jahan Ali Road, Rail Road and PTI Intersection, and many residential areas of the town were completely submerged, making it difficult for local residents to manage their daily life.

People living in the town's low-lying areas were the worst sufferers as most

of the roads in those areas were either impassable or waterlogged.

Meanwhile, townspeople are getting extremely frustrated by the frequent waterlogging issue.

Sabiha Khanam of Puratan Bazar area said, "Water enters our houses even after a little rain. All the families here have been experiencing the same problem for a long time."

People won't get relief from such a situation until the drainage system is improved, she added.

While talking, Manik Howlader, a pedestrian, also blamed the long-neglected poor drainage system for the flooding and waterlogging.

Despite repeated attempts this correspondent could not reach any high officials of the municipality for their comments in this regard.

Earlier, Assistant Engineer Rezaul Karim Rizvi said repair work of five kilometres of drains in already underway. The municipality also have a plan to excavate the five canals, flowing through the town, to fix the waterlogging problem, he said.

197 global leaders

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pointing to the role of Yunus and student leaders in ushering in a new era of democracy.

The call for change began after a violent crackdown by forces loyal to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in response to student-led protests. The students, demanding her resignation, ultimately succeeded when Hasina fled the country on August 5. Yunus was then chosen by student leaders to head the government.

"Just as the nation's young people have inspired [Muhammad Yunus], we know that he will inspire them to play a leadership role in bringing a bright new future to Bangladesh," the letter reads.

The global leaders expressed strong support for the interim government's commitment to restoring democracy through free and fair elections.

"We stand ready to help in any way we can to support the efforts of Bangladesh and

the interim government to lead the world in creating a new and better civilisation," they continued, echoing Yunus's longstanding vision of societal transformation.

Earlier, sitting heads of state, international institutions, and leaders like UN Secretary-General António Guterres voiced their backing for Yunus. Guterres emphasised the UN's full support for an inclusive and prosperous democracy in Bangladesh, pledging to collaborate closely with the interim government.

Former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, also a signatory to the letter, expressed his hopes for a brighter future. "I sincerely hope that, under Yunus's leadership, the people of Bangladesh will be able to enjoy freedom and that he will help Bangladesh become a free and democratic country."

Sam Daley-Harris, founder of Civic Courage, had urged global citizens to join the movement in support of Bangladesh's democratic aspirations.

Probe each

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and condemned such ruthless acts and expressed deep concern over the incidents," according to a statement of the foreign ministry.

The government of Bangladesh reminded the

Indian government that such incidents of border killing are undesirable and unwarranted and such actions are in violation of the provisions of the Joint Indo-Bangladesh Guidelines for Border Authorities, 1975.

Single-use plastics

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The letter also discouraged the use of plastic in flower bouquets.

The cabinet division has requested all senior secretaries, secretaries, divisional commissioners and district commissioners to instruct their respective ministries/divisions and affiliated offices/agencies to take appropriate actions on these matters.

Additionally, as part

of awareness building and taking effective steps against plastic pollution, the cabinet division has asked all secretaries of ministries/divisions to implement measures to declare the secretariat free from single-use plastics, as per a letter on August 15.

A date will be set for making the secretariat free of single-use plastics following further discussions, Hasan told The Daily Star.

Three more ICT cases filed

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Families of victims started filing complaints against Hasina and others with the ICT after Law Adviser Asif Nazrul on August 15 said the interim government decided to try them at the tribunal for the killings during the mass uprising.

Meanwhile, a case was filed in Rajshahi against Hasina and 177 others over the 2015 murder of a BNP leader.

Hasina is now facing at least 129 cases -- mostly on murder charges. Such a spree of filing cases against Hasina and others has prompted experts and the interim government to issue warnings.

In a press release on Wednesday, the National Human Rights Commission said putting people's names as accused in an uncontrolled manner weakens the cases.

"Inconsistent and deliberate cases aimed at harassment are not acceptable in any way," the commission said, calling for filing cases on specific charges. It also urged the law enforcement agencies to refrain from making arrests just because of these cases.

Of the three latest ICT cases, Supreme Court lawyer Abdus Sattar Palwan filed a complaint on behalf of

Sayed Akhter, sister of Anhaf Abir Ashrafullah of Delduar Upazila of Tangail, against Hasina and 35 others.

Ahhaf, a third-year student of Manarat International University, was shot dead at Baipail in Ashulia on August 5. The other accused include former ministers Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Mohammad Ali Arafat, top former police officers, and leaders of the AL and its front organisations from Savar upazila.

Khairul Islam, brother of Saiful Islam Sekul of Durgapur upazila in Netrokona, filed another complaint with the ICT against Hasina and 22 others.

Saiful, an expatriate from Malaysia, was shot dead in Uttara on August 5.

Apart from Hasina, former ministers Quader, Asaduzzaman, Anisul Huq, Hasan Mahmud, Hasanul Haq Inu, Matia Chowdhury, Abdur Razzaque, Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Mohammad Ali Arafat, former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, former DB chief Harunor Rashid, former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, former director general of RAB

Harun-Or-Rashid, the then officer in charge of Uttara East Police Station, Chhatra League President Saddam Hossain and General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Inan, former Netrokona AL MPs Ahamed Hossain, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Mostak Ahmed Ruhi and Sajjadul Hassan, and former Awami Jubo Mohila League general secretary Apu Ukil were made accused in the complaint.

The third ICT case against Hasina and the 22 others was filed by Bachchu Sarker, the father of Mehedi Hasan of Netrokona's Kalmakanda upazila who was shot dead by law enforcement agencies in the Savar Bazar Road area on July 20.

The same people were accused in the cases filed by Khairul and Bachchu.

In Rajshahi, the murder case was filed by Most Masufa, wife of slain ward unit BNP leader Majir Uddin, at Puthia Police Station on Wednesday night. Besides Hasina and the 177 others, including former ministers Quader, Asaduzzaman and former state minister for foreign affairs Shahriar Alam, Masufa accused 260 unnamed people of killing her husband, said Kabir Hossain, OC of the police station.

Man beaten up

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happened around 12:15am in the Sonadanga residential area.

Locals and some police officials wishing anonymity said that the man posted "offensive" content on his social media page, prompting some students to confront him around 8:30am. They took him to the KMP DC's office at Sonadanga.

As news of the post spread, hundreds of locals gathered outside the office, demanding the man be handed over to them.

To prevent the situation

from escalating, teams from the army and the navy went there to assist the police control the crowd. However, when police brought him out to take him to the police station, the mob beat him up severely.

KMP DC Tajul Islam said he had assured locals that legal action would be taken against the man, but the mob did not listen.

The ISPR press release said when members of the armed forces reached the spot, some unruly people attacked the man who was in

police custody.

Members of the armed forces put in a tremendous effort to rescue the person alive, it said.

The press release noted that a case against the accused over hurting religious sentiment was under process of being filed, and subject to his recovery, the army will hand him over to law enforcement agencies following due process.

ISPR requested people to not be misled by rumours on social media about the death of the person in question.



This road in front of Bagerhat Municipality Office often remains filled with rainwater even after a brief shower, exposing inadequate drainage system of the municipality.

PHOTO: STAR