

Dr Jahangir Kabir: A perfectionist at heart

As the Chief Cardiac Surgeon & Director at the Cardiac Centre of United Hospital, Dr Jahangir Kabir needs no introduction. A legend in his field, everyone looks up to him for critical and challenging cases — a beacon of hope and a torchbearer for future generations of surgeons. But if one were to dig deeper behind this persona, they would find a perfectionist, an artist of the heart.

Like Rome wasn't built in a day, of course, the surgeon too has honed his skill with time, just like musical maestros who develop their skills for years and years. Dr Kabir believes that confidence is key. "You will be able to keep your calm during a surgery when you have embodied confidence within you," he says. "You have to build yourself to that extent, so that you can deal with the fine details, where every stitch has to be perfect, all done in a limited window of time."

It is evident that he is a huge music fan, not only from the fact that he loves talking and drawing inspiration from it as an art form, and the immense discipline it takes to master it, but also because it is not uncommon for him to listen to music while performing surgery. "I listen to a lot of music. It really relaxes me," he says.

Meanwhile, in the 'art' of heart surgery, he is a master artist. And for every artist, the biggest reward is personal satisfaction — as the surgeon says, we all of course need to earn money, but personal satisfaction is paramount.

For Dr Kabir, one of his most cherished rewards is the gratification of having built a body of enthusiastic and skilled cachet of human resource for his field. "The biggest asset is people. If we can collectively nurture people, we can build a nation," he says. "At my age, my concern is how can I train and groom more surgeons."

Another reward that he has achieved and holds very dearly is the satisfaction

or happiness of the patients. "I ask myself, have I been able to reach the 'heart' of the patients? After all, many of them arrive in very distressed conditions."

Despite his overwhelming schedule, he finds time not only to listen to music, but also to collect paintings, both by Bangladeshi and international artists; he has a collection of brilliant artworks by a number of renowned painters.

Perhaps it was his mother who instilled this love of painting, as she used to paint ardently.

On the other hand, during his student life, he was very much into sports and athletics, from running marathons to playing table tennis to cricket; he was a good spinner, he says.



"We only get one life. We should enjoy it!" Dr Kabir adds.

Truth be told, the dynamism of the doctor was easily indicated even in his early years, especially as a student, with the active participation in various extracurriculars, despite the load of medical studies.

After the end of college, over the many years of learning, practicing at various prestigious institutions, he became, to say the least, one of the finest cardiac surgeons Bangladesh has produced — the artist who has perfected his art.

By M H Haider
Photo: Nayem Shaan and Personal Collection

