

A three-day Nazrul festival was held in 1999 at the National Museum. The Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha along with Feroza Begum, the then Chairperson of the organisation render Nazrul songs.

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Born in an aristocratic Muslim family in Faridpur district in the 1930s, Feroza Begum became drawn to music in her childhood. She had no formal education in music, but she used to render songs on the megaphone listening to contemporary music on records of the then popular singers such as Aashchorjomoyee Devi, Sati Devi, Angur Bala, Indu Bala and Swarnokumari Devi in the pantry of her parent's house. She became so devoted to music that it was an all-encompassing preoccupation. At this stage of her life she got enormous support from her family and took part in school music competitions.

"I always dreamt of recording my songs and hoped everybody would listen to my music," says Feroza Begum, "Which is why I always wanted to go to Kolkata since songs were recorded there."



With Kazi Nazrul Islam and others at Nazrul's Kolkata residence on Christopher Road.

Her dream came true in the summer of 1940. While a student of only class four she went to Kolkata to visit her maternal uncle's house. That trip turned out to be her first break. Her maternal uncle and a cousin took her to the rehearsal room of popular music production company HMV where National Poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam and his colleagues used to mingle.

"Before going there uncle told me to render songs whenever asked to do," says Feroza Begum describing her first meeting with Kazi Nazrul Islam and his associates, "I did not know much about Kazi Nazrul Islam nor had I known him. Entering the rehearsal room I found six/seven people; one of them welcomed me 'esho khuki esho' (actually he was Nazrul). He asked my name and