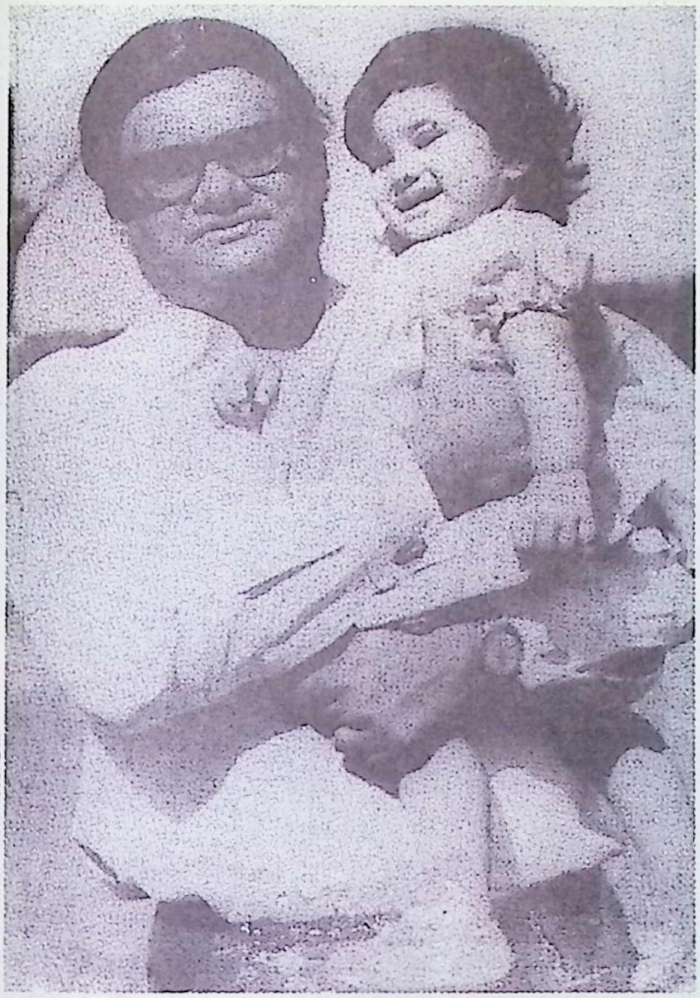


PHOTO COURTESY: MIR SHAMSUL ALAM

With his daughter Elora Kabir.

From Palestine and Algeria to the liberation war of Bangladesh, the word freedom always inflamed Kabir's desire to fight.

just translate the desires of a woman on the big screen but also focussed on the urge for freedom reflected through a male perspective. It was, thus, not merely a feminist film but also provoked a common need of people from every region, gender, age, race – the need for freedom.

From Palestine and Algeria to the liberation war of Bangladesh, the word freedom always inflamed Kabir's desire to fight. Hence, the word freedom would naturally appear in all of his six feature films, either in the form of a dialogue or interwoven into the narrative of the story. According to Tanvir Mokammel, no one can wholly understand the relevance and reality of Liberation War and the urge for freedom without knowing the days of turmoil of the 1960s. Alamgir Kabir superbly played his part both as a filmmaker and as a fighter both during and after the liberation war to free the country from social injustice.

In the early 80s, along with a group of youngsters, Kabir initiated the film society movement. He was considered a mentor because of his refreshing perspective of films. Late Tareq Masud in his memoir, "Cholochitrajatra", admits that Kabir's contribution to his journey as a filmmaker was immense. When Tareq was making 'Adam Surat', Kabir stood beside him with all his resources. He gladly gave his 16mm camera to shoot the documentary on SM Sultan. According to Tareq, Kabir was always sympathetic to the filmmakers who didn't have money in their pockets to make a film. He wrote in his book, "He helped me in every way. To pay my gratitude I dedicated 'Adam Surat' to him."

Alamgir Kabir's co-workers, admirers and students aptly call him *Cholochitracharya*. According to documentary film-maker and activist Manjare Hasin Murad, he felt completely and personally co-opted by the massive social, economic and cultural developments that were profoundly transforming people in the post-war society and was able to perfectly capture it in his cinema. Moreover he played a crucial role as a social reformist. And that is why Murad believes, "The word *Cholochitracharya* goes well with him."

Renowned writer Syed Shamsul Haq, who was also a school friend of Alamgir Kabir, explains why the word *Cholochitracharya* suits him more than anyone else. He explains that the term "Acharya" is most often said to include the root "char" or "charya" meaning conduct. Thus it literally connotes one who teaches by conduct. He says, "Kabir had charismatic power. He was an intellectual filmmaker and a rare personality in our country. He wanted to create an innovative film language. And for that matter, I believe he deserves national recognition."

Besides his extraordinary achievement in filmmaking, Kabir and his films still retain for us a sense of revolution that proposes both freedom and social justice that has rarely been seen in the works of any other artist in the country. ■