

## THE POET, THE COMPOSER, THE VOICE OF MELODY



A tape record from the Gramophone Company of India; with composer husband Kamal Dasgupta; with Nazrul, her lifelong inspiration.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## The nightingale will sing on

FROM PAGE 1  
either in Bangladesh or in West Bengal, has been able to match. The richness of Nazrul music, to the accompaniment of Feroza's voice, achieved a distinctiveness all its own. You could suggest, and no one would disagree, that Nazrul and Feroza were made for each other. Or broaden the thought. Feroza Begum and music were made for each other. Into the warmth of her life came Kamal Dasgupta, that famous name whose compositions are yet remembered as being some of the finest in the Indian subcontinent. And then came, into the family, a new generation of music makers. Her three sons proved the truism that music could be a generational, indeed a dynastic affair.

Go back to Feroza Begum. In mra aar jonome, she makes the music rise to a crescendo. And it must rise because her voice reaches out to the skies, to have you know that love between man and woman is fundamentally a sublime affair. She was no more than twelve when the world became her stage. She burst forth with her first album. And on it were such Islamic songs as *morur buuke jibon*

*dhara and Nabiji esho go*. She was always grateful to Chitta Roy for the musical compositions of the songs.

That gratitude comes through in the perfection she gave such defining songs as *tumi shunite cheyo na amar moner kotha*. Imagine a forlorn lover-woman, in plaintive mood, on the banks of a bucolic stream, missing the lover she will not, must not forget. It was such a woman who came alive in Feroza Begum. But, then again, Feroza's exquisite artistry adroitly transformed this heart-break into the luminosity of spring when she sang *tumi shundor tai cheye thaki priyo*. In the beauty of Nazrul songs she spotted the beauty of the poet Nazrul. As she would relate the story, her meeting with Nazrul was a matter of destiny. They met at a radio station. The poet wondered why she had elected to sing songs that quite did not go with her tender age. Her love for songs, she replied, defied her age.

That was the principle she held dear all her life. She went out to the wider world --- to America, to

Europe, to the rest of the subcontinent --- and made a gift of Nazrul to men and women who sought the meaning of existence in poetry and song. There was no stopping her, as there is no stopping the river from flowing. She was a mystic, in that special sense of the meaning, enriching lives with melody. Her rendition of *Laily tomar eshechhe phiriya* has for ages kept the heart throbbing in beautifully searing pain. And in *chumki chumki dheer bhiru paaye polli balika bon pothe jaaye*, the image is of an adolescent girl blossoming warily yet excitedly into womanhood. Feroza Begum sings and, as it were, dances through the song. It is all before you --- the girl-woman, the fallen leaves, the liberating woods. Only Feroza Begum could cause such magic.

The nightingale will not sing any more. But must we complain? Feroza Begum's songs have always played in our homes, in our courtyards --- like butterflies caught in the ecstasy of being part of the universe. The nightingale's songs will indeed be heard on the banks of the moon-bathed river.

## PM for universal health protection

UNB, Dhaka

Expressing optimism that the World Health Organization will come up with more technical assistance for its member countries, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to vow afresh to ensure universal health protection to turn their population into human resources.

"Let's reiterate our pledges for ensuring universal health protection. This is the best way to turn population into manpower and make development sustainable. We can attain this only through united efforts," she said.

The PM was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Countries of the WHO South-East Asia Region and the 67th Session of WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia.

Noting that Bangladesh has been actively participating in all programmes and discussions of WHO, Hasina said, "I hope WHO will become a stronger organisation

through implementation of reform programmes and be able to give more technical assistance to its member countries."

The government has introduced countrywide intensive monitoring system of pregnant mothers and children in a bid to implement the world strategy paper on mother and child related aspects of the UN, she mentioned.

Bangladesh, added the PM, has eradicated polio and leprosy diseases while various programmes are being implemented to control transmissible diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, avian influenza, anthrax, Nipah and dengue.

Presided over by Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, the function was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Health Zahid Malek, Indian Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan, DG WHO Margaret Chan and WHO South-East Asia Regional Director Poonam Khetrpal Singh.

## Fabled Franklin

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Sir John Franklin led the two ships and 129 men in 1845 to chart the Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic.

The expedition's disappearance shortly after became one of the great mysteries of the age of Victorian exploration.

"I am delighted to announce that this year's Victoria Strait expedition has solved one of Canada's greatest mysteries, with the discovery of one of the two ships belonging to the Franklin Expedition," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a statement.

"Finding the first vessel will no doubt provide the momentum - or wind in our sails - necessary to locate

its sister ship and find out even more about what happened to the Franklin Expedition's crew."

The loss of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror prompted one of largest searches in history, running from 1848 to 1859.

The mystery has gripped people for generations, in part because no one knows for sure exactly what happened to the crew.

Reports at the time from local Inuits say the men, desperate for food, resorted to cannibalism before they died.

Sir John Franklin's wife spear-headed an attempt to find him, launching five ships in search of her husband and even leaving cans of food on the ice in the desperate hope he would find them.

## JS panel for scrapping

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Suranjit Sengupta told a press briefing after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"This is a small amendment to the constitution. There is no need for such a long preamble to the bill," he mentioned.

Sources said committee members at the meeting came down heavily on the law minister for needlessly including the preamble to the bill.

Instead of the present preamble, the committee will propose a preamble in a sentence.

The preamble, said Suranjit, states that Article 96 of the constitution will be revived to restore parliament's authority to remove a SC judge. But it is not possible now as the retirement age of the SC judges was 62 in the constitution adopted in 1972 but was raised to 67 through a constitutional amendment in 2004, he pointed out.

"Therefore, it's not possible to restore Article 96 to its original position. Many judges will lose their jobs if we go back to the original provision," said the legislator.

The preamble also put the blame on

military ruler Gen Ziaur Rahman for introduction of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) through a martial law order in 1978 to remove SC judges.

However, the provision for the SJC introduced by the military ruler does not exist in the constitution any more as it was declared illegal and void by the SC earlier.

The present provision for the chief justice-led SJC was introduced by the Awami League-led government through the 15th amendment to the constitution in 2011.

The preamble, however, concealed this fact.

In Suranjit's view, the preamble also unnecessarily spoke about the impeachment, removal and resignation of the president, prime minister and speaker. They are elected representatives of the people, but the judges are appointed officials, he added.

Asked whether the parliamentary body would seek the opinion of stakeholders, the committee chief said they would do so if the law ministry agreed. The law minister will inform the committee today about the government's position on it.

## 20-party

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authority to impeach Supreme Court judges on grounds of misbehaviour or incapacity.

The existing constitutional provision for the chief justice-led Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) will cease to exist once the bill is passed.

With the scrapping of the SJC, parliament will have the power to impeach those holding constitutional posts, such as chief election commissioner and election commissioners, public service commission chairman and members, comptroller and auditor general. They may be removed the same way as the SC judges.

The House will also have the authority to impeach some other statutory functionaries like chairman

and commissioners of the Anti-Corruption Commission, chief and members of the National Human Rights Commission.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address a rally in Jamalpur on September 25 demanding polls under neutral administration, protesting recent National Broadcast Policy and restoring the parliament's authority to impeach judges, Sayrul Kabir Khan, a media wing staff of the BNP chief, told The Daily Star. She will also protest abductions, forced disappearances and killings across the country.

Party insiders said Khaleda decided to visit several districts to wage movement against the government. Her visit to Jamalpur is part of the decision.

## Muhith hits back

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(JB) on Monday, alleged that the CSR activities were halted as he had not entertained a request of the minister to finance a boat race in Sunamganj.

"His [Barakat's] term has expired and it will not be renewed anymore. He may have grievances for this," said Muhith yesterday, indicating that Barakat had made the remark out of this grievance.

Asked if he really had made the request Barakat claimed, the finance minister said he could not recall any such incident.

The finance ministry had no record in their files either which could prove any letter was sent to the immediate past JB chairman in this regard, Muhith told journalists at his office.

Prof Barakat was appointed the JB chairman for three years in September 2009. The tenure was later extended by another two years that expired on Monday. Barakat was kept in the post for

around five years and it was enough, Muhith said, adding that there are a number of intellectual giants among Awami League supporters in the country.

"So, we have to look after their interests as well. There is no reason to expect that a chairman will retain the post for an indefinite period."

On August 28, the finance ministry's banking division issued a notice forbidding Janata, Agrani, Rupali and Bangladesh Development Bank from spending anymore under the CSR until further instructions.

The decision was taken after it had been found the banks were spending huge amounts of money as the expiry of the bank chairmen's tenures were nearing, Muhith said.

When the AL-led government assumed power in 2009, Janata was in a good shape. But its condition has deteriorated now and the amount of default loans has increased, he added.

## Leading jurists call for dialogue

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An amendment to the constitution might be extra-constitutional despite the fact that parliament can do it on the basis of majority, said Dr Kamal.

The Supreme Court cancelled the eighth amendment to the constitution though it had been brought by the majority in parliament, he said.

Referring to the mistakes in the bill's preamble, he said there should be an enquiry about the person who prepared the draft of the bill.

He also raised doubts about efficiency of the drafter.

The law minister had practised at the Supreme Court for long. It was impossible that he would forget laws after becoming minister, said Dr Kamal.

Time should be taken and discussions should take place before any amendment is made to the constitution.

He questioned why the amendment should be brought in three to seven days.

The eminent jurist urged all lawyers to get united to protect the constitution and independence of the judiciary.

M Amir-Ul Islam, another framer of the constitution, said the 1972 charter gave powers to parliament to remove judges because the Supreme Court was not "mature" then.

The 1972 constitution suggested formulating a law for appointing judges, but such a law was yet to be made, he said.

Discussions are needed for bringing an amendment to the constitution.

"The judiciary has played a very effective role in establishing the constitutional supremacy through the second-generation judgment that revoked the eighth amendment to the constitution," he said.

The "third-generation judgments" cancelled the so-called caretaker government system and extra-constitutional democracy, said the senior legal expert.

Former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque is the pioneer of the third-generation judgments, as he cancelled the fifth amendment to the constitution, said Amir-Ul Islam.

No compromise can be made

regarding the principles upon which Justice Khairul had given the judgment in the fifth amendment case, he said.

However, renowned lawyer Rakanuddin Mahmud said Justice Khairul in his judgment upheld the constitutional provision of Supreme Judicial Council led by the chief justice for removing judges.

After becoming Law Commission chairman, Justice Khairul recommended giving the powers back to parliament to remove judges, he said.

"Why did Justice Khairul do that?" asked Rakanuddin.

The noted jurist said he heard that a three-member committee comprising an ex-chief justice and two retired SC judges would be formed to determine the procedures for judges' removal.

He suggested setting up the committee with the incumbent chief justice and two sitting SC judges.

Senior lawyer Mainul Hossain said the current parliament, "which has no legitimacy", shouldn't have the powers to remove judges.

Dr Shahdeen Malik said false infor-

mation was given in the preamble of the amendment bill, which is "a fraud on the nation".

From the preamble, it seems that the powers the 1972 constitution gave to parliament to remove judges were snatched away in 1978. But in fact, the powers were transferred to the president from parliament through the fourth amendment to the constitution in 1975.

The judges' retirement age was 62 in the 1972 constitution whereas the preamble of the amendment bill puts it at 67, Malik said.

At the meeting, Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandker Mahbub Hossain proposed forming a committee with Dr Kamal as its convener to "protect the independence of judiciary".

He also suggested making Amir-Ul Islam, Mainul Hossain, Rakanuddin Mahmud, Khandker Mahbub Hossain and Shahdeen Malik joint conveners of the committee.

Ganotantrik Ainjibi Samity President Subrata Chowdhury presided over the discussion.

## Why this campaign?

FROM PAGE 1

cosmetic and one off. Till today, there is no effective and functional regulatory mechanism to ensure safe food, and people feel helpless.

Under these circumstances, what can responsible media do? We needed to raise public awareness and call for collective action by all stakeholders to do something about it. There is NO NEED to PANIC, as we wrote yesterday, but there is EVERY REASON to be HIGHLY CONCERNED.

A few readers have also asked as to why we are accepting advertisements along with publishing the reports. The reason is simple. One of the actions we want to trigger through our campaign is to make all actors in the food supply chain *pledge* that they will act to ensure safe food to people. This *pledge* can be made through press releases, emails, social media, advertisements and public statements. Some have chosen to advertise, which is a transparent and globally acceptable ethical practice to express solidarity with a social cause. *Pledge* is the first step which, we expect, will be followed by effective action on the part of all.

We appeal to growers, marketeers, retailers and everybody involved in the food supply chain to *pledge* in public to do everything in their power to limit, within scientifically proven permissible levels, the use of chemicals in the food items they produce, market and retail.

We also appeal to the government to act.

---Editor

## Congress to resurrect Nehru to counter Modi

TNN, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "focused assault on Nehruvian ideas" will be the catalyst behind the intense Congress focus on resurrecting the first PM on the national centrestage.

Jawaharlal Nehru's 125th anniversary celebrations provide Congress with the ideal opening to toast the stalwart in the national discourse just when he is under attack.

The celebrations were always on but, insiders said, the advent of a hard-line rightwing government seeking to posit Modi against Nehru has provided added impetus to the issue. The party on Sunday announced a panel, headed by Sheila Dikshit, to implement Nehru anniversary programmes.

Reeling under the debilitating defeat handed out by the saffron mascot, Congress's bid to hold up its foremost leader is also an attempt to insert

ideological pull with the cadre in a state of disarray.

"So long as BJP talks about Nehru, Congress can always talk about him. Thanks to Modi that Nehru is back on centrestage," a Congress insider said.

Modi's Independence Day announcement to wind up the Planning Commission has been widely seen as an attempt to slight the Congress stalwart given that the panel is an integral part of Nehru's legacy.

## Foreign jobs costlier

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To get jobs abroad, Bangladeshis mainly depend on local agents while Indians rely on their private management and Sri Lankans on registered recruiting agencies, said Abrar, citing the research.

A team of Bangladesh's Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Centre for Developing Societies of India and Bureau of Foreign Labour Employment of Sri Lanka carried out the research.

RMMRU organised the workshop at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University yesterday.

For the research, the team claimed to have obtained information from 350 migrants currently living in

Malaysia, Qatar and the UAE between March last year and April this year.

A large number of the migrants living in the three countries, however, have to work more than 8 hours a day while the domestic workers of the countries have to work 14 to 18 hours daily, he added.

The education level of Bangladeshis in the three countries is lower than that of Indians and Sri Lankans, the research shows.

Most of the Bangladeshis are working in the construction and service sectors of these countries while the Indians and Sri Lankans are involved in a wide range of professions there.

Among the three South Asian coun-

tries, Sri Lanka's labour attachés provide the country's migrants with comparatively better services.

The attachés perform the tasks of providing protection and assistance to the nationals of their countries abroad.

The study shows all the attachés frequently have to deal with the issue of illegal workers in Malaysia, Qatar and the UAE.

The researchers also came up with some recommendations to improve the service of the labour attachés, including introducing a 24-hour emergency hotline to give assistance to the migrant workers and improve attachés' regular communications with their respective countries.