

PHOTO: MUNEM WASIF

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piece made with a little stone and a white feather, which I named 'Peace Treaty String'; I hung it on roadside trees, barb wires and boundaries of any sorts. My second idea was I wanted my closest people to dedicate one of their favourite or memorable things -- to remember the deaths and the injustice happening right before our eyes in Gaza, which I sacrificed as part of my performance at Drik.

How did you prepare for it?

In any performance, the most important thing is to concentrate. For "A Bird of Stone", my usual preparation schedule (that we follow for theatre) was not satisfactory. But for mental preparation, I meditated. Before any performance, logistics is another crucial part of preparation. The white feathers and little stones were not easy to collect. Part of my performance was collecting special personal items from my closest ones. Although some preparation was done at the last minute, I was all set before the scheduled start.

Share with us your experience of the performance. How did your audience take it?

I started the walk at 1pm from Baridhara US Embassy. The singing bowl was making a hum but it was drowned out by street honking. The US embassy security guards realised that something was happening, but they let me do my walk, and bind my 'peace treaty string' without any fuss. From Baridhara to Gulshan 1, I felt people were vocal, wanted to know what was going on, and tried to talk to me. As planned, I explained my cause at three points during the walk. People were very touched; more importantly, nobody thought it was ludicrous. One pedestrian instantly gave me his personal possession: his daughter's picture kept in the wallet. Hatirjheel was more meditative. After Hatirjheel, the Tejgaon part was the toughest for walking. The vagrants thought I might be some kind of a holy woman. The remaining part of my journey was alright. My walk for Gaza became memorable for my loved ones. I had asked them to dedicate one of their most favourite or memorable things. For the cause, the way they dedicated their child's clothes, a daughter's letter to her mother, their own hair, and a family heirloom – was overwhelming.

What impact did you want to achieve through it, and how much of it do you think you've achieved?

I dedicated my walk to the innocent lives lost in the lust of power from generations after generations. I didn't know how else to express my helplessness in this critical point of time, and at a point, I felt numb. So this numbness, this forgetting or crowding of memory made me do 'A bird of Stone'. I wanted to remember the feeling of agony the lives faced, and I told my favourite people to dedicate something to the memories of those people. I am ever so thankful to Topu, Seuty, Rubayat, Munmun, Wasif, Nupur apa, Masum bhai, Khaled bhai, Shulekha'di, Lima apa, Shahidul, Lipi apa and Mahbub bhai, Reza bhai and the two persons from street who dedicated their valuable memories for the performance. A note of my experience posted on Facebook has been shared hundreds of times, and there are comments on it from so many people I don't know. As an artiste, we often feel helpless. What more can we do but dedicate some of our thoughts or time or sympathy? I just wanted to remember the people in agony. ■