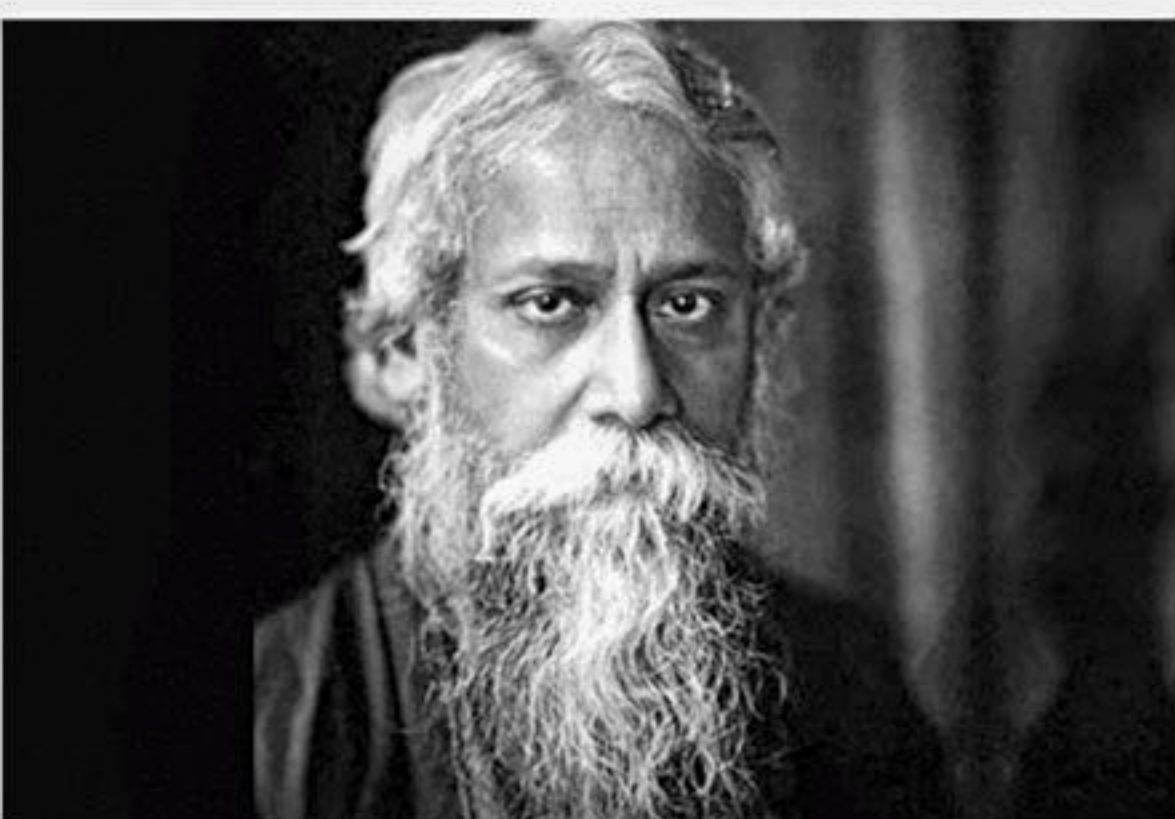




TELEVISION
OF A
LIFETIME

SHOMAPTI



FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

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If there are any other things in which Mostofa Kamal Syed is interested those are playing cricket and reading books. He has tremendously mixed up television things with books since he works at television. There is a story regarding the play "Shomapti" by Rabindranath Tagore.

Mostofa Kamal Syed was frequently seen reading the story "Shomapti" for few days. What has been happened? Why is he reading the "Shomapti" everyday? When he was asked about it he had replied that a renowned playwright has dramatized this story by Rabindranath Tagore. While reading the drama Mr. Kamal has realized that the playwright has come out from the main theme. On the contrary, since the playwright is a renowned playwright he had done this kind of things unknowingly; Mr. Kamal is not ready to admit that. That is why he was reading the story "Shomapti" repeatedly. He was trying to understand the perspective of the playwright whether he is right. Mr. Kamal used to check not only this type of dramas but also used to do the same thing in almost every program. Nowadays it sounds as a story about how much effort Mr. Kamal has given for the producers after starting package programs.

During the beginning of the first week only one drama used to go for package program. Slowly and steadily the rate of package programs in television started to increase. And from that came the formation of preview committee. Till now it remains undeniable that the man responsible for all of this is none other than Mostofa Kamal Syed.

Working 5 hours straight in the office he would travel down to Shahbag in order to meet with the then former Director Sayed Sallaudin Zakir. There he used to sit with him for hours during the night creating documents out of the package and would then directly go back to his house and now it only remains as a story.

But nowadays there are so many Bangla Serials that the young producers are able to get lots of jobs, they must be highly grateful to Kamal Shaheb and would surely never forget to follow his footsteps. The famous play righter Masum Reza gain popularity through writing lots of dramas, those dramas were produced by Salaudin Lavlu. Salaudin Lavlu was himself a recognized actor, cinematographer, director and film maker. From hit movies like "Molla Barir Bou" to serials like "Ronger Manush", Bhubher haath he had a lot of successful dramas under his credit. But the pair first drama that was showcased as a drama package was called "Koytor". Golam Mustafa, Ali Zaker and others were present in the cast. After the release of the drama audiences were curious as to who was this new director. Still the preview committee after seeing the serial felt skeptic about airing a serial made by a new director or producer at a time like this.

Mostofa Kamal Syed was the person who had aired the drama after discussing with the director Syed Salaudding Zakir over phone. Not only Salaudin Lavlu but also many other directors-playwrights could get the chance to telecast their dramas just because of the package drama. Mr. Kamal has inspired and encouraged many newcomer directors and playwrights. Once Progga Laboni made a drama which had no background music. Mr. Kamal called up Progga Laboni and told her that her drama was good but if it gets a background music then it might get audiences' attention. Progga Laboni then added a background music as Mr. Kamal told her. She had realized the importance of using background music.

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*The writer is Managing Director, Channel i
Translated by Imtiaz Salim*

EPAR BANGLA, OPAR BANGLA

LIFE'S
LYRICS



NASHID KAMAL

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As part of Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit a leading TV channel included the names and short interviews of luminaries who came to Bangladesh from West Bengal and vice versa. Those who hailed from East Bengal were noted personalities like Sunil Gongopadhay, actress Suchitra Sen and Shomlata (A singer from Faridpur). Among those making their way to East Bengal was Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman and the family of Abbasuddin Ahmed.

Many years back I had read the beautiful autobiographical account of Sunil Gongopadhay titled 'Amar ordhek jeebon'. Although it was meant to be autobiographical, the writer hid himself and his family as main characters and provided detailed treatment of the politics of India, whereby on the 14th of August 1947, the country known as India had been divided into India and Pakistan. The description is very thorough and well researched and coupled with his brilliant writing style, has been one of the finest ever and in my opinion, even rivals history books. His story was that of the plight of an average Hindu family who were suddenly uprooted from the comfort zones of their ancestral homes, their livelihood and friends, and turned into a life of refugees set in the metropolis of Calcutta. The harsh life there, his father's failing health, financial struggles of the family, and the struggles of a writer could well be that of an imaginary character who had left their home in the partition of 1947. When I was reading Sunil's account, I was often reminded of similar narratives from my father, former Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal and son of Abbasuddin Ahmed.

He always recalled his life with his parents in Kolkata, his Ballygunge school, the roles of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and Abbasuddin Ahmed during the riots of India where one wrote the songs and the other sang on truck tops, "Mora ek e brinte duiti kushum hindu musalman". I had heard about the beauty of Cooch Bihar, the princely state of West Bengal where the Maharaja often came on clandestine visits and gave reviews of gardens maintained

by his wards. It seemed like a dreamland and some accounts of 'A Princess Remembers', by Gayatri Devi, matches the description given by my late father. They left all of that, especially Abbasuddin, who left behind his seat of fame in Kolkata and settled in East Pakistan. My aunt Ferdausi Rahman and her mother were horrified to have their horse carts bound with layers and layers of material when they went to schools or colleges. Another phase of struggle started for this family when Abbasuddin fell ill with an incurable disease when all three of his children were students. As I read Sunil, it seemed I had grown up with the counterpart. I had visions of their lives in Kolkata and in Dhaka after the partition. I had listened to them so many times that I could almost repeat verbatim.

Then, a book by Professor Emeritus Padmabhushan Anisuzzaman, 'Kal nirobodhi', was released, where he wrote about his life before and after the partition of India. As I leafed through the pages, names, events, places, and families mentioned there all seemed familiar and once again I felt that this was a complimentary story of a man who came to these parts from West Bengal. His father practiced homeopathy and the indecision of migrating to East Pakistan was settled by the strong will of his mother. Professor Anisuzzaman's family was well placed in Park Circus, India. He mentions the names of people who frequented their homes, his father's closeness with A K Fazlul Huq, including the lady who brought their car and treated him to ice cream etc. in spite of the fact that young Anisuzzaman pronounced kolutola as "kolulota". Among them was the sister of Mrs. M Rahman, the lady who was like a mother to poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Then comes the time of riot and his eye witness account of a Hindu man being killed in his own home, all brought forward the deep rift between the two communities.

People who have migrated to this either Bengal have similar experiences of being uprooted and having to start all over again, gaining new experiences in the process.

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*The writer is an academic,
Nazrul exponent and writer.*

