

# ONE MAN SHOW

FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

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Mr. Kamal was the producer of most of the dramas by Momtazuddin Ahmed. Humayun Ahmed's "Ditiyo Jonmo" was one of the remarkable dramas that have been produced by Mr. Kamal. It has to be mentioned that Mostofa Kamal Syed has produced dramas of many senior playwrights but he had produced only few dramas of the newcomer playwrights. But still he is making a science fiction drama serial titled "Grohokonna" which is being telecasted on NTV. Nobody has shown the bravery to telecast the serial due to it is a science fiction drama serial where Mr. Kamal has managed to telecast the drama by giving some suggestions to the director. Although he didn't give voice in any commercial advertisements but he has given a background voice to the program called "Ogrojo" which is a program based on senior citizens. Mostofa Kamal Syed is also

fascinated on cricket. He has not only shown his fascination on cricket but also tried and encouraged on how television can be used for cricket to reach the audiences. That is why nowadays the audiences of Bangladesh can watch the LIVE cricket match even the World Cup.

Overall, due to the unique countenance of Bangladesh Television's screen and the clarity of its characteristics, viewers of all ages can enjoy the television program sitting together. Mostofa Kamal Syed was the leader behind making these clean characteristics of television – nobody can argue with that. The man who is opposed to the promotion is still spending his every moment for the development of television. It can be an inspiring thing for the youth of this age that some people do exist who don't think of their own self-development but rather think about the development of the organizations they work for.

The position of General Manger at Bangladesh Television is very much impor-

tant. The holder of that position actually controls everything of the television's screen. Usually one from the producers gets selected for taking the responsibility. This policy has been coming out for long time. Initially the title of this position was Commissioner. After Mustafizur Rahman took this position of commissioner the title has been changed into General Manager. If anyone from the producers gets selected for the position of General Manager then he has to work for the administration of television. Producers are usually busy with the creative works where as a general manager he has to work with the administrative things and that makes so many troubles sometimes. Once Mustafa Monowar wrote while being a commissioner "8 taka" instead of writing "Car has to be provided at 8 AM" in the permit to provide car for an important program. The producer became bewildered seeing that 8 taka note and that put Mustafa Monowar under a lot of stresses.

## TELEVISION OF A LIFETIME



Abdullah Al Mamun had an important recording session for a drama. But he was not able to come to the recording session. Because, he was at that time taking the responsibility of an acting commissioner. And as a commissioner he had to make a tough decision in a meeting at that time. The higher officials of Information Ministry were present at the meeting. The topic of the meeting was regarding the maintenance of the toilet. It was so weird that a creative person is busy in making decisions about the toilet's maintenance. Because of all these matters once it has been thought that would it be good if there are two persons in the position of commissioner. One will look after the programs and other will take care of the management and administration.

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THE WRITER IS MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHANNEL I  
*Translated by IMTIAZ SALIM*



## LIFE'S LYRICS

# RUNA LAILA IS RUNA LAILA

NASHID KAMAL

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This was the summer of 1990. I had taken a taxi cab to reach the Hawaii East West Centre in Hawaii, USA. I was selected by the centre to take part in a training titled 'Micro-computers in Demography.' Usually I would walk down to the centre to attend my early morning lectures, but on this particular occasion, I was running late. I hailed a cab and the cabbie seemed to be of Indian origin. As I took the ride, contemplating the charges for my tardiness, the cab driver asked me where I was from. Upon hearing my reply, he asked me if I knew Runa Laila and I answered, "Of course, everyone knows Runa Laila!"

I sort of expected him to be Indian (since he didn't look Bangladeshi, nor spoke Bangla), but he turned out to be a Pakistani. He explained that he was a neighbour of Runa Laila when she lived in Karachi as a young girl. He lamented about Pakistan losing this valuable singer.

I could easily recall Runa Laila during those years.

It was the election year of the 1970s. The last election of erstwhile East Pakistan. Pakistan TV gave overnight coverage to the election results. My grandmother allowed us to sleep on the drawing room floor and watch TV all night. There were four of us. We were two sisters and two other friends who were daughters of renowned writer Dilara Hashem. That was the first time I saw Runa Laila. I had already heard about her from Mithul (Dilara Hashem's daughter who lived in Karachi and also knew her).

Runa, then a slim bright-eyed teenager in an unusual outfit, appeared on Zia Mohiuddin's show. Zia Mohiuddin

hosted a very interesting magazine programme and Runa was already a renowned singer and celebrity in Pakistan. She was asked to describe a remarkable moment in her singing career. Runa went on to explain how, during one of her vocal recordings, a fly entered her mouth and, to avoid a 'cut', she just went on with the recording. Runa looked eager, proud and very smart as she said, "For the sake of the programme, I digested the fly!"

Even when she made her early debut as a teenager in the realms of playback music in Pakistan, Runa landed into a difficult situation with the journalists who said that she was being haughty with the melody queen Noor Jehan. This matter was exaggerated and mentioned repeatedly in various newspapers and brought a lot of adverse publicity for Runa Laila. But her rise continued. Both in playback and stage performances, Runa Laila surpassed many boundaries. The range of her voice, her versatility with any branch of music, her flexibility with pronouncing difficult Punjabi, Sindhi and Pashtu songs (apart from Urdu ones) brought her immense fame and adoration.

She is one of the very few who translated the song into her body language and movement, and that too so aptly. The gestures and gyrations didn't just come out of her from nowhere. In one recent interview on Doordarshan TV, Bhupen Hazarika and Runa Laila were shown taking a stroll in a lavish garden of Calcutta where she told the audience the secret of her superb and well-coordinated movements. Runa Laila and her sister Dina Laila lived in Karachi. Runa, in her early years, was given training in Bharat Natyam and Dina learned music. For four years Runa took these

lessons till her mother one day discovered that she had also memorised all the music lessons that Dina was taking! It was then that music training was initiated for her. In some of her songs, for example, "Ore tui bajash ne tore obujh bashi," recorded for BTV, a well-trained eye can easily spot her dexterous bharat natyam posture of playing the flute.

Since Runa returned to Bangladesh, she has been the subject of many discussions. She has run into various situations such as having to submit herself to the test audition for Bangladesh Radio! Her playback numbers in Bangla have topped



many previous records both in the academic and commercial sense. She has been immensely applauded for her performance in India. She has recorded a wide range of songs from Nazrul to Bhawaiya, Bhajan and Ghazals. In a very short span of time, she became the most well-known Bangladeshi. Yes, one aspect has not gained enough attention, that is the fact that Runa has been the trend-setter. As far as performance is concerned, no Bangladeshi artiste has ever

thought of show business as a performing art. Runa Laila presented her first performance for BTV in the mid-70s.

I myself was an intermediate student at that time and used to host a show on BTV called 'Notun Kuri'. This programme gave me an opportunity to sample the on-going trend in the art of performance. As years went by, I noticed how young participants in that programme -- both from Dhaka and other places of the country -- adopted Runa Laila's style into their performance, rather than the sedate sitting down rendering with the self-accompaniment of a quaint harmonium.

Even many of the contemporary music luminaries are now emulating her. On today's private channels and also on BTV, we see the new generation of artists blending dance with their vocal performance. However, none has matched Runa because she has a special gift and in my opinion, her gift of presentation has made her the Queen in the sub-continent. On the occasion of Eid, ATN (Bangla) presented one of her shows where Runa has shown once again how she has utilised both her body rhythm and music training, and her imagination, to present each song with new dimensions. None can surpass the gifted Runa Laila. Runa Laila is a legend in her own right.

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