

SPOTLIGHT

A vast steel mass, disguised as a door, will open into a room that stops your breath at first sight. What you will witness will make you feel unreal for a slight second before you can swallow in the fact that you are, as off now, surrounded by more than just history. What you will witness is an area of 5,000 square feet with at least 75 percent covered in shelves—shelves that carry the past, present and future.

AKM Enayet Kabir Khan, a 64 year old zealous individual with an incredible zest for life, has collected around 60,000 stamps, 1,000 FDC's, 5,000 coins, 3,000 telephone cards, 2,000 key-rings, 1,000 matchboxes, along with books, re-prints, annual reports, magazines, tabloids and newspapers collectively weighing more than 40 tons, dating from 1968-2014. He

beginnings, with his best friends being the milkman's son and a rickshaw-puller's son, the environment in St. Joseph's High School was one that Enayet was not used to. "The year was 1966, pre-liberation period," starts Kabir. "Even though I was just an engineer's son, a profession not too popular back then, my father thrust me in the midst of high-profile children, the sons of the crème de la crème of the society. Many of the children were from high-profile Pakistani families, like Isphani, Adamjee, Bhawani, Kohinor Group, Meher Industries, Dosan Group etc, who always believed to be better than us," he says.

Bullied every now and then, Kabir made it a point to be better than them, no matter his financial position, through wit and intelligence. He believed, in his own words, that 'a person does not need money to be of quality'. He once

football, basketball and baseball, and proved his point successfully at that young an age. "Apart from academic results, I felt the importance of gaining general knowledge. Most of my time was spent devouring the contents of books about politics, history, philosophy and general knowledge on world affairs," he says. In 1970, he passed the Senior Cambridge exams and was placed in the First Division with a place on the School Honour Roll.

Soon after, he joined Notre Dame College, and passed in the higher Secondary Division, only to be admitted into Dhaka University afterwards to study Public Administration, which was then called Political Science. Since in college, Enayet has been actively revolting against examination techniques and our education system, claiming that the system was and still is restricted primarily to the physical sciences, technologies

towards- travelling. "I was always fascinated with tourism. Immediately after university, I began travelling around each and every corner of the country. I believe we cannot judge our merits and shortcomings until we come in contact with people in the remote areas, go through the deep forests, stand on the banks of the mighty rivers like Meghna, Padma, Jamuna, listen to the music of the flowing waters and enjoy the beauty of the landscape lying outside our small houses in the city."

In 1979, he sat for his Master's final examination, after which he was sent to America to pursue his doctorate. "But I didn't want to be there! My country had gained liberation just some years ago, and for the young minds to be away at such a crucial time was a preposterous thought to me," he says, "I wrote to my father after a couple of months, saying that I will make sure that my children are privileged

wealth and background, Enayet decided to start a new life with Jahanara Akhter Sheela, on June 12, 1980. With Sheela, and one wooden bed (Chawki), he found himself a one bedroom apartment in Sayedabad. "I continued to help Sheela become an empowered woman. She was and is my best friend, so I nurtured her skills and intellect, I helped develop her mind, and once she obtained her Master's degree, even after birthing one daughter and two sons, I presented her, with all the status and background they could ask for, in front of my family."

He first ventured out into the corporate world by joining the famous South Korean Multi-national group, Daewoo Corporation's Dhaka Liaison Office in mid-August of 1981. After being with Daewoo till 1988, Enayet came across a friend of his, chairman of Abedin Group, who was about to close down his garment's business due to problems he

He took a job with Abedin Group promising that he will fix every problem within the two years of his contract- a promise he successfully kept. Afterwards, he joined the International Trade Agency, and also later, in 1995 went on to becoming the Director of Overseas Projects in Bangladesh for Gooryong Company Ltd.

In 2003, Enayet went into retirement after a mild myocardial attack. He then began using his time to be a freelance columnist. He wrote 53 sub-editorials for The Independent, a national daily, on various socio-economic problems in our country. He also joined the NGO Brotec, as a project coordinator for Human Rights in vulnerable communities for one year post retirement.

Kabir has been awarded the Sher-e

Bangabandhu Memorial Award for his collection of rare materials and

THE EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION OF AKM ENAYET KABIR

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

also has a massive collection of books and research papers, which even eminent personalities like Mohammad Zafar Iqbal and other great names, sometimes use for reference. "Even our government doesn't possess documents and papers from before 1978. I can boast about my collection of papers and historical documents, dating back to 1971 and even earlier," says Kabir.

His knack for history and knowledge stemmed within him at a very young age. Having been raised in humble

challenged his friend, Assad, to tell him where Queen Elizabeth was during her coronation, something he read up on an issue of Reader's Digest. Being laughed at the query and met with a reply stating, "I go to the UK for vacations, you think I won't know?" Enayet left the scene with more ardour than ever to prove himself smarter. He began reading.

He began studying harder, performing better, he always stood among the first 5 students in class, became Head Monitor, began captaining teams - cricket,

and professions—it teaches how to earn a living, but not how to live. "The education system follows outdated philosophies of developing the machine, while neglecting the very development of a human being—character, right sense of values and the knowledge and real purpose of life," says Kabir.

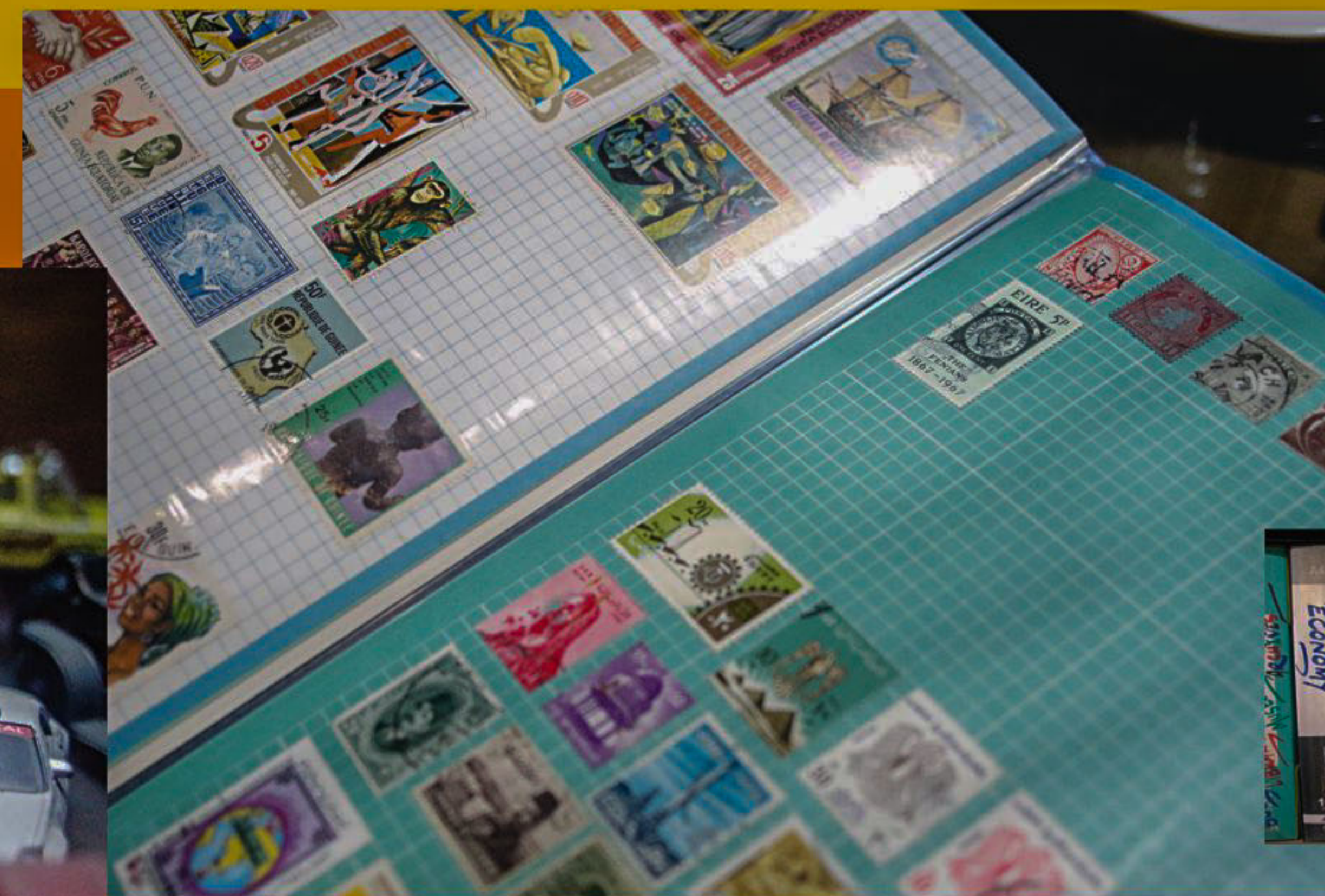
After completing his degree, he took on a path that he always had lean

enough to come and study on foreign land, but it was time for me to sacrifice and work for my beloved growing nation. I firmly believed in the youth, as I still do, and journeyed back to my Bangladesh as soon as I could," says Kabir.

After returning to Bangladesh, Enayet opted to marry without the considerations of wealth, social status, etc. "I found an ordinary orphaned girl, with an extra-ordinary personality." Even after objections from family regarding her

faced from the labour unions. While people called the garment's business a 'sick industry', Enayet had challenged to show them that it's not the industry that's sick, it is the management making it so.

Bangla Memorial Trophy 2010 for contributing to socio-economic activities, Mother Teresa Golden Trophy 2010 for his contribution in collecting materials for knowledge expansion, and the



AKM Enayet Kabir Khan with his wife.

