



Bobita

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

The name Bobita brings back some great memories, offering a nostalgic trip for many. Throughout the decades, she had performed in three hundred of movies.

More so, she was a star during glorious periods of Bengali cinema, working for eminent makers such as Satyajit Ray and Zahir Raihan. Little known fact; Zahir Raihan, the legendary filmmaker and writer, was her brother-in-law.

Due to her numerous achievements in life, Celebrating Life is awarding her the Lifetime Achievement for film, an award that tries to honour the incredible feats achieved by Bengalis in the field of film, photography, and lyrics. Therefore, when we interviewed her, it was a magnificent experience for us. We caught glimpses about not just the life of the superstar Bobita, but also that of those gurus whose works now stand as proud heritages. Very sincere and very candid, here's Bobita for you.

THE BEGINNING

My mother was very particular that we learned different art forms like singing, dancing, poetry recitation, etc. As a child, in Jessore, I used to see my elder sister Shuchanda doing songs and dances and watching movies of Suchitra Sen and practising acting in front of the camera at home. These deeply affected my psyche. But I never thought that I would one day enter the movie industry.

Shuchanda went to Dhaka and became an actor. Eventually, she got married to Zahir Raihan. And it was he who wanted me in one of his films. But at the time, acting was not something I wanted to pursue. As a schoolgirl, I

he foresaw that something bad is going to happen, and within days, the relative died in a car accident.

You will be surprised to know that when one day, when reading Shuchanda's palms, he said, "One day I will be gone. Then, you will get married again." Everything turned out to be true.

RAY'S HEROINE

One fine day, I received an invitation letter to go to Kolkata and meet Satyajit Ray in person, saying that he had been thinking about casting me in one of his movies. I simply couldn't believe that someone as legendary as Satyajit Ray would be interested in me. I didn't take the

my shyness, whether I could perform or not.

Eventually, he gave me a few scripts and told me to come the next day for audition - and he added that I must not wear any makeup that day.

In front of the cameras, I was a different Bobita, one who was neither timid nor awkward. And I impressed him. That very day, he decided to cast me in "Ashani Sanket".

Working with him was an experience of a lifetime. He was so systematic and professional. For example, whenever he wanted to take a shot again, he asked for a reshot very cordially. He used to say, "You have given excellent shot. But still, I would like to go again." So then you had to understand that Satyajit was not satisfied with the shot.

KNOT NEVER TIED AGAIN

My son was only three when he lost his father. But I never remarried. Even before my marriage, I was always very sceptical and anxious about issues like adjusting and compromising with a spouse. When the question rose about marrying the second time, the concern was even more, and it seemed rather complicated, because by then I was already a mother.

RETIRED?

Times have changed. While I believe that many of today's artists are brilliant, I am indeed not very impressed by the quality. Therefore, I have decided that I am not going to work in movies or in the television for the time-being. But if I do get a project that is very promising and sparks that interest in me, I will surely consider it.

Interviewed by Rafi Hossain and

Narrated by M H Haider

TO READ ABOUT HER SON'S FEELINGS REGARDING HER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 10



thought of becoming a doctor; I was pretty good at studies.

I had to give in to my brother-in-law's insistence that I must take part in his films. And when one movie became a blockbuster hit, I couldn't go look. As the Bobita-craze rippled all over, the prominent directors of the time got busy to hire me. That was the start.

MEMORIES OF ZAHIR RAIHAN

As he was my brother-in-law, I got the chance to see this highly revered cultural figure very closely. He was a creative genius. By the way, Zahir was a fantastic palm reader too! For example, when studying one of his relative's palms, I

matter seriously, thinking that the letter was a prank!

But afterwards, when I was contacted through the embassy, I packed my bag and went to Kolkata to meet the maestro.

I remember the first time I saw him. His towering height and immense stature overpowered me. I became nervous and tongue-tied. To make matters worse, as I was going to meet him, I had put a lot of attention in getting ready and wore all the makeup in the world! When I was sitting in front of him, dumbstruck, he said, "You've put so much makeup that I can't even recognise you". He was concerned, seeing

