

DISCUSSING 'CELEBRATING LIFE' WITH

BITOPI DAS CHOWDHURY

Head of Corporate Affairs at Standard Chartered

Bitopi Das Chowdhury has been a backbone of the Standard Chartered-The Daily Star's Celebrating Life. Having been a part of the program since its inception, she talks about her experience, thoughts and future plans on the program.

You have been a part of Celebrating life for a long time, and this will be the 10th iteration of the program. How do you feel about this achievement?

Standard Chartered Bangladesh has always been a big supporter of promoting art and culture on a community level. Since The Daily Star is the leading English Daily in Bangladesh, we were quite happy to partner up as we loved Mahfuz Bhai's (Mahfuz Anam) vision for promoting young talent. When we first started, we were not so sure about how far we could take this, but at this point I am ecstatic about how well we have worked together to create a truly impactful and memorable program. It has been a great journey, and now everyone knows what Celebrating Life is.

What do you think has been the biggest achievement of Celebrating Life so far?
Our biggest achievement has definitely been to get people from very remote parts of the country to be recognized. We took them to the national level and rewarded them for their talents. Many winners of the competition have achieved great success, and that is also an achievement for us. We eventually also introduced the Standard Chartered-The Daily Star's Celebrating Life 'Lifetime Achievement Award', which was to commemorate the contributions of many greats for their

lifetime of work for our country.

What are your fondest memories of the program?

I would say that travelling all across the country, even to the very remote areas was a thrilling experience during the various times we had to travel to promote the program. We got to introduce Standard Chartered Bangladesh to many places where we did not necessarily have any activities, so this was a huge step over the years. Besides these, the many different people that I could meet and the places we went to were all very memorable.

What would Celebrating Life's plans be for the future?

We want to expand the scope of this competition. We are now working on incorporating an online and social media based competition, which will include all comers. I also hope that we can take the program to Bangladeshis who are living abroad.

Do you have any message for the readers?
My only message would be that as much as we need skills that would help us advance in our professions, we need an equal amount of emphasis on art and culture as they help make us complete and better human beings.

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Interviewed by Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz

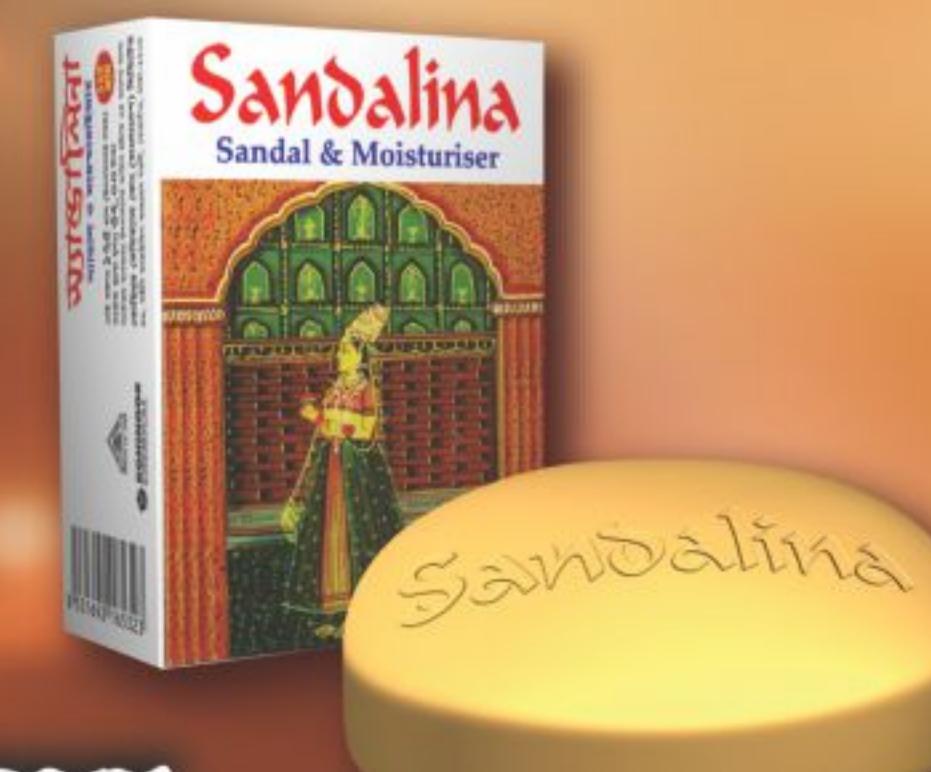


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