

# BASHIR AHMED

## Taking pride in our past

Tribute to a musical great

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

*"Bashir Ahmed was one of the chief architects of the golden era of our Bangla music. Since his death in 2014 his musical presence has been a great loss. He was committed to music, and chose this as a profession unlike many who followed it as a pastime. It's a pity that many of our golden melodies will not be heard anymore," remarked Syed Abdul Hadi, referring to the late singer and music director, Bashir Ahmed, whose birthday was on November 18.*

Bashir Ahmed's talents were not limited to music. Eminent singer Ferdousi Rahman, reminiscing on Bashir Ahmed's reputation as a perfectionist, said, "After recording through the night, the crew was ready to pack up their equipment. However, Bashir Ahmed, requested me to give it another shot the following day. And that is the only time in my career that I re-recorded a song." The song in question, "Katha Bolo Na Bolo Ogo Bondhu," was composed by Ahmed for the film "Modhu Milon". In those days, recording for playbacks were done throughout the night supported by a full orchestra.

Bashir Ahmed, originally from Kolkata, had already made his name with popular songs with Geeta Dutta. It was around the '60s, when renowned film producer and owner of Gulistan Cinema Hall, Mr. Dosani, arranged a special music programme in Dhaka

where Talat Mahmood and Bashir Ahmed were invited to perform. After their tour of Chittagong and Mymensingh, Talat Mahmood returned to India but Bashir Ahmed, entranced by this country, decided to stay back.

From then on he would enrich the music world with his memorable hits in countless films such as "Talash", "Chanda", "Darshan" and many more.

Urdu films were a rage at that time in erstwhile East Pakistan and Bashir Ahmed captured the hearts of listeners. In 1967-68, "Pinjor Khule Diyechhi" became a sensation amongst his listeners. And then of course there was "Oi Akash Ta Ghurey Eshechhi / Meghe Meghe Je Koto Bheshechhi". Another masterpiece duet by Nahid Niazi and Bashir Ahmed came about in an unconventional mix of Bangla and Urdu: "Duti Mon Matano Chhonde / Duti Phool Phutechhe Gondhe . . . Iss Mehke Hue Gulshan Mein / Ye Phool Ye Phool Ki

Khushboo / Shey Ki Tumi Ar Aami / Ik Tum Ho Ik Main Huun."

Many recall that Bashir Ahmed with his rendition of a Muhammad Rafi song "Khoya Khoya Chand" entranced the audience at the Aloka Cinema Hall in Mymensingh in 1959. Much later "Onek Shadher Moyna", the Baul based hit song, set in raga bhaairavi, proved his mettle and taleem in classical music.

"Throughout his career he remained true to his own style, rather than follow the popular trend, which was unique," said one of his contemporaries, noted singer Syed Abdul Hadi.

"When I took charge at the Shilpakala Academy in 1996, I took keen interest in preserving the works of our great masters of music. The infrastructure of a museum, and archive for the musical greats of our country was all prepared. These are our national treasures. We prepared to have research facilities, for great masters like Abdul Ahad, Samar

Das, Altaf Mahmood to name only a few. We even traveled to Hong Kong, Thailand and Philippines to learn the technical aspects of preservation. A plan was chalked out to portray indigenous instruments at the entrance. But somehow things did not work out as planned, which I greatly regret," commented Hadi.

With time, archival facilities have improved, but the transcription service at the government owned Radio has not taken the onus of preserving our golden melodies. Most of the tapes are run down and hence cannot be retrieved. Culture changes yet culture survives. Most importantly, culture evolves based on contributions made by earlier generations. If we are to take pride in our culture, it is only sensible we preserve the work of earlier generations the best we can. Bashir Ahmed left an undeniable mark on our cultural arena, one can only wish it not be forgotten through apathy.



## RJ sharmeen releases "Onek Jotone" music video

A CORRESPONDENT

**Gazi Sharmeen Ahmed, known popularly among radio listeners of the country as RJ Sharmeen, released the music video of her song "Onek Jotone" on Monday at the ABC Radio premises in the capital, marking a first for her.**

The song has been written by Milon Mahmud and composed and arranged by Hridoy Khan. Kazi Faisal Ahmed has played guitar on the track. The audio was first played last year on Hridoy Khan-hosted "The HK Show" on the radio station.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, eminent singer-composer Bappa Mazumdar, Milon Mahmud and others were present at the music video launch ceremony.

"I did not want to lip-sync on the song

for the video, so we decided to make the video a lyrical video instead," said Gazi Sharmeen at the event. The video, produced by Flybot Studios, features the slow, romantic track with the lyrics written on various materials as the song plays, interlaced with video of the artiste lost in her own world.

Sharmeen, a deputy executive producer at ABC Radio, is a popular radio jockey with the station with shows like "Kuasha", "Prem Rog" and "Tara Rum Pum".

## TV WATCH

### Honouring Abdul Jabbar's legacy in "Priyojoner Gaan"

A CORRESPONDENT



Mithun Jabbar

Singer Abdul Jabbar's passing has left a vacuum in the Bangladeshi music scene. He will be remembered for his magnificent voice as, much as his role in the Liberation War, when he bravely joined the host of artistes in Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. He has left behind his wife, Halima Jabbar, and two sons- Babu and Mithun Jabbar.

To celebrate this legacy and mourn his passing, his son Mithun Jabbar will perform live on a musical programme on Desh TV titled "Priyojoner Gaan" today at 3pm. The show will enable viewers to actively take part, as they can call in with song requests.



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## WEEKENDER

**"I am particularly fond of action-thrillers"**

**... Anisur Rahman Milon**

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

With strong origins in theatre, Anisur Rahman Milon is a popular small screen actor who has also earned high praise in films. The actor currently has his hands full with both small and big screen ventures, but has recently returned from much needed respite in Australia. In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, the acclaimed actor speaks about his life and interests beyond the sets.

**How do you normally spend your weekends?**

**ARM:** Working days mean long, arduous hours where we don't have a choice regarding any aspect of our routine. On my day off I look forward to long, uninterrupted hours of sleep, followed by spending time with the fam-



ily. During filming, we often have to resort to eating whatever is made available to us (usually unappetising food), and so I often make requests at home during weekends for a particular dish that I have been craving, whether it's fish, or a bharta. After that what unfolds is the regularities of any normal weekend - meeting friends family, catching up on unread scripts, running various errands.

**What genre of movies do you enjoy?**

**ARM:** I am particularly fond of action-thrillers - oftentimes on my days off I will settle down to watch a movie after lunch.

**What are you currently working on?**

**ARM:** I am currently involved in a few running serials, such as "Jolrong", "Oloshpur", "Shunnotta", to name a few. I am busy dubbing a number of films, which includes "Chol Jai", "Alta Banu", "Shadakalo Prem", "Shopnobari". I have signed on to work on a new film titled "Faltu", directed by Wajed Ali Shumon. We will begin filming as soon as a schedule is set.

**What are your favourite books?**

**ARM:** I loved "Dighir Joley Kaar Chhaya Go" by Humayun Ahmed and to this day I reread books by him. I also hold the writings of Aroj Ali Matubbar close to my heart and have a fondness for Zafar Iqbal's short stories.

**Out of all the ventures you have worked in, which has special significance to you?**

**ARM:** I can only name the ventures that have helped propel me forward in show business. The tele-film "Tui Ta" has helped give me my first footing, the drama series "Ronger Manush" helped me go even further, and the same goes for the series "Bela Bhoomi". I have started working in film from 2012, among which "Dehorokhi", "Poramon", "Onek Shadher Moyna", "Bhalobashar Rong", "Rajneeti" has earned me good reviews.

**Is there a personal fact about you could share, that your fans could never guess?**

**ARM:** I love singing, and often get invited to perform at events by friends and family. I love traveling too, and just returned from Australia a week ago.