



## IN A CONVERSATION WITH The Finance Minister AMA Muhith

*Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Hon'ble Minister of Finance, the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, is a well-respected economist and diplomat of this country. His interest in classical music stems from a young age, and he has contributed greatly to the success behind the multiple iterations of Bengal Classical Music Festival. In this interview, the Finance Minister AMA Muhith talks about his cultural interests, as well as views and plans for future classical events of Bangladesh.*

**Have you always been interested in cultural music?**

I had interest in music and cultural arts since my younger days. I had good relationships with prominent artists such as the ever-respected Zainul Abedin, and I personally know Litu (Abul Khair Litu) very well. I didn't practice cultural music too much myself, but I was appointed to be the Secretary of an Arts Council once, and had decent exposure to music and arts since then. I enjoy music because one can say the same thing in many different ways using it.

**What is your overall view on the Bengal Classical Music Festival?**

My interest in the Bengal Classical Music Festival stems mostly from Litu (Abul Khair Litu), who I have good connection with since a long time ago. I don't know how he got the idea of this fest, but this certainly was an excellent idea. Our love for classical music has made us famous worldwide, and initiatives such as these only help the cause further.

**Are there any plans you personally want to undertake concerning Bengal Classical Music Festival?**

There is a slight problem with the location every year,



even though the previous venue, the Army Stadium, was a respectable choice. I am looking to acquire new land which can host cultural events such as the Bengal Classical Music Festival. I already have two places in mind which can act as better venues for

more effective cultural festivals in the future.

**Do you think the Bengal Classical Music Festival had a positive impact on our society?**

This time the attendance was 50 thousand; so many people enjoying classic music together shows a serious change in habit of the people. Anyone who honestly enjoys classical music transcended themselves to a higher class of human beings; they can't get into petty fights anymore, they can't commit crime, or harm another human being. This is a big change for the society which is something commendable.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Just a little effort goes a long way. Look at how important our cultural celebrations are, for example Pohela Boishakh, which was previously observed by Bangladeshis exclusively, is now celebrated all around the world. Holding onto traditions with passion and dedication will certainly stop crime in this country. I believe that someone who sings can't ever commit murder or any heinous deed.

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Interviewed by Rafi Hossain