

THROUGH THE EYES

ASIF IQBAL

A man of many talents

Coming from a highly educated and culturally rich background, Asif Iqbal already knew how to balance the two. To him music came from the heart but his job was important too, to lead a better life. Tough times surely came and then there were times when he felt like leaving behind the corporate life to focus only on music. His music company 'Gaanchill' has given us many hits like 'Jhoom', 'Local Bus', 'Beyainshab' and many more.

EARLY LIFE

Born in Nalapara, Chittagong I belong to an illustrious family. My father was a physician, a freedom fighter, a politician and a former member of the parliament. He was Deputy Commander of Sector One during the Liberation War. My mother too, was a social worker and a politician.

My eldest brother Late Sadrul Pasha was an eminent actor and filmmaker. My eldest sister Tazia Irfan is an oncologist in one of the world's best cancer hospitals, Royal Marsden, in London. Another sister Jessicca Irfan is a lawyer who practices and lives in Chittagong. My younger sister is a housewife who graduated from the UK in Mass Media and Communications with Dean's award as the first Asian Lady to do so from her university.

Childhood is interesting for everyone; I was a rule-breaker with very few factors that could restrict my mischievousness. But unfortunately, during my childhood Bangladesh was going through the turmoil of reconstruction. My father, uncles and later my elder brother joined the Liberation War and the situation in the family became quite unstable. The pictures of the war are still pretty vivid in my memories, though I was very young at that time. After the Liberation War, I had a very interesting childhood. I seldom cared for restrictions and what was expected of me. I grew up in a turbulent time when as a nation we were going through a full-blown social reconstruction. I do not remember many stories of my childhood; however, I clearly remember the Liberation War, we returned to our *Nandan Kanon* home and I started my schooling at Hillside School which is now known as Paharika Kindergarten School. I was transferred to Saint Placid's soon after. After seeing my performance during debate and extempore speech my mother was called to allow me to get into Collegiate School. I did my HSC from Chittagong College.

My involvement in various extracurricular activities enhanced my education life in various ways. In my college, I was a part of Red Crescent Youth, from where I got the chance to represent Bangladesh in an exchange program which took me to Japan in 1984. I was a table tennis champion and loved playing cricket too. My passion for Karate got me a brown belt.



My passion for music came from my elder sister Dr. Tazia Irfan. She has been my inspiration and has helped me improve my music.

WITH THE BRIEFCASE

Passing through many hurdles, I completed my MBA from IBA with CGPA 3.8 and came out as one of the toppers. As my father was alone in Chittagong, I returned after finishing my degree unlike my peers who were running after MNC jobs. There I joined American Express which was an excellent place to work but I soon realized that banking was not my cup of tea. I also got offers to join IBA as a lecturer but the teaching profession was never my thing either. In the meantime, I gave a written test for Unilever and I got a call for selection while I was in the middle of a project of Starship Brand of Abul Khair Group in which American Express was also associated. I had to reject the call as I had already given my word for the Starship project. It made me a little sad but a few days later Unilever called me again, for a second chance. That was a vital turning point of my life. Unilever gave me a better understanding of mar-

keting and the industry. I did many projects there, including LUX with which I saw many ups and downs. I worked for Unilever Pakistan branch as well. By then my story of success became widespread around the corporate world. Then from Aktel to ACL, I tried to make a mark wherever I went. After leaving ACL, I took a much needed sabbatical when I concentrated on my personal life and my own music label 'Gaanchill'. In 2011, I joined Meghna Group of Industries where I focused on making their manpower more effective.

THOUGHTS ON MUSIC

Music will always be there as long as there is an industry. Variation will come with changing generations. With the advancements of technology, music is easily accessible to listeners. Not only pleasing to the ears, music nowadays comes with videos giving them a cinematic touch! Thus, it can be clearly said that, music has gone through a lot of evolution. I am a part of this industry for the past 30 years and till now have worked with almost 6 generations. When I started writing songs, it was the era of

Kawsar Ahmed Choudhury, Nazrul Islam Babu, Rafiqujjaman, Masud Karim. Eventually all started changing. People's taste in music was changing a great deal too. Then came a point when even my own children were not into my songs. That is when I realized, it's time I try to understand the music preferences of the current generation. But in keeping pace with time, we are leaving the past behind. This is what scares me the most. Music has become more like a personal profession rather than a team work where one tries to do them all. Lack of diversity and creativity is quite evident in the music being produced nowadays. I am writing a book on music for which I am doing a lot of research. Contemporary music should not only focus on being instant hit but also should last longer in the play chart. **MIRROR, MIRROR!** Some people tell me that I am successful, it is indeed for them to decide. I just want to keep on doing my work, because I believe there are yet "Miles to go before I sleep".

By Sushmita Sruti Choudhury