

# THE ARBOVIRUS EPIDEMIC

In 2002, two friends and former classmates Shuharto Sherif and Asif Asgar Ranjan started a band, pursuing their dreams in music. 17 years, 3 studio albums, 12 singles and an 'infection' epidemic later, Arbovirus stands tall as one of the mightiest bands in Bangladesh today. The story of Arbovirus in not only incredible, but also inspiring, as the route they took changed the music industry for good at one point in their trailblazing career.

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"We are about to drop an EP (Extended Play) on April 14," smiled Sufi Maverick, the vocalist of the Band. Sufi had joined Arbovirus as a passionate vocalist, inspired by System of a Down, Korn and other psychedelic acts of the time. "We are currently almost done with the recording, and I feel like it will be a nice little surprise for our fans." The band claims that the new EP will contain a completely different sound than their previous releases. "We have so many unreleased tracks, that we can launch an album now if we want," says Ranjan. However, the collective philosophy of the band is to produce theme-based collaborative work, one that would satisfy them and their fans. "We will wait until we know what exactly we will go for in our next album," says Nafeez.

One of the most inspiring aspects of Arbovirus is their will to keep moving forward, despite the adversities they have faced over the years. "We have been through it all: members leaving bands at crucial times, time-constraints due to our professional lives, and a long period of inactivity," says Ranjan, who claims that the band has to keep going no matter what. From 2007 to 2011, the band had struggled with their line-up until Nafeez Al Amin joined as a drummer and stabilised the band. "We owe a lot to Nafeez for bringing his energy and high-octane antics to our band," laughs Sufi, "he is every bit as passionate about the band as we are, if not more."

LINE-UP

Suharto Sherif – Guitar  
Nafeez Al Amin–Drums  
Sufi Maverick– Vocals  
Asif Asgar Ranjan – Guitar  
Aldnane Alam –Bass  
Fasihuddin Ahmed Itmam – Guitar (Touring)  
Mong Sai - Bass (Touring)



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

After Nafeez joined the band's resurgence took its full course when they released their second album, *Montobbo Nishproyjon* in 2013. The album was a huge success, with *Hariye Jao*, *Mukhosh* and *Roder Kinaray* topping the charts. What made the success astounding is the fact that the band had decided not to sign under a label, which shocked the industry. "The fact that Arbovirus took such a step, inspired thou-

sands of aspiring musicians, including me," says Fasihuddin Ahmed Itmam, the guitarist for both Owned and Arbovirus, and a touring member of the band. Almost immediately after the release, big-banner labels, which had been considered the most 'important' facet of releasing the album, became less important to young, upcoming musicians, who started going the indie route.

"We are one of the few bands who had

received a 'second chance' from our fans, and we are grateful for it," says Sufi, "please come to live shows, regardless of how 'big' or 'small' the band is.

That is the best way to support the music scene, which now has some incredible new talent in it." The sentiment was echoed by the rest of the members, who consider Arbovirus to be their identities, rather than just a band.



## Abinta Kabir Foundation School's vision of empowering women

MALIHA AHSAN

"Due to my mother, my incredible role model, I value trust, determination, gratitude, respect, and open mindedness; therefore my purpose in life is to become successful, hardworking, and accepting, but at the same time care for those around me and appreciate the fortunate life I live. This is the case for me because growing up I always looked up to my mother and the many things she went through and accomplished while raising me."

These are the words of Abinta Kabir, written in one of her college essays about her role model, her *Maa*. It was from her mother that she learned life's most essential ideals and skills, from the basics of tying her shoe laces, to being able to justify the difference between right and wrong.

Abinta Kabir Foundation School, founded in 2017, was established based on the ideals that Abinta had. Abinta's mother influenced her in a great manner, instilling the belief in her, that a mother of a child must be well-educated to ensure a healthy growth and development for a promising future for her offspring. To shape Abinta's noble belief into a reality, the school aims to educate girls who come from underprivileged back-

grounds.

The students are taught through activity-based lessons, which help to enhance their creative potential, while the teachers receive regular training to develop their academic abilities. Additionally, there are dancing and singing lessons, along with arts and crafts. A huge collection of diverse storybooks are available in the school library, while the multimedia room ensures that the students can watch educational videos to supplement the learning in classrooms. A newly launched computer lab ensures that the girls will receive computing knowledge from the first grade onwards. Alongside these facilities, students receive a daily nutritious meal and a free monthly health checkup.

The services are provided to the students to help them transform their future, as they dream of becoming successful teachers, doctors and business individuals when they grow up. The school is striving to offer the best quality educational experience so that the girls can be empowered to fulfill their dreams, one day making Bangladesh a better place, just like Abinta wanted.

The writer is the Education Program Officer and Head Teacher at Abinta Kabir Foundation School.

## Ferdous thrilled for his new ventures

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Popular actor Ferdous Ahmed is filming in full swing these days. Currently he is filming four films titled, *Save Life*, *Kathgorae Sarat Chandra*, *Jam and Gangchil*. Ferdous has two more films in his schedule, titled *Chattala Express* and *Beauty Circus*.

In *Save Life*, the actor will be playing the role of a firefighter, whereas in *Kathgorae Sarat Chandra* he will be portraying the role of Sarat Chandra.

While filming *Gangchil*, Ferdous accidentally injured himself.

His upcoming film *Chattala Express* will be filmed in the local dialect of Chattogram. "It is a completely new experience for me," said Ferdous. "We will shoot in Chattogram. I am very excited about it." The actor believes that *Beauty Circus* will bring out a new side of him. "I have never been an antagonist in a film. This is a first time," he adds.

Besides being an actor, Ferdous is also a producer. He has produced *Ek Cup Chaa* and *Post Master 71* previously. He looks forward to producing more films in the coming future.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



PHOTO: COURTESY

## International Group Exhibition at Epiphania Micro Gallery

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Epiphania Visuals has organised an international group art exhibition titled *Gender is a Performance* at Epiphania Micro Gallery in Lalbagh, Dhaka. To mark the International Women's Day, the exhibition was inaugurated on March 8.

Through the exhibition, artist and researcher Dipti Rani Datta, also a lecturer at the Department of Oriental Art, University of Dhaka, is encouraging the audience to question more. She collaborated with Shaik Faizur and Moon



Moon Alam Khan, to promote gender fluidity. Re-searching on the lives and works of Sheikh Mohammed Sultan (popularly known as SM Sultan), along

with six national and international artists, Dipti wants to ask the many questions, including:

What do you think about your position in the gender binary and its role in reproduction? Is power patriarchal? What is patriarchy?

The six other participating artists at the exhibition are Kaur Chimuk (India), Rasel Rana (Bangladesh), Fenia Kotsopoulou (UK, based in Greece), Taxi (India), Jordan Aswad (Bangladesh), Renu Hossain (UK). The exhibition, opening from 3 pm to 8 pm will conclude on March 18.