

GRAPE VINE

## Bhabna's busy beginning

In this new year, Ashna Habib Bhabna is busy working for a Mostafa Kamal Raz directed series, *Hit*. Aside from this, she has also acted in a tele-film *Porobashi Megh* for the first time under the direction of Shahiduzzaman Selim, and is also featured in the Aruna Biswa directed short film, *Thikana Bottrish Number*. In addition to these, she has finished shooting for a role in the film *Lal Moroger Jhuti*, directed by Nurul Alam Atique.

Amina Hossain



## Masud Pathik's Street Philosopher

After winning eight awards in *National Film Award 2019* for his film, *Maya: The Lost Mother* in different categories, the poet, lyricists and *National Film Award*-winning filmmaker Masud Pathik has recently revealed the poster of his upcoming film, *Street Philosopher*. The film will be directed in English. Aside from direction, the story and screenplay of the film is written by Masud Pathik himself. The shooting for the film will commence on March of this year.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Sporshia's new year

The new year seems to have graced actor Orchita Sporshia with good luck. She has been highly praised for her performance in the Anonno Mamun directed film, *Nabab LLB*. She has also launched an online organisation called *Shape Sporshia*. Besides this, she recently finished shooting alongside Tahsan on the web series *Chhok* by Golam Sohrab Dodul. When asked about her recent achievements, she said, "I had plans to do something new in the new year, and that's how things are currently proceeding. *Nabab LLB* was really well-received by the audience; there is nothing to criticise. I am also getting commended for the character that I played."

Shreya Shomoyeeta



PHOTO: COLLECTED

COVER STORY

# DEVOTEE OF MUSIC

*Kumar Bishwajit has been a prominent figure in the music industry of Bangladesh. Throughout his career, he has made numerous hit songs which have carved a place in the minds of listeners. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the renowned musician opens up about how he made a song in tribute to the father of our nation, Bangabandhu, and how he began his musical journey.*



**Rafi Hossain:** Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we are joined by a special guest, Kumar Bishwajit. Thank you for joining us today.

**Kumar Bishwajit:** Thank you for having me, Rafi Bhai. I am very happy to be here.

**Rafi:** You recently made a song in tribute to Bangabandhu in celebration of his 100th birthday. What inspired you to do so?

**Kumar:** I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to witness the fight for the freedom of Bangladesh. I was not old enough to fight for liberation, but I was old enough to understand what was going on. I was around seven or eight years old, and I had seen a lot of the war. With us reaching the fiftieth anniversary of our independence, I felt that I should also celebrate the man who led us to that independence. I'm blessed to sing about Bangabandhu. We are all grateful to him for what he has done for us. Without his contributions, we would not be able to call ourselves Bangladeshi. The song that I made about

everything nowadays. (laughs). Honestly, I do not try too hard to take care of my appearance as I am more focused on conveying myself through my music. I think that when it comes to music, looks do not matter.

**Rafi:** When you were young, did you decide that you would pursue music as a career?

**Kumar:** I think that to be a musician, you must be born with a God-gifted talent. There are a lot of people in the world who are very interested to be musicians, but without that gift, it is very difficult to actually make it. Without the help of God, I would not have been able to come this far. I grew up in a very musical atmosphere, and in my family, singing or listening to music was always encouraged. That made me fall in love with music. When a teacher would come to teach my sisters music, I would stand close enough to hear, and try to pick up the songs that he was teaching. After he would leave, I would sing the songs, and it would shock my sisters, as I had managed to pick it up by

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called *Rhythm-77*. After I left *Feelings*, the band broke up and then James started a new band under the same name.

**Rafi:** You were very close to Ayub Bachchu. What do you think of him as a musician?

**Kumar:** I have known Bachchu for a long time. We grew up in the same locality and were always very close. I made him join *Feelings*, and he also played using my guitar for a while. We both had very strict families that were not very eager to let us pursue music as a career, so we were both very close. Even when we moved to Dhaka after forming the band, we lived in the same house. As a musician, he was very dedicated. He would listen to a lot of music and try to pick it up. We would listen to popular instrumentals, and we would pick them up and cover them. Bachchu would always practise until he got it perfect. He had a dream, and he turned it into a reality. I think his contributions to music are proof of his love and dedication to music. Someone like Ayub Bachchu is very rare, and we do not know when someone of his calibre will appear again.

**Rafi:** Are you hopeful for the future of the industry?

**Kumar:** I think that there will be good artists coming out, but to be good artists, the artists need to have passion and dedication. If they do it just for money and fame, they will not be able to make good music. When I started, I had to struggle, and at the end, with my dedication to music, all the struggle proved to be worth it. Now, I am proud to say that I have been working with music for almost thirty-eight years, and it is my main profession. But, it was not an easy road to be a musician. To actually make it in music, you need to make sure the songs you create are of top quality. Doing covers of songs is fine, but without original content, it is impossible to be a professional musician. If you make good songs, it will reach people. Another important thing an artist needs to remember is that they must make songs which people will remember and something that they can sing onstage with people singing along. If you have a thousand songs but people only remember four, something is not right. It is much better to have only two songs, but people completely remember both. To make songs, you have to make things you enjoy yourself.

**Rafi:** Do you have any message for the readers?

**Kumar:** I hope everyone will stay well, healthy and safe, and work to better themselves this new year.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

him was amazing. Gazi Mazharul Anwar did an amazing job writing it. He told me that he actually wrote it as a poem after the liberation of our country, and he even recited it to Bangabandhu. The tune for the song was given by Kishore Das, and Manam Ahmed composed it. The mixing and mastering were done in Bombay. We made the song in celebration of his birthday.

**Rafi:** You did this song from your own initiative, right?

**Kumar:** I did it all because of my love for Bangabandhu. I admire him so much and I wanted to make a song in tribute to the man who carried us to freedom.

**Rafi:** Do you know if our honorable Prime Minister heard the song yet?

**Kumar:** I asked for her permission before making the song, and she told me to make it. She has heard it, and once the pandemic is over, I will present her with a box which has the CD and pen drive with the song on it. It is a wooden box with a picture of Bangabandhu on it. I am eager to present it to her.

**Rafi:** Even after so long, how have you kept yourself in such good shape? It seems like you do not age. What is your secret?

**Kumar:** I am a bit worried about that. Maybe it is because of all the formalin that is mixed in

just hearing it. I was very young then, so the adults in my family thought I was too young to start learning music. Seeing how I was picking up songs easily, my grandfather decided that I should start learning with a teacher. And once I had a teacher, I was picking up almost four songs a day. Where I lived, the teachers did not have too many songs to teach, and within a few months, I picked up every song my teacher had. At one point, my teacher stopped coming and when my grandfather asked why, the teacher told him that to teach me, he has to go back and learn songs again. Soon, I was enlisted to sing on the radio, and I even recorded a few songs then. Those songs eventually made to my first album. I then recorded some songs at a studio where the producer of *BTV* then, Al Mansur, came. After hearing my song, he asked me to sing on a programme. After that, I started receiving attention, and then I made my first album.

**Rafi:** You used to perform with the band, 'Souls', right?

**Kumar:** I was not a member of the band, but sometimes, I would play their keyboard if Nakib Bhai was not there. I was more of an invited guest. I had my own band back then, *Feelings*. Ayub Bachchu was in the band, and before we made *Feelings*, Bachchu and I were together in a band

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

## BRIDGERTON

*Bridgerton* is a television period drama series on *Netflix*, and has been based on the novel series of the same name by Julia Quinn. It has been created by Chris Van Dusen, produced by Shonda Rhimes, and stars Adjoa Andoh,

Lorraine Ashbourne and Jonathan Bailey, among others. The series has been set in the Regency-era England, and focuses on the Bridgerton family and tells their story. It premiered on December 25, 2020.



## Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is a drama film on *Netflix*, and has been based on the eponymous play by August Wilson. It has been directed by George C. Wolfe, produced by Denzel Washington, Todd Black and Dany Wolf, with Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman in the lead roles. The movie tells the story of the acclaimed and inspirational blues singer Ma Rainey and her band. It was initially released on November 25, 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



KAAGAZ

*Kaagaz* is a Hindi biographical film about the struggles a man has to go through to prove he is not, in fact, dead after being declared officially dead. It was written and directed by Satish Kaushik, produced by Salman Khan and Nishant Kaushik under the banner of *Salman Khan Films* and *The Satish Kaushik Entertainment Production*, distributed by *ZEE5*, and stars Pankaj Tripathi, Monal Gajjar and Amar Upadhyay, among others. It was first released on January 7, 2021.

Amina Hossain