

GOLDEN JUBILEE BEGINNINGS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2021, FALGUN 4, 1427 BS

Deshis have made us proud time and again. While the list is enormous and hard to script in a few pages, here, we make the effort to highlight a handful who made names in recent times, making being Bangladeshi a thing of pride in the global context.

Bangladeshis making names in the global arena

#ICONS

MEHRIN MUBDI CHOWDHURY

To make the recognition easier to 'identify with,' we have tried to group the names in segments.

SPORTS

Cricket - Shakib Al Hassan

Ranked as one of the world's most famous athletes by ESPN in 2019, Shakib has come a long way since his debut back in 2004 at the National Domestic League as a 17-year-old cricketer.

In 2015, the sports star of Bangladesh became the first and only cricketer in history to be marked as the top ranker in all three formats of the game.

In November 2020, after a ban of a full year by the International Cricket Council, Shakib returned to his passion - cricket, and continued his presence through taking part in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup 2020, as a selected team member for Gemcon Khulna.

Mountaineering - Wasfia Nazreen

On 18 November, 2015 Nazreen completed her seven-summit ascent by reaching the pinnacle of her final summit - the Carstensz Pyramid, summit of Oceania.

According to Nazreen, she dedicated the success to the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War and to the people who continuously fight to protect the

key partnerships with celebrities such as Dua Lipa, Cardi B, Beyonce, Ariana Grande, Miley Cyrus, and Bella Hadid.

Aysha holds a double master's degree from ESMOD Paris as one of the top graduates of her class. She also facilitated Paris fashion week shows for Isabel Marant and the cutting-edge brand Rick Owens. With a proven successful track record, Aysha is also a pioneer in the modest fashion network, having represented Bangladesh at international events and panel discussions in Dubai, Istanbul, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Paris.

Publications like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar often enlists Aysha as one of the most sought-after modest fashion profiles globally. Aysha aspires to use her platform and her voice to highlight Bangladeshi fashion and its talent on the global stage.

Modelling - Shirin Akter Shela

The 2019 Miss Universe Bangladesh title winner, Shirin Akter Shela, represented her home country at the globally recognised beauty parade - the 68th instalment of the Miss Universe pageant with courage and sophistication.

The beautiful lady took Bangladesh to the semi-finals. Although Shela couldn't win the title, she won the hearts of millions back in Bangladesh. She set the

time and again for their tireless efforts in advancing the healthcare efforts in combatting infectious diseases. CHRF (Child Health Research Foundation) where Dr Senjuti Saha is currently employed as a scientist is famous all over the world for using cutting-edge technology of IDseq, to detect the source of meningitis outbreak in Bangladesh.

Dr Senjuti Saha has also been appointed as the first Bangladeshi WHO Polio Transition Independent Monitoring Board to monitor the progress of the polio transition process - a much-needed effort to improve the global health infrastructure.

Astrophysicist - Tonima Tasnim Ananna

Black holes are an intriguing part of the universe, something that is extraordinary and yet, mysterious enough to not have been unearthed absolutely due to lack of research and study. Tonima Tasnim Ananna, a Bangladeshi astrophysicist, has taken the gargantuan task of unearthing the magnificent enigma, via the help of Artificial Intelligence.

Ananna has been able to script the most accurate picture of black holes as of yet, almost getting close to deciphering where they are situated, how they grow and affect their surrounding environment. According to the astrophysicist, who has worked at NASA

she also worked on the sets of Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud's film Matir Moyna, to be able to grasp the true emotions of the Liberation War.

In 2016, the final book of the trilogy was published by the renowned publishing house Harper Collins.

In 2017, Anam has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Besides being an author, Anam frequently writes for The New York Times, The Guardian, and The New Statesman as a columnist.

Author - Shaheen Akhter
Popular fiction writer Shaheen Akhter won the 3rd Asian Literature award for her novel, Talash, which was printed in 2004. The Award ceremony, held online from Gwangju, South Korea due to the pandemic, announced her win on the final day of the festival.

Talash is an epic novel, descriptive and quite graphic in depicting the suffering of the women who survived sexual violence during the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh - the Birangonas. It previously won the Prothom Alo Literary Prize in 2004.

In 2012, the English version of the novel had been transcribed and titled as The Search. Later, it was translated into Korean by Professor Seung Hee Jeon and Farhana Shashi and reprinted in 2018.

TV AND CINEMA

Director, Producer, and Screenwriter - Mostofa Sarwar Farooqi

A handful of his films, including Third Person Singular Number, has been critically acclaimed all over the world and received numerous international awards.

Farooqi debuted with his film, Bachelor, in 2003 and then continued with a political satire within a few years in 2007 - Made in Bangladesh. The director's attempt to entertain had just begun because his third film, Third Person Singular Number, went beyond borders and premiered at the Busan Film Festival in 2009.

This was only the beginning of international acclamation for the talented director, since his fourth feature film - Television, won the APSA Grand Jury Prize in 2013, as well as few other notable international awards, namely Dubai, Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival, Rome's Asiatica Film Mediale, and Kolkata International Film Festival.

Fast-forward to his sixth feature film, Doob - No Bed of Roses, starred international movie star Irrfan Khan alongside other Bengali cinema personalities. At the moment, Farooqi is busy with releasing a few of his ambitious projects, which includes No Lands Man - an upcoming American-Indian-Bangladeshi joint venture drama.

The story revolves around a complex plot that emphasised fascism and an associated identity crisis. The film includes international stars like Nawazuddin Siddiqui, A R Rahman as music composer, Marina Fernandez Ferri, Shrihari Sathe, besides deshi stalwart actors like Tahsan Rahman Khan, and Nusrat Imroze Tisha.

No lands Man is the second film of his trilogy that deals with recognition and identity crises amongst human beings. The first of the series, another ambitious project, a one-shot film - Saturday Afternoon starring Nusrat Imroze Tisha, Prambata Chatterjee, Zahid Hassan, Eyad Hourani, Mamunur Rashid is a Bangladesh-Germany-Russia joint collaboration inspired by the stories of terror attacks.

The third film of the trilogy is in the pipeline and is based on the Rohingya crisis. Besides being recognised massively in the global arena as a famed director, Farooqi has also been appointed in numerous award ceremonies as International Jury, Guest, and Speaker.

SOCIAL WORK

Activist - Sadat Rahman

Who isn't familiar with Malala Yousufzai and Greta Thunberg? Yet many of us fail to recognise Sadat Rahman, a 17-year-old hailing from Bangladesh, who won the same prestigious title as the former two candidates - the KidsRights International Children's Peace Prize in 2020. Rahman won the title for developing a mobile app that

helps teenagers to report any sort of cyberbullying and cybercrimes, if and when it occurs. 'Cyber-Teens' as the app is popularly known, gives tips to its users on safety and security over the internet. The app brings together social workers and the police under the same platform. In such a case, every local teenager has the opportunity to make complaints and see swift results, in case any incident should take place over the internet. Till now, the app has been able to help around 300 victims of cyber bullying, helping to put down numerous fake accounts and provide mental support in case of any presiding mental health issue amongst the user.

NGO - Ruhul Abid
HAEFA - Health and Education for All, an NGO initiated by a Bangladeshi-American professor, Ruhul Abid, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 by University of Massachusetts, Boston, for the supportive work during the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh.

Dr Abid's NGO worked relentlessly to providing free healthcare to the underprivileged, and provided medical experts with competency training to aid in the management of curbing the transmission of the novel coronavirus in the Rohingya refugee camps.

Dr Abid is one of 211 individuals nominated for the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize. HAEFA was initiated right after the disaster of the Rana Plaza incident back in 2013, in order to provide healthcare to the RMG factory workers all throughout Bangladesh. HAEFA is especially renowned for its 'digitally innovative creation' termed as Nirog in Bengali. It's basically a solar powered device capable of storing medical records in electronic form and that too, without the use of Wi-Fi.

Also known as EMR (Electronic Medical Record System), the device enables the HAEFA team to retrieve medical records of patients with chronic diseases whenever necessary for effective healthcare management and accurate follow-up care.

ART

Art Patrons - Nadia Samdani and Rajeev Samdani - The Samdani Art Foundation

Founded in 2011, the Samdani Art Foundation has the sole motive of popularising the Bangladeshi art and architecture scene to the rest of the world. It is famously known for the bi-annual art summit by the name of Dhaka Art Summit.

In February 2020, right before the pandemic wreaked havoc across the country, the popular art congregation, in its fifth edition, welcomed over 477,000 visitors. The foundation is also famous for being one of the most active art institutions in South Asia. Founded and operated by art collectors Nadia and Rajeev Samdani, the foundation has allowed local artists to experiment and expand their creative horizons via their grants, residencies, education programs and exhibitions.

Samdani Art Foundation has been associated with some of the world's leading institutions in the Asia Pacific, Europe, Africa, and North America, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Swiss Institute and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Getty Foundation in Los Angeles, Para Site, M+, and the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Alserkhal Avenue and Art Jameel in Dubai, the Venice Biennale, to name a few.

Caricature: Biplob Chakroborty

References:
<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/bangladeshi-american-dr-ruhul-abid-his-org-haefa-get-nomination-1961501>
<https://kidsrights.org/news/sadat-rahman-17-from-bangladesh-wins-international-childrens-peace-prize-2020/>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/toggle/news/looking-back-2020-the-ones-who-made-us-proud-2024229>
<https://www.wikipedia.org/>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/lifestyle/perspective/news/around-the-world-my-hijab-1761313>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samdani_Art_Foundation



sovereignty till date. The campaign to reach the seven summits was launched on a similar auspicious note, back in 2011 - marking the 40 years of women's progression in Bangladesh since the country's liberation.

The campaign received widespread support from the masses, including renowned sports people of the country. Patrick Morrow, the first person to have topped all the seven summits, was one to train Nazreen for her ascent.

Today, Nazreen is a social worker, an activist and a writer, besides being a mountaineer. She has been honoured by many reputed titles especially for her commitment to empowering women through her work in the field of outdoor adventure.

FASHION

Brand - Aysha Mehnaz

Aysha Mehnaz, a 26-year-old Bangladeshi, is taking the mainstream Parisian fashion scene by storm at the renowned luxury fashion brand Mugler, owned by the world's biggest beauty conglomerate, L'Oréal Group.

Aysha and her team at Mugler leads the strategic PR initiatives that have made this famous brand from the '80s, a modern pop culture phenomenon; with

stage on fire with her unique wardrobe of a blood-red jamdani, alphabet earrings, and a rickshaw hood as prop, all very unique to the heritage of the country.

Shela, a student of Dhaka University and hailing from Thakurgaon, dedicates her success to her father who is a member of the Border Guard Bangladesh. According to Shela, her willingness to glorify Bangladesh has been inspired by her father's relentless support to the welfare and safety of the motherland.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Microbiologist - Senjuti Saha

Dr Senjuti Saha and her team made quite a stir in the first quarter of 2020 with the completion of the genome sequencing of the virus causing SARS-CoV2, paving a way for vaccine manufacturers for the rest of the world. Prior to that, she had performed an unbiased metagenomic sequence analysis to show a correlation between paediatric meningitis and Chikungunya virus outbreak within the country.

A microbiologist by profession, Dr Senjuti Saha is the daughter of the renowned Bangladeshi scientist Dr Samir Kumar Saha. Both father and daughter duo has been applauded by Bill Gates

and CERN, understanding black holes is the key behind deciphering the existence of cosmic structures and maybe even life itself.

Inspired by her mother and her stories on astronauts and spacecrafts, Ananna decided to become an astrophysicist at a very early stage in her life. She co-founded Wi-Stem (read as wisdom), a mentorship network for aspiring girl scientists. She and four other Bangladeshi scientists mentor a group of twenty female college students, all residing in Bangladesh, to pursue the fascinating paths of science.

LITERATURE

Author - Tahmima Anam

A writer, novelist, and columnist has made quite a name for herself in the international literary circuit.

Winner of the Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 2007, with the first instalment of her trilogy, A Golden Age (2007), she made her debut in the literary scene. The follow-up novel, The Good Muslim was also nominated for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011.

In order to write her novel, set during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, Anam stayed in Bangladesh for two years to do her research. Additionally,