

GRAPE VINE

## PORI MONI'S dream come true

Pori Moni is set to work as the brand ambassador of Hash Marka Gondhoraj Oil. Ever since she was a child, she had dreamt of modelling for that brand. Finally, her dream has come true. She will be seen in multiple advertisements of the brand. Recently, the Tauquir Ahmed directed film Sphulingo was released, where she was featured in. Pori Moni recently completed the shooting for the film Mukhosh, directed by Iftekhar Shuvo. Her film, Adventure of Sundarban, is awaiting its release.



Amina Hossain

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## INDO-BENGAL DUET



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Singer Sabbir Nasir and Kolkata-based singer Shampa Biswas, known for her appearance in Sa Re Ga Ma Pa sang a duet together, titled Binodini Rai. The lyrics and the tune for the song were made by Plabon Koreshi. The musical arrangements were done by Rial Ashiq. Sabbir Nasir said, "I hope that the new song will turn out well. I tried to keep the originality of the tune intact while singing. I hope the audience will like it." Plabon Koreshi said, "We will find traces of Bangladesh in this song. I have been very meticulous in the songwriting and composing department."

Amina Hossain

## SHAKIB KHAN'S new eid feature

The shooting of the Eid special film, Antaratma, featuring Shakib Khan, has been completed. Audiences were amazed seeing the diverse looks of the film that were periodically released. He hasn't yet posted any pictures with the Kolkata-based actor, Darshana Banik who will be seen alongside him. The film has been directed by Wajed Ali Sumon. Sohani Hossain wrote the storyline while Ferrari Farhad wrote the dialogues. According to the director, "The post-production of the film is taking place in India. If the pandemic is within control, the film will be released on the coming Eid-ul-Fitr." The film will also feature Shahed Sharif Khan, Aruna Biswas, Jhuna Chowdhury and S M Mohsin, among others.

Amina Hossain



PHOTO: COLLECTED

COVER STORY

# CREATIVE GROWTH

Since she started uploading music to 'YouTube' five years ago, Xefer has made an impact on the music industry. From releasing her debut album, 'Uncaged' to being the executive producer for 'No Dorai', she has done a lot in a relatively short period of time. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, she talks about her start as an artist and how she spent the COVID-19 pandemic working on music and expanding herself creatively.

**Rafi Hossain:** Today we are joined by a very special guest, Xefer Rahman. How are you doing nowadays?

**Xefer:** I am very busy with work nowadays. Sometime back we got to loosen restrictions a bit so we were able to work more, but now I think that the situation is getting worse again. So, we are working while making sure to stay cautious regarding the pandemic.

**Rafi:** I hear many people from your generation say that older people have too much patriotic sentiment. What are your thoughts on that?

**Xefer:** I think that if someone has too much patriotism then that is a good thing. The sacrifices people made so that we have this country are something that we should be proud of. I don't know the point of view of people who say that too much patriotism is bad, but from my own point of view, I think we all should have a lot of patriotic sentiment.

**Rafi:** As an artist, how do you want to present yourself as a Bangladeshi to the whole world?

**Xefer:** As an artist, it is difficult, so what is the right way to present myself and what is the wrong way? Art is very subjective, and we should be able to express ourselves in whichever way we like. But



to only have music as your only career. Some even say that the industry is in dire conditions and that it is going through a crisis. And after the pandemic, it affected the industry even more. What do you think the state of the showbiz industry will be after the pandemic is over?

**Xefer:** Since the beginning of the pandemic, it's not just people in the showbiz industry that were affected. People who owned businesses were also affected badly. From an artist's standpoint, it affected me badly. We stopped being able to do live shows, so that was very bad for us. Since music is my main earning source, I had to think a lot about what I must do. But after restrictions loosened, people were able to do some small shows here and there. During the quarantine, I spent a lot of time working on new songs, and I also got to think about things I probably would not have had time to think about during the regular busy life. But I have to admit, I am privileged in a way as I did not have to worry about my earnings be it for savings and other reasons, whereas there were many people who had to worry about how they were going to put food on their plates on the daily. So, I was very fortunate that way. Now I cannot tell you what the industry will be like after the pandemic, but in my case, I just spent my quarantine time working on new songs which will help my music career. Aside from this, I have an announcement to make. I recently got appointed as the brand ambassador for the clothing brand LoveGen. It is an already established brand in India. I will be doing a lot of work with them in the coming days.

**Rafi:** You worked as an executive producer on 'No Dorai'. Will we be seeing you in that role again in the near future?

**Xefer:** It was a very interesting experience to be the executive producer of the film. I put in some input to the film and also helped out with some of the creative processes for it. However, I don't think that I can manage to do that role as a profession, but if I do find a very interesting project in the future, then I will definitely consider doing it again.

**Rafi:** You strike me as someone who is very interested in fashion. Were you always very fashion conscious?

**Xefer:** Even when I was very little, I always liked the idea of being a fashion designer. Even before getting into music, I was into fashion. However, after I started music, I knew that I was more into making music, but fashion always had a place in my heart. I am just naturally interested in fashion, there was no planning there. I do make custom outfits for my music videos and the photoshoots with those videos. I also have designed some of those outfits which I have worn.

**Rafi:** Xefer, you have been a musician for five years now. Could you please tell us what your journey in

music has been like over these five years?

**Xefer:** When my journey started, it was very unexpected for me. Before me, I don't think anyone had made a career in music by making songs and putting them on YouTube. I used to do it as a hobby, and it came as a massive shock to me when I realized that people were really liking what I put out. I never really made a song that was meant to be a very commercial song. I just made whatever I felt like, and for most of my career, I made songs in English. My progress in the industry was slow, but steadily increasing. But now I have been doing playbacks and I even had a song in No Dorai. So the last five years were an interesting experience, and I hope the next five years will be good for me and my career.

**Rafi:** What should one do to retain a good career in music?

**Xefer:** I don't think that I am the right person to advise on this. But for me, what helped me retain the fame I have is that I always stayed true to my craft. There were times when I made a song and if I didn't like it then I would not put it out. I only released something if I liked it. I stayed passionate and did what I liked. But during the pandemic, I got the chance to explore myself more musically. I got to evolve as an artist and my music style changed a bit. I try to evolve as an artist and I think people will get to see my evolution more prominently in the future. And I wholeheartedly believe that I have more to offer as an artist.

**Rafi:** Who are your favorite musicians, both old and new?

**Xefer:** From the newer artists, I really like the work that Pritom has been doing, and there's a relatively newer artist called Farooque Bhai, I really like his music too. I also like the music that Pragata is doing and also Fairouz. There are many more new artists who I think are doing great. From the more senior artists, I love Arnob, Fuad bhai, James, Ark, Chirkutt, Nemesis, and many others. When I started making music, I was heavily inspired by the band Evanescence, but with time I think my inspirations also changed. Now I have had so many artists that have inspired me.

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

**Xefer:** I think right now the main thing that I want to tell people is that we are still in a pandemic, so we must remain cautious. Wear masks, wash your hands and make sure to not only stay healthy but to ensure that your families are healthy as well. I know that a lot of people have to go out and work, but make sure to remain cautious if you must go out. Make sure to maintain social distancing. We must stay safe, and better days are ahead.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

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



### Hello, Me

Hello, Me is a South Korean drama fantasy television series on Netflix. It has been directed by Lee Hyun-seok, produced by Jung Ah-reum and Jung Hyun-jo, and stars Kim Young-kwang, Choi Kang-hee, and Lee Re among others. The show, which has been based on Kim Hye-jung's novel, Fantastic Girl, tells the story of a woman who meets her younger self and becomes inspired to bring changes in her current life. It was first released on February 17, 2021.

### KARNAN

Karnan is a Tamil action and drama film. It has been directed by Mari Selvaraj, produced by Kalaipuli S. Thanu, and stars stars Dhanush, Lal, Yogi Babu, and Natarajan Subramaniam among others. The film follows the story of a young man who has to fight for his village and its people who have been discriminated against for years due to their caste. It was originally released on April 9, 2021.



### American Gods

American Gods is a fantasy drama television series that is available on Amazon Prime Video and has been based on the eponymous novel by Neil Gaiman. The series has been developed by Bryan Fuller and Michael Green, who also produced the show alongside others, and stars Ricky Whittle, Emily Browning, and Crispin Glover among others. It follows the life of an ex-convict, who, after getting released, gets a mysterious job offer which leads to him being involved with people in a world where magic is real. It was released on April 30, 2017 with the final episode being aired on March 21, 2021.

Shreya Shomoyeeta