

Through the lenses of Adity Mohsin

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Adity Mohsin is considered to be one of the premiere Rabindra Sangeet exponents in the country, having earned immense popularity in her career spanning over two decades. Marking Rabindra Jayanti this year, the singer shares her journey and upcoming plans in a candid chat with *The Daily Star*.

Everyone has been in their houses for these past couple of weeks due to the lockdown. How are you spending your time?

It has been months since we have been in lockdowns and I have always tried my best to adjust to the 'new' normal. I teach music at the Anandadhara School online. Besides Bangladeshi students, I also have students from India and Dubai, among many other countries. I also have a YouTube channel where I am trying to upload as much digital content as possible. I have actually been quite active during this pandemic and I must say, through work has been a little difficult, I am enjoying every bit of it.

How are you planning to spend the day today?

I don't have any specific plans yet as we are all in lockdown. Nevertheless, since it is Rabindra Jayanti, I will definitely do something special online.

Why did you choose to pursue Rabindra Sangeet?

Tagore's philosophy is what had attracted me to take up Rabindra Sangeet. His songs are not always about happiness or practiced for the purpose of entertainment. Rabindra Sangeet makes us mature and sophisticated. Also, Rabindranath has always had a huge impact on the lives of Bengali people, and I am no different.

You have been a fan favourite in both parts of Bengal. How do you feel about it?

Being born and brought up in Bangladesh, I love this country and the appreciation of my fans from here more than anything. I know I have earned a place in the cultural square of West Bengal, and I do enjoy their love as well. It seems like we are two sides of the same coin.

What advice would you like to give to the younger promising Rabindra Sangeet singers?

Anyone who wishes to have a career in music should first and foremost, aim to never give up on their dreams. With proper training, dedication, and love for the art, you will surely succeed, be it sooner or later.

The importance of art is inevitable, and it has always kept its place intact even in capitalistic societies. It helps a nation develop emotions and improve their understanding of social structures, among numerous other such factors.

I believe, we have the responsibility to guide the upcoming generations and lead the path of righteousness and that is what I have been doing to with my work—trying to inspire the upcoming generation to keep their traditions alive through art.



PHOTO: STAR



A statue of Rabindranath Tagore in Patisar, outside the museum

A letter that travelled through time

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

"I had a letter to pen, But the words have not come easy. If there was news instead, Words could rather keep me busy." These four lines, quoted from the poem named 'Chithi' (letter), printed in the book named 'Kori O Komol' by the great Rabindranath Tagore addressing his niece Indira Devi, testifies to his passion for writing letters. Such a letter, penned by the Nobel Laureate, came to the light in Patisar of Atrai Upazila in Naogaon district in the school established by the poet himself.

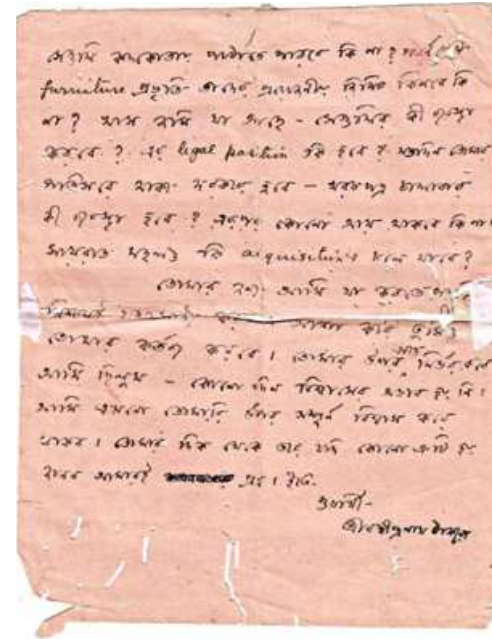
A museum in Patisar, Naogaon, laced with the poet's memory, preserves the letter, along with seven other letters penned by his son and daughter-in-law. There is also the scanned copy of another letter the intended recipient of which is still a mystery. Its original copy is preserved in Mahasthangarh Museum in Bogura district. The yellowed papers of the letter are evocative of the poet who is unanimously credited with taking the Bangla language to the global stage and living no chord of human emotion untouched.

"Rabindra Smriti Sangrahasala" (A museum on Tagore), was established to preserve his memory but was denied the spotlight rightfully deserved by the first Asian to win a Nobel Prize more than 100 years ago.

That is why for a long time, many memories of the poet including his words of blessings for the school, valuable letters written by him, his son and daughter-in-law Pratima Devi, books brought by the poet from Oxford University, remained out of the public eye.

However, the last account of Tagore's zamindari is recorded in the valuable letters. When insects were eating up the invaluable letters, collectors focused on their preservation. To that end, M Matiar Rahman Mamun, a collector, and researcher of Rabindranath's memorabilia, has preserved some priceless memories of Tagore at Kaligram Rathindranath Institution on May 8, 2013.

The Sadar Kachari of Kaligram Pargana, a zamindari of the Jorasanko Tagore family, was at Patisar. The Patisar ME School was



A letter handwritten by Rabindranath Tagore, preserved in the museum

established in 1905 by Rabindranath Tagore. The journey of the school began in the tin-tiled tent of the earthen wall. By 1905, the number of schools and colleges in India was negligible. And the education of the rural people was not thought of in most areas.

However, Tagore always favored rural life. He started working from Patisar to educate them. In addition to establishing moral schools and high schools in about 200 villages, he established a library in Patisar in the name of his brother-in-law (Nagendranath Institute 1905).

Almost three decades later, on July 26, 1937, the ailing poet came to Patisar to bid farewell to his beloved subjects. On the same day, the poet renamed the ME school after his favorite pargana 'Kaligram' and his beloved son Rathindranath Tagore as 'Kaligram Rathindranath Institution'.

Naturally, many memorabilia of the poet's zamindari and the things used by the poet have

remained there. There are many books. Patisar, Shilaidaha, and Shahajapur are enriched with Rabindranath's footprints, as well as the poet's life and literature. The poet has spent a significant part of his life on Padma to Nagar.

He himself plowed the field with a power tiller in Patisar to improve agriculture; he formed cooperatives of agriculture, weaving and pottery. He also gave Tk 1 lakh of his Nobel Prize to Patisar Agricultural Bank, which was never returned.

"When the archeological department did not take any initiative even after informing them that the poet's memorabilia have started decaying," says collector and researcher M Matiar Rahman Mamun. "Local lawmaker and an ardent follower of the poet Md Israfil Alam and I established 'Rabindrasmriti Sangrahasala' on the very school set up by the poet himself.

The letters were found in envelopes at the school. They were discovered among other items. After the death of the poet and the abolition of the zamindari system in the 1950s, the dominance of this family in the region came to an end. Due to the lack of preservation of Rabindranath's handwritten letters, personal belongings, educational institutions, and other facilities, some things were gradually lost and many things were taken over.

The words some more memories of the poet were at the risk of perishing. The earthen houses created by the poet were demolished in the nineties, and modern houses were built to preserve the memories in their stead.

At the request of the people, Rabindranath Tagore visited Patisar for the last time in 1937 on the occasion of 'Punya'.

At the entrance of the museum, there is a bust of the poet, a two-storied house, several houses. The museum has also carefully arranged the pictures of the poet taken with Rabindranath, Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller, Einstein, and other famous people by bringing some pictures from Shantiniketan.

Every day, researchers and visitors from different parts of the country and abroad come to visit this place, which is one of the more overlooked museums dedicated to the Nobel laureate.

Actors on their challenges with shooting

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDA

Eid is one of the most awaited occasions for new television and film releases. However, the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has given way to different challenges for the entertainment arena. In light of the current scenario, television and film actors shared their experiences of shooting during this pandemic, and spoke about their upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr projects.

SABILA NUR

I stopped shooting from April 4 after talking to some of my peers, as Covid-19 cases were already on the rise during that time. However, I completed shooting for a few ventures which will be releasing this Eid.

I am looking forward to Shihab Shaheen's "Pasher Bashar Cheleta" where I will appear alongside Ziaul Faruq Apurba. My other projects,



Bidya Sinha Mim

including Rakesh Bashu's "Physics Chemistry Math" and "Rokto", are also exciting.

I also finished shooting for a tele-fiction by Rubel Hasan but we have not finalised the name of the production yet. Shooting during this pandemic for the last two consecutive Eid seasons has been very stressful, especially for me as I am very particular about cleanliness and hygiene. Not being able to wear a mask during shots and always having to carry alcohol wipes and sanitisers only adds to the



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

stress. In addition, the recent deaths have been worrying.

MANOJ KUMAR PRAMANIK

I had stopped shooting for about 15 to 20 days during the initial days of the lockdown this year. However, I am currently shooting as per my usual schedule, while maintaining safety guidelines strictly.

I am looking forward to my tele-fiction, "Mon Boleche Jabo Jabo" by Chayanika Chowdhury and another one by Preeti Dutta. I am also working on two short



Siam Ahmed

films with Shafayet Mansoor and Raihan Rafi, respectively.

For safety purposes, we are avoiding intimate shots and trying to have fewer crew members on the sets.

NUSRAAT FARIA

I try to take a break during this time of the year as I am busy preparing for my exams, and this year is no different. Nevertheless, my cooking show named "Quick Recipe" has been on air throughout Ramadan. I am also waiting for "Operation Sundarbans" and "Pataal Ghor" to hit movie theatres soon, once the second wave passes. I am looking forward to having an amazing Eid-ul-Fitr with my family at home.

SIAM AHMED

We were hoping to release "Shaan", a film directed by M Raihan, during this Eid as the film is already in the post-production stage. However, owing to the lockdown, we have postponed its theatrical release. I stopped shooting last month.

I shot some advertisements while



Manoj Pramanik

the Covid cases were in control at the beginning of this year, and I also completed shooting for "Operation Sundarbans".

BIDYA SINHA MIM

I have been busy with my online talk show "The Box" and I finished shooting for a few advertisements, before the lockdown.

We are almost ready to wrap up the film, "Poran" except for its trailer song and promotions. I am also waiting to resume shooting for my upcoming film "Ittefaq". Shooting during the pandemic has made me rather irritated than anxious.

Having to wear a mask before shots, taking it off during the shot, and at times, losing track of where I had kept it prior to the shot has been a day-to-day hassle for me. Amidst all that, I also had to remember my lines and make sure that I was maintaining safety and hygiene rules, which is difficult to do, especially when you are surrounded by a whole crew.



Nusraat Faria



Sabila Nur