



An enchanted musical evening showcasing the union of tagore and western songs at chhyanaut auditorium

## Team Bangladesh shines at IMDO 2022

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

The International Medicine and Disease Olympiad (IMDO) is a global medical and disease knowledge/problem solving competition for high school students. The IMDO recognises the best high school problem solvers, who are interested in medicine, in order to boost their fascination towards the field. It assesses both fundamental medical comprehension of human biology and disease, as well as the competitors' problem-solving ability. It tests the participants' knowledge in medicine-related domains of biology, including molecular and cell biology, human physiology, and human diseases.

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In order to participate in the competition, students from all over the world participated in the United States Medicine and Disease Olympiad (USMDO), which was organised in late June of this year.

Following this two-hour long exam, teams from different countries were formed based on their scores. After completing USMDO, seven Bangladeshi students got the chance to participate in IMDO. Out of them, six students won medals. This is the highest number of medals won by Bangladesh in this Olympiad.

Sanjida Nusrat Ananna, an A level candidate from Dhaka, won a gold medal by scoring 118 out of 150. The second highest scorer was Md Shafin Jubayer, from Adamjee Cantonment College. The other two silver medal winners were Naimul Islam and Talha Zubair, from Notre Dame College. Minhaz Uddin Sayeed, from Comilla Government College, and Jubayer Ahmed, an A level examinee from Chittagong, bagged two bronze medals.

"I am overwhelmed by the performance of our group. Winning the gold medal is like a dream come true. I am thankful to our seniors, for organising a preparation webinar and providing us resources on the basis of IMDO structure. We are also grateful to our mentor Dr Promit Paul, from Mymensingh Medical College, for guiding us throughout the USMLE structured questions," said Ananna.



# MUSICAL TWINS spread the gospel of Bengali music

**"Bangla music always invigorated our spirit, and with the support of maa and baba, we never faced any difficulties practicing our music."**

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Purba Audhora and Urbi Modhura, two teenage musicians from London, showcased their love and respect for Rabindranath Tagore in the presentation of "Poshchimer Robi", last Friday at Chhyanaut.

Despite living in London, the musical duo always maintained a strong bond with their Bengali culture through Bengali music. In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the twin sisters and their father opened up about their musical memories.

From a tender age, both sisters have followed their father, acclaimed Tagorean music maestro Dr Imtiaz Ahmed. "We have been with Bangla music our entire life," said Purba. "I still remember maa and baba playing our aunt Lisa's Rabindra Sangeet albums and reading Bangla books

to us at bedtime."

"We have always felt a strong connection to Bangladesh, and finally coming here after so many years fills us with joy," said Urbi. "Being a Bangladeshi is a matter of pride for us. Bangla music and culture connects us to our roots," says Purba.

Adept in both Bangla and English music, the musical duo have sung with their father, Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, at multiple concerts around London, introducing Bengali culture and music to the British society.

"They have been learning Bangla and English songs since they were young," shared Dr Ahmed. "We, as their parents, have not neglected English music. They have learned multiple musical instruments as well."

"Our mother took the initiative to make us join English choirs and learn Western music. As a result,

Western music has also been a big part of our lives," added the twins. The musical twins are part of the prestigious National Youth Choir of Great Britain, and also the Novem Consort.

Through their mother and father, Urbi and Purba came to know about Tagorean music. "We have always enjoyed baba teaching us Rabindra Sangeet," mentioned the twins. "When we were kids, maa enrolled us in Bengali dance lessons for a while and introduced us to even more Bengali music."

"For us, music allows us to know about our heritage, our history, and culture," smiled Purba and Urbi.

Last Friday, in the "Poshchimer Robi" cultural programme at Chhyanaut, the musical twins sang the English songs which inspired many of Rabindranath's classics, accompanied by their father who sang the classical

Rabindra Sangeet.

"It was an exhilarating experience singing the English songs that inspired Rabindra Sangeet," shared Purba.

"Coming here and singing at the Poshchimer Robi event, listening to the songs and recitations filled my heart with respect and pride," said Urbi.

As a Bangladeshi, both sisters are quite passionate about Bangla music. "We have always instinctively loved Bangla music," said the two sisters. "Bangla music always invigorated our spirit, and with the support of maa and baba, we never faced any difficulties practicing our music."

Currently, Purba and Urbi have just finished their high school education at Southend High School for Girls. "Music is what connects us to our roots and our journey with it has just begun," concluded Purba and Urbi.

# Farhsa: Reimagining fashion in Bangladesh

SARA KABIR

19-year-old Masud Ashraf Taha dreamt of starting a sustainable, high-end international fashion brand that caters to Bangladeshis who are looking to buy affordable couture statement pieces from the comfort of their homes. With this dream in mind, Masud founded Farhsa in 2020, hoping to make it a home-grown fashion house based in Bangladesh.

As stated by their website, Farhsa is a name that represents a tendency to exhibit extremes in terms of material success. "When a customer buys from Farhsa, they are not only buying the clothes, but they are also buying the dream and vision we have curated for them. We don't make clothes, we make people's desires come true," stated Masud proudly.

The brand is attempting to create clothes that aren't simply high quality but will also tell a story and offer a collectible piece of history for interested clients. It caters to individuals wishing to make a fashion statement, show off their individual style, and stand out from the crowd.

Farhsa hopes to fill the gap in Bangladesh's luxury fashion market, and break out of the cycle of fast fashion. Each piece in their selective collection is custom-made for their clients, with a major focus on the details—from the quality of the fabric used to the hand-stitched embroidery. The brand also offers international shipping, currently serving clients in eight countries, including the US, UK, Italy, Dubai, Germany, Bangladesh, India, and Australia.

Most of their marketing is done organically, through word of mouth. The company is also planning to create video campaigns to showcase the story behind the brand in the future. Earlier this year, on the March 25, Farhsa launched its Spring/Summer collection with an exclusive fashion showcase at the Sheraton Hotel.

They also plan to rebrand their packaging and showcase a new and improved T-Shirt line through their "Reborn" campaign, launching at the end of August. Masud shared that he dreams of seeing Farhsa everywhere, from New York Times Square to Paris one day.

But running a brand at such a young age definitely comes with its struggles, more so when it comes to curating a unique collection in such a competitive fashion industry—particularly when there is a focus on catering to a young target demographic in Bangladesh. In contemporary culture, where everyone dreams of becoming an entrepreneur and owning their own brand, few realise the hardships and struggles that come with the reality of running a successful international brand.

Being passionate and having the drive to go above and beyond is not always enough. From investing time and money, to creating genuine connections, it is both the easiest and the most challenging time to become an entrepreneur right now. Knowing all that, Masud Ashraf Taha took the plunge into Bangladesh's competitive fast fashion industry, and the positive response Farhsa has received so far seems to prove it was worth it.



A group photo of one of Farhsa's many designer collections

PHOTO: COURTESY