

#PERSPECTIVE

On living in the suburbs of Dhaka: Kanak Aditya

It is the first week of November, and the winter sun has already set on Kanak Aditya and Ishrat Jahan's beautiful homestead in Savar. A few hours into the drive and after a considerable time being stuck in the terrible Dhaka traffic, we discover that the picturesque address is a mere 40 minutes' drive away from the bustle of Uttara. Once you reach the farmhouse, you are immediately transported into a land of calm and serenity.

Aditya dressed in a cotton dhoti salwar, sleeveless t-shirt, and *gamcha* looped around his neck, greets us at the door. "Kemon achen?" he beams, showing us the way inside. In person, his voice is as deep as it sounds on the records.

To be truthful, the property's modest exterior gave no hint of what was about to come. Aditya led us through a trail to his dining room where wooden floors complemented wicker chairs and antique wooden furniture; elsewhere there were steel plates, wooden masks, and locally spun throws.

Aditya laughs, "Things are a bit messy around here, I hope you can excuse us because we are renovating."

Strangely, even amidst all the disorder, the entire house looked fiercely coordinated.

"Ishrat and I always planned on leaving the city once we started a family. And hence this was always something that would have happened somehow or the other. I was already accustomed to growing up in a village, this was more alluring to Ishrat because she grew up in the centre of the chaos of Old Dhaka – so this house is mostly hers," Aditya mentions.

a mini pond adjacent to the main structure of the house, and there are coloured and oversized pebbles outside making way for a miniature live aquarium-like structure. She then built the 'all-natural kitchen', with a large clay stove in the center – where we presumed everyone in the household loves to spend time.

Aditya attributes a major share of the decorations to Ishrat, "This place is ever evolving. We are always adding something or the other. We are both artists and it is only natural to look at every piece of our creation as an art form."

Saying this, Aditya takes us next, to the most inspirational spot in the entire house — a little corridor that looked out



to the pond. This is where he spends hours painting, composing new music, and playing 'old master' songs.

A few cups of traditional milk tea are placed on the rustic coffee table.

"This spot gives me inspiration, I get to see birds fly in and out, right before my eyes. The daily morning mist inspires me to paint better, the full moon can be experienced in its majestic form. We can see the sun rise and set every day. As parents this is the least, we could have done for our children," says the convinced father.

Right here, while sitting in the hermetic opulence, amidst rattan chairs, chirping of birds, antique furniture, and the smell of fresh bloom, it is pretty difficult to imagine the creative couple being comfortable anywhere else. Their secret to authentic and passionate work is finally revealed: returning to nature.

Kanak Aditya, Director and Chief Creative Officer at Deshal is a true artiste in all senses. Renowned musician, seasoned painter with a professional degree from the Faculty of Fine Arts, DU, involved with Prachyanat since his university days – he knows the ins and outs of the creative world.

The first thing the couple did when they entered their three-storied wooden house, they made sure there was an enlarged terrace in the front, where their children — Dhian Giri and Panhi Leelaboti — could play all day. A cosy outdoor spot, where friends could come and spend hours together, jamming.

"This is also where Dhian and I work on making and repairing musical instruments — father and son bonding area you see," smiles a coy Aditya.

Ishrat certainly worked on the details, while building their dream house – there's

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Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
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