

‘Amar Dekha Noya Chin’: Bangabandhu’s formative journey in a travelogue-style graphic novel

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Online Desk: In an innovative blend of art and history, the graphic novel “Amar Dekha Noya China” (The New China as I Saw) vividly portrays the myriad challenges faced by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh’s founding father. Radwan Mujib Siddiq, a trustee of the Centre for Research and Information (CRI) and Bangabandhu’s grandson, shared insights into the graphic novel, revealing how it captures the relentless hurdles encountered by the Father of the Nation.

During an interview for a documentary, Radwan Mujib highlighted the struggles of conveying information to the tech-savvy younger generation and how the graphic novel bridges this gap by speaking their language. He reminisced about his childhood curiosity regarding the lack of comics about his grandfather, which planted the seed for this project. As an adult, seizing the opportunity presented by working on Bangabandhu’s unfinished autobiography, he proposed creating a graphic novel to his mother and aunt, who gave their blessing.

Radwan Mujib emphasized that the novel depicts Bangabandhu in situations rarely imagined by the public, such as contemplating mundane concerns like passport whereabouts, travel logistics, and ill-fitting suits after losing weight in jail. This humanizing portrayal offers a fresh perspective on the national leader’s life.

The project curator, Shibu Kumar Shil, pointed out that while there are three biographical books on Bangabandhu, “Amar Dekha Noya Chin” stands out as a travelogue-style narrative intertwining his visions for a new country with his experiences. It compares his dreams with the realities of Pakistan at the time, offering a unique blend of personal and political insights.

Radwan Mujib noted the importance of obtaining approval from Bangabandhu’s daughters, ensuring the project’s credibility and receiving invaluable input from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina without any interference in their creative vision.

The artist, Sabyasachi Mistry, stressed the meticulous research required to accurately depict characters and settings, particularly for the historical context of China in the 1950s and 60s. The team navigated challenges in finding accurate information and visuals to faithfully represent the era, ultimately capturing the essence of Bangabandhu’s character and the spirit of the time.

The graphic novel not only sheds light on Bangabandhu’s personal and political journey but also plays a crucial role in introducing the graphic novel culture to Bangladesh, inspiring publishers to explore the country’s history and heritage through this medium.

“Amar Dekha Noya Chin” thus emerges as a pioneering work, blending art, history, and literature to offer a unique glimpse into the life of the Father of the Nation, ensuring his legacy continues to inspire future generations.