

Heart to heart with Bijori-Emon

While at the peak of her career, she tied the knot with music director Shawkat Ali Emon

Emon embarked on his career as a keyboard player. He is now an established music composer and director. He has achieved this position through hard work, and his versatility and prolific musical output make him a popular figure in the music industry. Last year he won laurels for the composition of *Closeup 1* hit song titled *Maa.....* sung by Rashed (one of the finalists of the *Closeup 1*). He has worked extensively in music studios both in Bangladesh and India.

Bijori and Emon's love affair began when he saw her at a concert by the band *Chime* held at Hotel Sheraton in 1989. They met again at a cultural programme held at Shilpakala Academy. Friends and family revel in his dynamic personality and good nature.

He is also known for his simplicity and decency. According to Emon, the happiest moment in his life was when he married Bijori. Even today he speaks affectionately about his wife.

In Emon's words, "Bijori and I have one thing in common. I appreciate her and she does likewise. I am very intense about my love for her. She is a part of me. Or rather, I am her appendage. I would say that our relationship is spiritual. She became a very big influence in my life."

Taking about key elements of his family life, Emon says, "I am happily committed to my

wife. By nature, I am a family person and therefore my first priority is to spend quality time with my daughter. I try my best to be a good father. I suppose the secret to good health is a contented heart. I make

it a point to pray to God every day." **Living with Emon, says Bijori, is like living with her best friend.** "There are no barriers between us. I

love sharing my experiences and joys with him. Marriage has been an enriching experience for me," says Bijori about the companionship they share.

When asked whether she has really found her soulmate, she says, "My husband and I have a lot of things in common. He is easygoing, patient and compassionate; qualities I admire most. Moreover, he is a patient and kind human being. It's a quality I admire most in whoever I meet. Emon has a basic respect for women and that is quite fascinating for me to see, as his wife."

Talking about the reason for marrying a person from the music profession, Bijori says,

"I just wanted to settle down with someone who was kind, caring, shared similar interest and was intelligent. It didn't matter what he was apart from the fact that he also needed to be self-sufficient. I'm lucky I got just the person I wanted."

When asked how Bijori juggles her career as an actress with home responsibilities, she says,

"I haven't married someone who is from the dark ages! My husband is a very today person, who sees no harm in his wife pursuing a career of her choice. He has never asked me to quit or do any such ridiculous thing. It has been my decision to concentrate on both my home and my career."

by Khalid-Bin-Habib

Good histrionic skills, grace and hard work--these are the ingredients that best define dancer and versatile actress Bijori Barkat Ullah. She is complemented by her husband, music director Shawkat Ali Emon. The duo, who married on February 24, 1999 are the delighted parents of a baby girl named Urbana



Italian Fashion Night

Big designer labels hit Dhaka

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

JPR Events, in conjunction with the Italian Embassy, is to present the first ever Italian Fashion Night in Bangladesh, on September 6 at the

time to exhibit the strength of the Italian retail and manufacturing industry. These brands have dominated the world fashion market for decades. The interaction between Bangladesh and Italy in the field of

as the Bangladesh Design Council and is expected to be the voice not only for designers but also the back-up industry i.e. weavers, dyers, printers, graphic artists, embroiderers, machinists, pattern-cutters, pottery makers, leatherwear and accessories developers, jewelers and all who are concerned with the Design and Fashion Industry of the country.

JPR Events is also launching *Asiana* magazine in Bangladesh. *Asiana* is considered the foremost magazine for South Asian designers. The British fashion magazine will have Bangladeshi content in *Asiana* international issues, commencing from October 2006. Bangladeshi arts, designers, crafts and fashion news will grace the pages of the magazine. The *Asiana* team will also be here to assist designers in promoting their products through professional photo shoots with international models and photographers.

Acer, Emirates, Grameen Phone, Mercedes Benz, Radisson Hotel and Standard Chartered Bank are the main sponsors for the Italian Fashion Night. RTV is the national television partner and FTV the international television partner, along with *The Daily Star* as the national media partner. *Asiana* and *All Access* magazines are the international media partners from UK.

Palazzo Versace's Chef Steve Szabo will create delectable Italian menus for Sublime restaurant's discerning clientele for a further two days, September 7 and 8. For further enquiries call Sublime at 8754502. Reservations are highly recommended.

Designer brands such as Versace, Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Gian Franco Ferre, Prada, Moschino, Diesel as well as many others are being brought to Dhaka for the first time... The interaction between Bangladesh and Italy in the field of fashion should lead to the RMG sector to the next step



Radisson Hotel. The mega fashion event is by invitation only. Designer brands such as Versace, Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Gian Franco Ferre, Prada, Moschino, Diesel as well as many others are being brought to Dhaka for the first

fashion should lead to the RMG sector to the next step, forcing our industry to upgrade their skills. The launch of Bangladesh Designers and Fashion Technology Council is also to take place. The organisation is to be known simply

Tisha: Making waves on the small screen

MAHMUDA AFROZ

From being a child artist to bagging the top model's award in Meril Prothom Alo, Tisha has achieved much in a very short time. Young, bubbly and energetic, she has her wings spread for much more. In her own words "My family always wanted me to join the world of entertainment and so since the age of four I have been involved with it. The best part is I enjoy it very much."

Like most children in Bangladesh Tisha contested in the Notun Kuri programme as a child and in 1993 she won the second prize for singing. She wasn't satisfied with that and hence once again with more dedication and passion she ended up winning 'the gold cup award' in 1995.

With maturity Tisha felt that her voice was better suited for an anchor and so she tried her luck at being an MC (master of ceremony). While she enjoyed success in that field, she was soon noticed by Dolly Zahur who inspired her to join television serials. "I was excited by the prospect and signed on my first serial *Shaat poure kabbo* in 1998." Then in quick succession Tisha acted in *Firey dekha*, *Greeho golpo* and *Shopnojatra*. Once



again Tisha's mature outlook made her take a break "I felt I hadn't gained the maturity to do certain roles. I checked my facial expressions and thought I still looked childish. Hence I took the break," explains Tisha.

But this Viquarunessa student did not sit idle. Tisha took up modelling during this time and did her first advertisement of a Mumbai sweet company. Soon offers came flooding her way and she selectively modelled for Coke and City Cell. Finally Tisha was signed on by Keya to be their brand ambassador. The highest point in her modelling career came when she bagged the Meril Prothom Alo top model's award in 2003 as well as in 2004.

By this time Tisha felt that she was prepared to take up mature roles in serials. So she signed on *Sixty nine* and *Ekoda Nurul Huda*. "Generally if you are a Notun Kuri artist you get branded as a child artist. I was lucky that my fans accepted me in these mature roles," asserts Tisha.

While this young lady seems all set to make it big on the television screen, she continues to develop her singing talents as well. Last Eid she did a duet with none other than Ayub Bachchu. She also sang a Tagore song on television on the

occasion of Tagore anniversary. "As I have a classical base I can sing almost any song," says Tisha. Back in 2002, Tisha was part of a band called 'Angel four'. They had also released an album called *Bhalobasha chai*. However, after their first release she left the band. "I was already into modelling by then and I couldn't give time to the band. I didn't want their performance to get affected because of me, so I left," she says.

Education is a top priority now for this Pisces beauty. She has just passed her HSC examination and awaits admission results at NSU. Besides education, someday Tisha wants to join the movie industry. "I would love to join the industry but movies are a long time commitment and I know I need more experience for that. Movies are forever and I want to live in the minds of people for eternity."

For all those fans out there, Tisha has a number of serials lined up: Ashutosh Shojon's *Khapey*, Rajiv Ahmed's *Cafe tintin* (26 episodes), Kuchi Khondokar's *Khoshru plus moina* to name a few.

'Teensho Bochor Por': An adaptation of Tagore's 'Kudhito Pashan' on Channel i

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT



Shahed (R) and co-artistes in the play

Lux drama of the week *Teensho Bichhor por* will be aired today at 7:50 pm on Channel i.

Directed by Asrafur Rahman, the play is an adaptation of Tagore's classic *Kudhito Pashan*. The play revolves around a young man's search for a palace

and the girl that he has encountered regularly in his dreams. The man eventually finds the palace where he comes across the girl's spirit. To his surprise, he later discovers that the girl had committed suicide 300 years ago. Shahed, Tanjika, Najmul Huda Bachchu, Rupok, Sohel Khan are the main cast members of the play.

'Citycell Let's Move' in Sylhet

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The popular entertainment game show *Citycell Let's Move* is currently running on channel i. The programme includes lively, fun-filled games in locations throughout Bangladesh. Well-known actor, director Shahidul Alam Shachchu has adapted and directed the programme.

Hosted by Farzana Brownia the two new episodes for August and September feature the attractive landscape and magnificent palaces of the Sylhet district and surrounding areas. Two medleys rendered by SI Tutul and Fahmida Nabi are the main attractions of the two episodes. There are several entertaining moments in the programme.

The show is aired on the last day of every month at 7:50pm. The champion of the game show will win a brand new car.

Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna

Old wine, old bottle, tacky new label

KARIM WAHEED

For months, endless barrage of previews, clips and promos have built up a mass hype regarding Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar's latest production *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* (title definitely checked and if necessary corrected by Johar's personal numerologist and astrologer). Apparently, mainstream Bollywood has matured and Johar, who upholds the family values (?) and traditions in Hindi films, had supposedly taken a trip to the "wild side", otherwise known as extramarital affairs or infidelity.

For those who have not yet been "fortunate" enough to "experience" this enlightening film, first warning--stay away from films that claim to contain a "life-altering" message. The sob-saga stretches on for nearly four hours, a substantial chunk of your life that will never come back.

Had tried to check out some of Johar's earlier movies; could not sit through them however. Too sugary, too Balaji-produced primetime soap-ish. But then again, Karan Johar movies were never meant to make sense or portray reality. They are about mansions spacious enough to house 10 average families and



Rani and Shah Rukh get drenched in the film

beautiful actresses running around frantically in London or New York. But had to check out *Kabhi Alvida...with all the hoopla going on.*

Sooner or later everyone in showbiz seems to be struck by the 'Substance Syndrome'. It's like when Mariah Carey decided that fans should acknowledge her as an "actress". Johar should not have succumbed to fads and should have left marriage and its gripping problems alone.

Failed footballer Dev Saran (Shah Rukh Khan) is resentful towards fashionista wife Rhea (Preity Zinta), just because she is successful. On the other side, there's party-animal Rishi (Abhishek Bachchan) who tries hard to court schoolteacher wife Maya (Rani Mukerji), but as it turns out she is quite frigid. Both couples live in New York.

Through "interesting" turn of events Dev and Maya meet, with both marriages well on the rocks. Their spouses get acquainted as well. After some tiresome songs, the story oscillates between high melodrama and slapstick hilarity, going nowhere. Eventually Dev and Maya realise that they are soul mates and decide to emotionally shut out their partners. Rani's altruistic father-in-law (played by Amitabh Bachchan) suggests she should follow her heart, even if it means his son's marriage would end sourly. Possibly believable in western cultures but in the context of our Desi culture--blasphemous.

Shah Rukh's Dev is perpetually upset; an angry "not so young" man with no apparent reason. He hams, scowls and smirks in slow motion, each facial twitch exaggerated to painful proportions. Rani's character is not fond of Abhishek's lifestyle (no explanation there either). Rani, known for her impressive acting skills, does not have much to do but flash an occasional teary grin and that almost melts one's heart. Preity's Rhea echoes the age-old Bollywood cliché of working women being uncaring. Abhishek is fortunate enough to get the most believable character in the film. Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, dressed like Snoop Dogg, frolics around with blondes. Kajol, John Abraham and Arjun Rampal make "extremely crucial (?) cameos. And of course, like any other Karan Johar movie, there's glycerine-induced waterworks galore.

The dialogues were perhaps meant to be "profound" but turned out to be laughable. You don't feel sorry for the characters, you feel sorry for yourself. And, for all the hype about Bollywood heading into a "bold" direction, the film ends up being a lot of oversight with barely any insight. Couples on the verge of marriage would do well not to waste their time on this drama.

'Black Dahlia' opens Venice film fest

AP, Italy

Brian De Palma's *The Black Dahlia* opened the 63rd Venice Film Festival on Wednesday, the first of 21 films vying for the coveted Golden Lion award that will also be making their world debuts here.

The all-premiere competition is a first for the festival, which traditionally kicks off the fall movie-going season with a dose of European glamour ahead of Toronto later in September. This year, there has been controversy over a new international festival being started in Rome just two months after Venice that has threatened to eclipse the lagoon city's prestige.

"The best response," festival director Marco Mueller told an opening news conference, "is to watch the films in the competition. Last year, there was a lot of discussion about the film selection - and then came the Golden Globes and Oscars."

Films shown at Venice last year received 23 Oscar nominations. Catherine Deneuve, who made her first appearance in Venice in 1967 for Golden Lion winner *Belle du jour*, is heading the jury that will award the top prize on the festival's closing day, September 9.

"Venice is a special festival, both for its location and for being international. It has had its high seasons and low seasons, but today it is experiencing a very high season. I think that the festival is at the vanguard for European festivals," Deneuve told a news conference. Four US films were competing for the Golden Lion: Besides *The Black Dahlia*, the contenders from Hollywood are *The Fountain*, starring Hugh Jackman as an immortal seeker, *Hollywoodland*, a film exploring the mysterious death of the star of TV's *Adventures of Superman*, and *Bobby*, Emilio Estevez's look at the last day of Robert Kennedy's life.

The festival also features many films outside of competition, notably this year Stone's drama about the Sept. 11 terror attacks and Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke. A Requiem in Four Acts*, a four-hour HBO documentary. David Lynch, who will present his new movie, *Inland Empire*, will receive the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement.



Scarlett Johansson waves to fans at the screening of *The Black Dahlia*

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100 contestants in 5 music categories

Finalround 2 to 6 Sept. 2006. Everyday at 5pm
Rabindra Sangeet : Sept. 2, Saturday
Tin Kabir Gaan : Sept. 3, Sunday (10 am)
Nazrul Sangeet : Sept. 3, Sunday
Folk Song : Sept. 4, Monday
Adhunik Gaan : Sept. 5, Tuesday
Prize giving ceremony : Sept. 6, Wednesday, 6 pm

Venue: Shaheed Zia Auditorium National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka

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