

# Heart to Heart with Tania and Tutul

MAHMUDA AFROZ

**Tutul:** I was in charge of several tasks for that tour and so naturally I was in charge of making sure Tania was comfortable and well settled. I liked her right from the beginning but she was unaware of how I felt.

**Tania:** Casual things brought us together. He was easy going and sweet. We had plenty of interaction just before the tour and became very good friends. As a matter of fact we used to address each other as *tui* even after we started going around.

**When did you realise that it was no longer just friendship?**

**Tutul:** Frankly put, right from the beginning. Whenever I saw Tania I just felt like getting married. I didn't want to go around or date.

**Tania:** We were shopping in a jewellery shop in Miami and I liked this ring, which he bought for me. Suddenly he was like "I want to marry you". Over the past few weeks I got to know him upfront and realised he was a very nice person; everyone liked him and I was impressed by his character, but marriage was still out of the question.

**How did no become yes?**

**Tutul:** I asked her the reasons why she didn't like me. Was I not educated enough for her (I had an MA degree), was I not good looking enough (I never thought I was repulsive), did I not have a personality (everyone thought I had a good personality), did I not have enough money (ok, she got me there but she always claimed money was not a factor). It so happened that she did like me, but she had a criterion.

**Tania:** He knew my past, yet he was ready to be with me. But I wanted everyone to accept our relationship, from both sides. That was my criterion. It took quite some time to convince everyone, but here we are today, happily married with our respective in-laws loving us.

**What is it that makes your marriage so strong?**

**Tutul:** I am madly in love with her. Isn't that reason enough? On a more



**Great friends turned great couple--this is the story of Tania and Tutul. Tutul was with LRB and Tania was not only a successful actress but also a top choreographer and model. They were just friends until they both ended up in Miami for a LRB show in 1997. Here's what they have to say**

**Frivolous note:** she has spies everywhere in the form of her students. I wouldn't be able to cheat on her even if I wanted to.

**Tutul:** We are great friends and share everything. For e.g. if I see a hot guy I'll drool over him and tell Tutul about it. If I see a hot girl I'll point her out to him and use our code language CS. We are just such good friends.

**Does that mean you don't fight?**

**Tutul, Tania:** We hardly fight about issues related to us; we

always disagree about other people and end up fighting about them. However, in relationships you need these odd bits of arguments.

**What do you dislike about each other?**

**Tutul:** She scolds me as soon as I am wrong. So what if I am wrong? Secondly, she takes at least two hours to get dressed, yet if I take five minutes extra she gets angry. She also criticises my work outright.

**Tania:** Yes I take two hours to get dressed but for that reason I start getting dressed three hours before

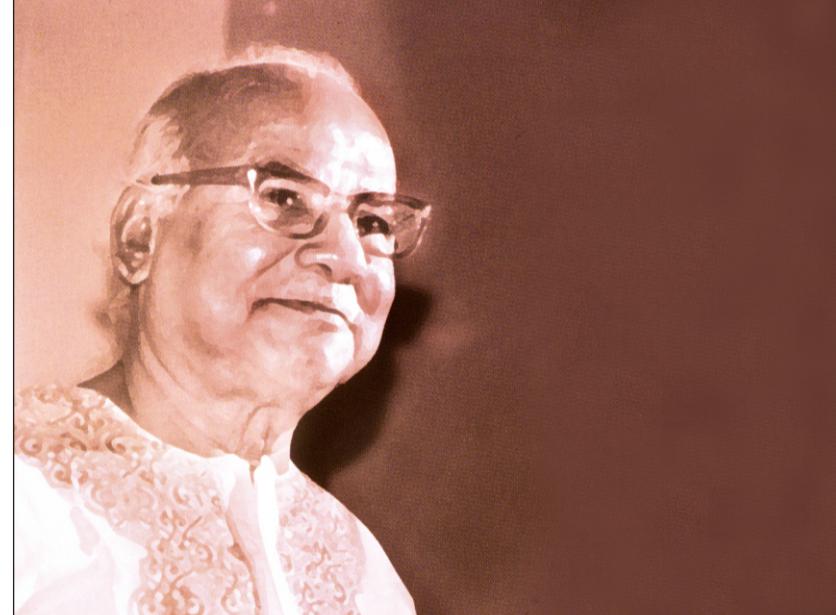
the occasion so that I am not late. As for him, he begins dressing at the last minute and always takes extra time and we are invariably late. I hate that. Tutul is also great at making excuses. He has a bad habit of biting his nails.

**Any regrets?**

**Tania:** I have no regrets. I do regret some smaller issues like not getting any surprises from him, or his habit of giving me money and expecting me to buy everything on my own.

**Tutul:** My only occasional regret is that Tania deserved better.

## A musical tribute to Waheedul Haq



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Waheedul Haq, founder of the cultural organisation Chhayatan passed away on January 27. In remembrance of his achievements as a teacher, writer, journalist and a key figure in the revival of Bengali culture, the Bengal Foundation organised an evening of songs, poetry and speeches by eminent personalities and his students. The event, titled *Acho ontre chirodein* (In the heart forever) was held at the Bengal Foundation on February 14.

The ambience was perfect as small candles provided the only lights and a spotlight on the performing artistes. The occasion started with a record of Haq- *Ami tomay joto shunye chhilem* and went on to a choir- *Shurer guru, dao go shurer deekhkhra*. Speeches were given highlighting his life's achievements and personal moments of joy, laughter, fear and sadness. Singers from all around the country came to pay homage to this great cultural figure and sing soulful songs in his remembrance. As Ilora Ahmed Shukla, Ifat Ara Dewan and Mita Haq performed, the audience was moved to tears by the tenderness and longing in their voices. Assaduzzaman Noor in his trademark baritone recited *Ondhokar* by Jeebonanda Das. All around the atmosphere was one of loss and loneliness.

Towards the end of the programme there was a short documentary on Haq's life. *Acho ontre chirodein* came to an end with a recorded song by Haq- *Tumi kichchu diye jao*.

## Audition for 'American Idol': First-hand experience

SOLOVEJ SCHOU

I've been singing since I was 4 and performing in bands since 15. Nothing, however, could prepare me for auditioning for TV's hit competition *American Idol*.

It was a chilly morning in August. I slept through my alarm, set to 3:30am. A friend's call half an hour later woke me out of my nervous sleep. I rushed over to the Rose Bowl stadium in Pasadena for the Los Angeles area audition.

Bleary-eyed and shivering in the pre-dawn darkness, I took a place in line along with 10,000 other aspiring contestants -- from teenagers to those like me in their late 20s.

People brought their mothers, fathers, best friends and aunts. Some piled on makeup. Others rehearsed their songs-- loudly or whispering. I came alone and murmured lyrics under my breath. Friends called to keep me company. My feet started to hurt.

I'm a blues-singing garage rocker at heart, not someone prone to trying out for a commercial endeavour such as *Idol*. Yet prodding from friends and family prompted me to give it a chance. Even my bandmates said, "Hey, why not? Go for it."

The song I chose to audition, *Rock Steady* by Aretha Franklin, was a favorite -- soulful, sassy. Not as ubiquitous as *Respect*, but still felt committed.

Once inside the stadium, after hours of waiting for the gates to open and then that mad dash inside, I found my seat, surrounded by a mix of saucy trash-talkers and shy couples. Mostly, the tension was palpable--somewhere between wide-eyed hope and

crushing anonymity. But there was also something else in the air: a joyful love of music.

Questions looped through the crowd. "Are Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson and Paula Abdul here?" "No they're not." "I heard they are!"

the swooping camera, we yelled "I'm the next 'American Idol'!" and we waited.

Row by row, we lined up to audition in front of 12 booths, four participants to a booth. Sure enough -- no Simon, no Randy, no Paula.

One was a young woman with sunglasses so large, she could have been napping behind them. The other was a young man with his head propped up in his hands. He said nothing and looked bored. Suddenly Simon seemed not so rude after all.

Each of us would be given roughly 15 seconds of our chosen song to perform. No questions, no names. Two of the singers next to me were great, even passionate. Another one, not so much.

Then I stepped forward and sang, belting out the tune with all I had. It's Aretha, after all.

I was louder than the rest, working my vibrato, stretching my arms out. The bored guy perked up a little, but still said nothing. This was the moment I had waited six hours for.

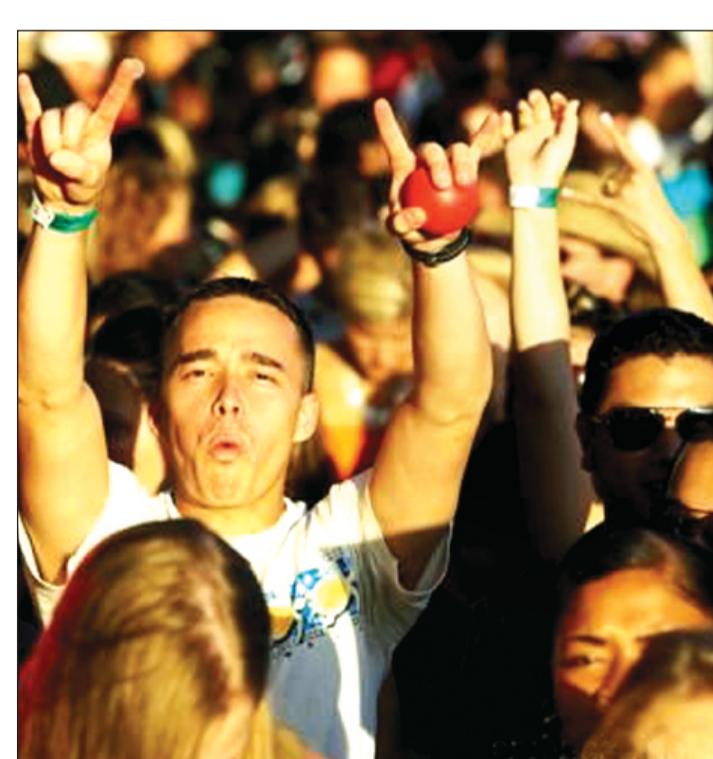
After less than 20 seconds, it was over.

Afterward, the young woman with the sunglasses turned to all of us, thanked us for auditioning, and said we would not be needed for the show. There was no banter between judges. No comments to us about our performances -- snarky or otherwise. Not even a little canned applause.

Instead, we were instructed to go, our wristbands were cut, and we walked out of the stadium.

Days later, my band Naughty Bird performed at a local club and I felt a deep sense of relief -- to sing our own songs in that cramped, dark place, on our own terms, to loud applause.

The author writes for Associated Press



It turns out they weren't -- by a long shot.

Once we settled in, a jubilant emcee roared us to our feet to sing the LA audition's retro theme song- *Daydream Believer* by the Monkees. Well, the chorus of it, at least, over and over. We waved to

By the time I got to that line, I was jittery yet pumped, repeating the feisty intro to *Rock Steady*: "Rock steady baby! That's what I feel now. Let's call this song exactly what it is."

At the judging table in front of us sat two 20-something producers.

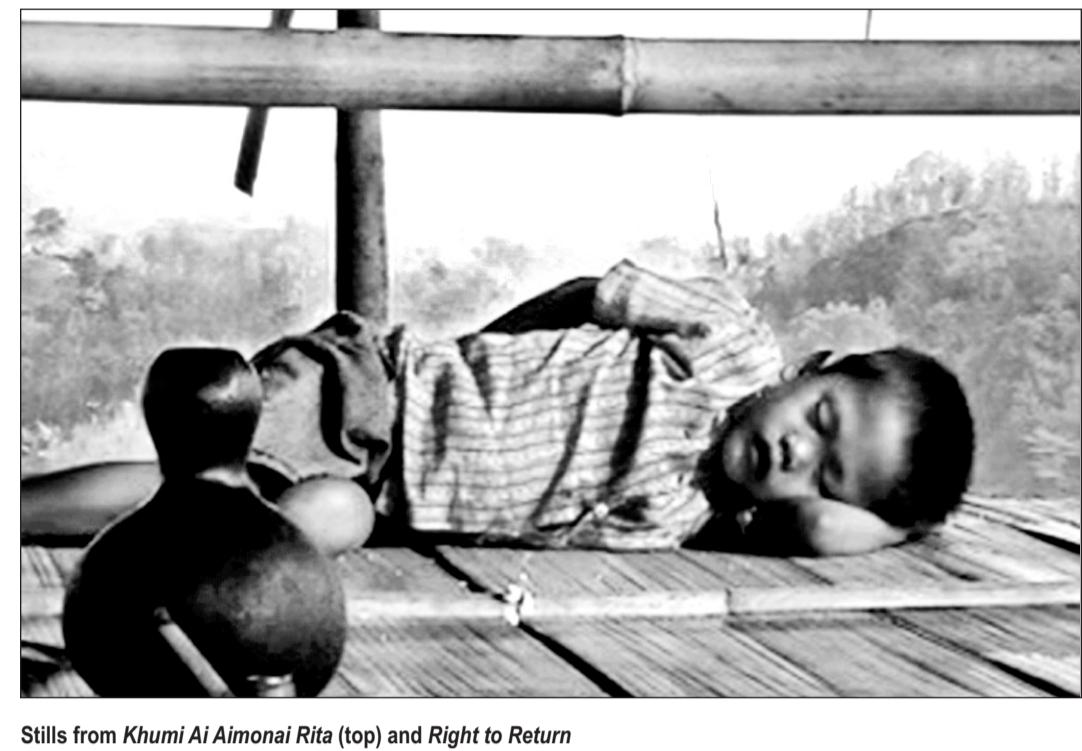
## Documenting Bangladesh-2

# Bangladesh Documentary Festival '07 begins

AHSAN HABIB

Bangladesh documentary film festival titled 'Documenting Bangladesh-2' was inaugurated yesterday at the Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium of Central Public Library. A total of 33 selected documentaries, made by Bangladeshi documentary filmmakers during the years 2005 and 2006, will be screened during the festival. The four-day festival organised by Bangladesh Documentary Council, also includes a seminar and publications.

Eminent artist and media personality Mustafa Monowar inaugurated the festival yesterday. Syed Bazley Hussain, eminent documentary filmmaker and cinematographer, was honoured with lifetime achievement award for his contribution in the field of documentary in Bangladesh. After the inauguration, Santu Ray's *Right to Return*, about the Palestinian peoples



Stills from *Khumi Ai Aimonai Rita* (top) and *Right to Return*

right to return to their own home and Ittukgula Changma's *Khumi Ai Aimonai Rita*, based on Khumi lives, were screened.

The festival aims at promoting the documentary film culture in the country. Syeda Neegar Banu, the festival director says, "There is a lack of clear concept about the genre. The festival will help to promote documentary as a creative genre that can authentically reflect reality. The festival brings documentaries of various forms and contents that will help to familiarise different aspects of the genre. Moreover, the festival can serve as a platform for interaction

with the audience for the filmmakers as no alternative way for reaching people has developed yet for them."

A seminar on 'Use of Digital Technology in Independent Documentary Film Making' will be held at 10:30 am on February 17. Presided over by Manzarehassan Murad, filmmakers and critics will attend the seminar.

During the festival, documentaries will be screened daily at 11:00 am, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm.

## Mini Screen

### Feature film 'Bangla' on February 21



Shabnoor and Mahfuz in *Bangla*

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

With Ekushey February (International Mother Language Day) round the corner, ATN Bangla will telecast a Bangla feature film titled *Bangla* on February 21 at 2.30pm. The movie is based on noted writer Ahmed Sofa's work *Ongkar*. Shahidul Islam Khokon is the director of the film. Popular actors like Humayun Fareedi, Mahfuz Ahmed, Shabnoor and Purnima play the central characters in the film.

The film is based on mass uprising of 1969 in Bangladesh. Talukder is an

affluent person and Kana Moktar is his long time assistant. In the course of time Talukder loses all his wealth. When Talukder is bed-ridden Kana Moktar comes up with a marriage proposal for the latter's mute daughter with Talukder's elder son. Though Talukder is angry at the proposal, his son agrees to the marriage. On 1969 Shaheed Asad is shot dead by the police. The masses come out to protest the inhumanity. One day the mute girl joins the masses and, in a twist to the film, begins to shout just one word -- Bangla.

Babul and Shumi are cousins and friends. Shumi loves Shuvro, on the other side, Babul loves Shumi but is unable to express his feelings. One day Shuvro is killed in a road mishap. After two months, Shumi discovers that she is pregnant. Fingers are pointed at Babul. The eventual fate of Shumi is the focal point of the play.

The cast includes Sharmil Ahmed, Apurbo, Tarin and others.

Apurbo and Tarin in the TV play



PHOTO: STAR

## Valentine's Day Concert

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

The finalist teams of the Project D Youth -- Lobdh and Sobyashachi in association with djuice (Grameen Phone's brand targeted towards the youth) organised an open-air concert titled Valentine's Day Concert at the Bashundhara Convention Center on February 14.

Project D Youth (PDY), a collaborative venture of the Project Bangladesh Foundation and djuice, is an arena for the youth to work together to express their creativity, interact with their peers, highlight their potential, and give back to the community. The finalists of PDY are vying for the coveted goal of becoming the brand ambassadors for djuice. Lobdh is a student from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Sobyashachi from Institute of Business Administration (IBA). The two finalists have been selected out of 773 teams after a five-month long rigorous teamwork.

The concert had a lofty purpose: to raise awareness at all spheres of national life about acid violence and raise money for the Acid Survivor's Foundation.

Both mainstream and some promising bands entertained the crowd. Among the bands that participated were Miles, Aurothohin, Shironamhin, Black, Yaatri, Roots, Stentorian and D Rockstars. The venue had a festive feel.

Popular band Miles performed their older popular numbers along with some new compositions. Songs like *Chand tara*, *Jala jala*, *Jatiyo sangeeter ditiyo line*, *Firide dao*, *November rain* and others were applauded.

Popular band Shironamhin began their performance with *Eka pakhi boshach* followed by some well-rendered tracks and carved a niche for themselves among the youth with their unique style.

Yaatri, a promising band which recently released an album, rocked the crowd with their performance. Songs performed by Yaatri included *Amar Ekkashy Nodi*, *Mitha prem* and *Ekkardekho*.

Other bands such as Aurothohin, Black, Roots, Stentorian and D Rockstars performed a series of their hits and kept the audience on their toes.