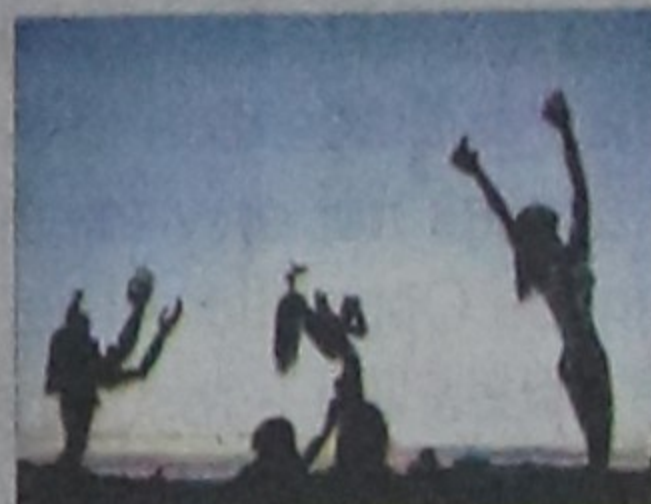


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Ekushey Bô Mela '09
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Bangla Academy premises
Date: February 01-28



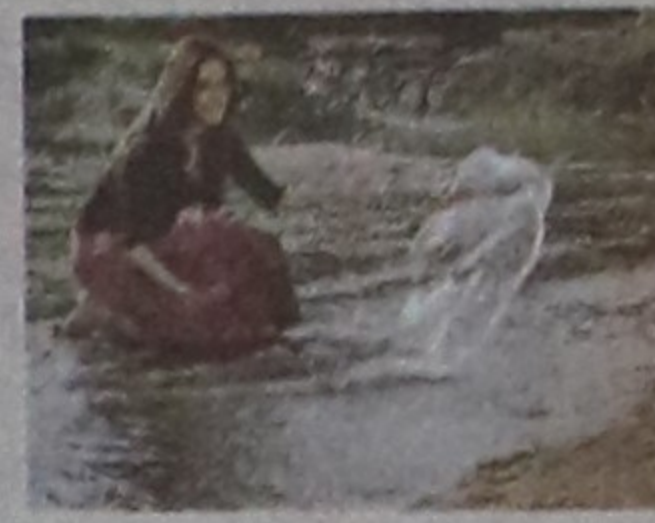
Chobi Mela V
Int'l Festival of Photography, Bangladesh '09
Theme: Freedom
Venues: National Museum, BSA, Dink Gallery, Bengal Gallery, AF, GIB, British Council, Asiatic Gallery, Kalpana Boarding and Karwan Bazar underpass
Date: Jan 30-Feb 20



4th Asian Film Festival
Organiser: CAAC
Venue: Alamgir Kabir Film Centre, 62, Science Laboratory Road
Date: February 12-17
Time: 2pm onwards
Today: 'Love Letter', 'The Road Home' and 'Djomeh'

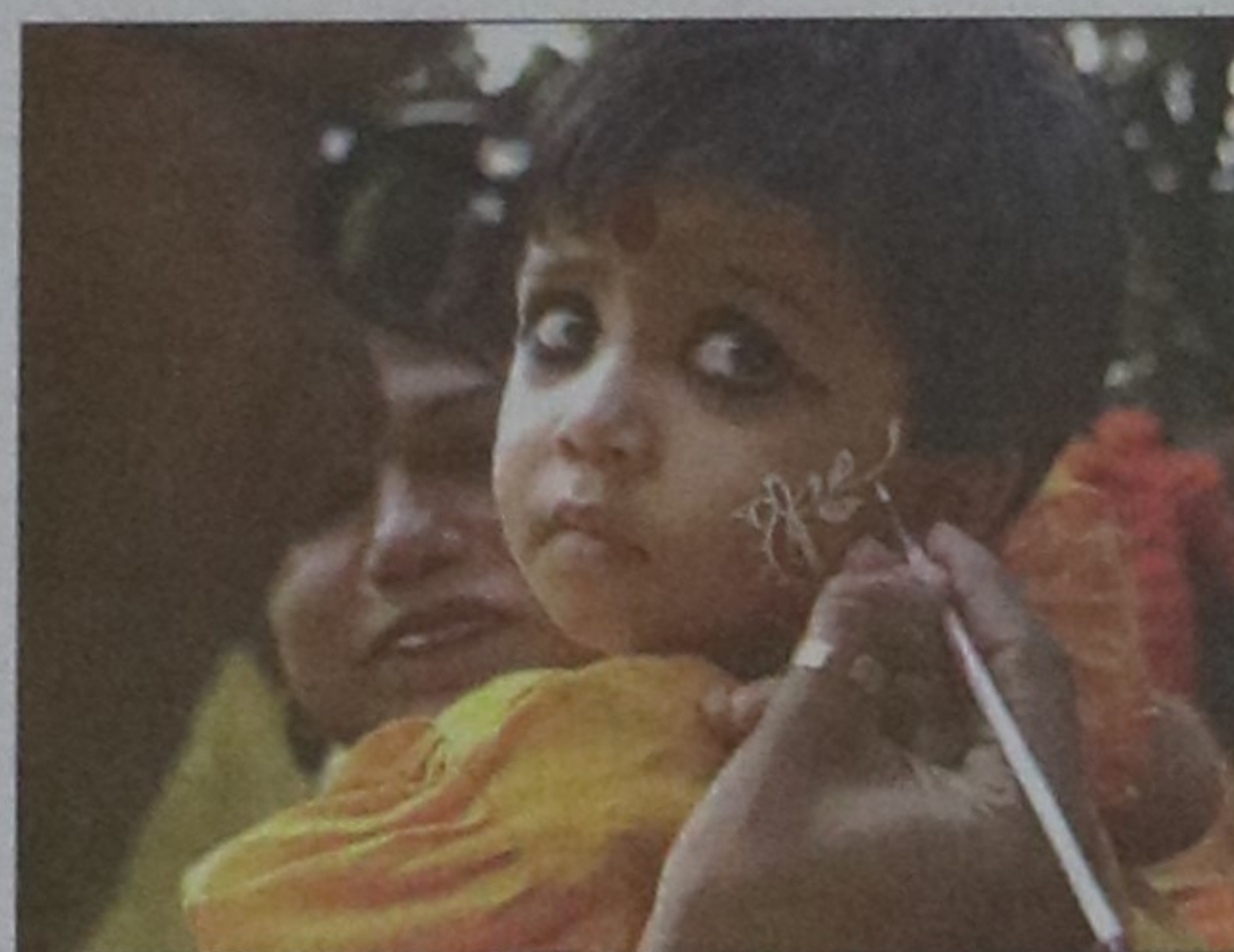


Film Screening
Title: Aamar Bhasar Chalochchitra
Organiser: DUFFS
Venue: TSC Auditorium, DU
Date: February 13-18
Time: 10 am onwards
February 14: 'Miss Lanka', 'Hridayer Kotha', 'Masud Rana' and 'The Bong Connection'



Spring in the air

Bashonto Utshab at Charukala



With the slogan "Esho Praan-er Utshabey," Jatiyo Bashonto Utshab Parishad celebrated the first day of spring with a daylong festival at the FFA premises yesterday.

NADIA SARWAT

Women, teenagers and little girls wearing red, yellow, orange or saffron sari, and men in panjabi started arriving at the Bakultala, Charukala (Faculty of Fine Arts) premises early morning yesterday. Though the city has not witnessed much crimson Shimul or Palash yet, marigold and roses were there to compensate. Here and there, students of FFA were painting bright designs on cheeks of children and eager revellers. On the stage under the 'Bakul' tree, flutist Gazi Abdul Hakim was playing a classical tune. Ebadul Haque Saikat was accompanying him on the sitar. As the crowd grew larger, the mood turned merrier. Some expats

were seen enjoying the festivities as well. First day of the Bengali month Falgun, in other words, first day of spring, was ushered in with much gusto in Dhaka. With the slogan "Esho Praan-er Utshabey," Jatiyo Bashonto Utshab Parishad celebrated the event with a daylong festival at the FFA premises yesterday. Noted recitor Kazi Arif, member secretary of the festival committee, welcomed the audience. "Inspired by initiatives of iconic figures such as poet Shamsur Rahman, and Tagore exponent Wahidul Haque, Jatiyo Bashonto Utshab Parishad started celebrating Pehela Falgun in the city a decade ago. The celebration is open to all, uniting people from all sections of the society," said Kazi Arif. Spring was welcomed with a chorus of the Rabindra Sangeet,

"Bishwa beena robey." Artistes of Chhayanat then presented the song "Bashonto elo elo." Noted Tagore artiste Mita Haque performed a solo, "Alok-er eijharna dharaye." The convenor of the festival, eminent theatre personality Aly Zaker presented the festival announcement. "There are many odds in the society... yet the general mood lightens up with the arrival of spring, albeit subconsciously. This festival is a platform to unite people with the help of music and colours of nature," said Zaker in the speech. Dances, recitations and songs rejoicing the spirit of spring, which is synonymous with the celebration of life, were highlights of the event. Leading cultural organisations, prominent and promising artistes of the country performed at the

programme. Nazrul Academy, Dhrubotan, Rabi Raag, Spandan, Nriyam, Padatik, Geetanjali, Dhruvad, Natraaj, K'jona and many others performed for hours. Kazi Arif, Hasan Arif, Khairul Anam Shakil, Lily Islam, Ferdous Ara, Fahim Hossain Chowdhury, Azizur Rahman Tuhin and other artistes also performed at the event. Along with traditional Bengali songs and poems, adivasi poetry and dances were also included in the festival. The first half of the programme ended with a vibrant rally brought out from the Charukala premises. The programme resumed in the afternoon. As part of the festival, Jatiyo Bashonto Utshab Parishad organised a programme at Rabindra Sarobar as well on the same day.

Heart to Heart: Arun & Chayanika Chowdhury

SYEDA SHAMIN MORTADA

They are a multi-talented couple! They have written scripts, directed and masterminded innumerable TV serials and soaps. He is a major figure in the Bangladeshi entertainment industry, along with being an author and journalist. She began her career as a child artiste and is now an accomplished

couple on the day of Saraswati Puja. Here's a glimpse of their conjugal life and careers in the entertainment industry. For Arun and Chayanika, marriage is a spiritual union. They entered this momentous stage of life through an arranged marriage on December 3, 1990. A smiling Chayanika says, "I said

other after marriage; it seems it was just the other day when she became my bride. Marriage is an amazing thing, for a man it is destiny, while for a woman it is a continuous journey." Chayanika says, "My family is very important to me. My kids are my first priority; I had two babies immediately after marriage and I fully concentrated on their upbringing. I enjoyed taking care of them in their early years. Gradually I started working as they grew up and I learnt a lot from my husband."

Commenting on Chayanika's work, Arun says, "I never went over her scripts, never went to any of her sets while she directed; the reason is simple, I don't want people to say that I did her work for her. She takes her work very seriously. She is observant and patient and likes to experiment."

Something each would like to change about the other? Arun says, "She is always cheerful. She is also very emotional and sensitive and that is why she tends to get hurt easily." On the other hand Chayanika says, "He is caring. But he is a bit unsocial and reserved. I would really like him to express himself more."

On love, Arun says, "Love is like a practice, you have to nurture it as it increases through time. I love her more than ever today." According to Chayanika, "When he is not there, even for a single day, the kids and I miss him a lot."

What ultimately keeps their marriage vibrant, says the duo, is their trust, respect and love for each other.

The writer is a freelance contributor.



For Arun and Chayanika, marriage is a spiritual union.

Tagore singer, and an actress.

Yes, we are talking about Arun and Chayanika Chowdhury. Arun has written scripts for and directed around 900 plays, while Chayanika has directed 83 plays and 2 serials. However, despite their talent, they prefer to remain in the wings.

The Daily Star caught up with the

yes, the moment I saw him. But, he was a bit apprehensive about marrying me as I'm 14 years younger than him."

However, as they say, marriages are made in heaven: The couple eventually got married and are very happy with each other. Arun, who strongly believes in arranged marriages, says, "It's better if you get to know each

Musings on Valentine's Day

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Baby Nazneen

The popular pop and play-back singer, Baby Nazneen whose musical spell leaves the audience high on their seats, says, "Valentine's day is a day that revolves around love." She further believes that the theme of the day is truly beautiful and is not focused on romantic love alone but is utilised to show one's family, friends and society as a whole



what they mean and how important they are.

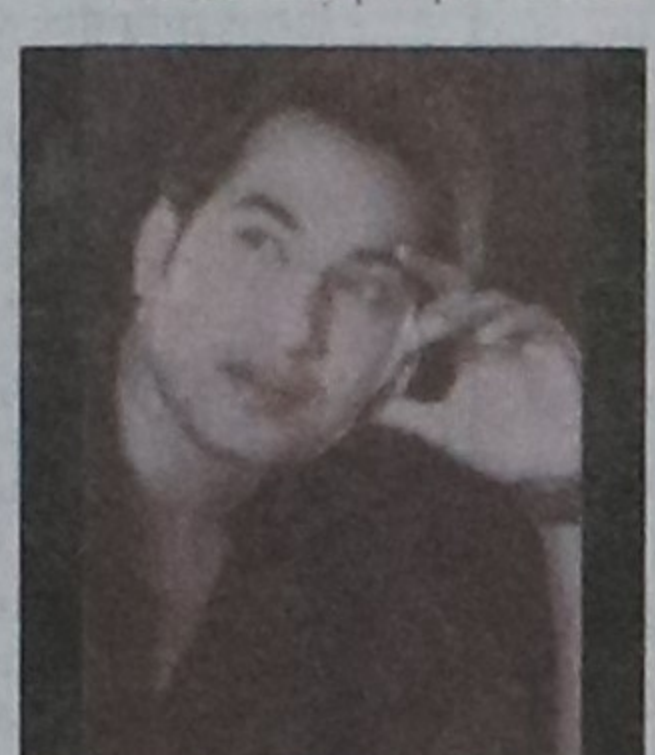
Nazneen says, "This is a special day when you should forget about yourself and put another's interest above your own. True love can only be found in those willing to give up anything and everything for the ones they love."

So, how does she describe 'love'? "Love is selfless. Love consists of self-sacrifices. Love is unconditional. Love is altruistic," she says. "We know that no living being can survive without water; life loses its meaning without love. I usually spend this day with the ones I love; try to communicate with my fans and basically enjoy the whole day. This Valentine's Day is all the more special as my latest album comes out today."

Shajol

"Valentine's Day is being celebrated all over the world today. People like to spend the day with that special someone," Shajol says. "But I believe, love comes from the heart and true love doesn't need one particular day out of 365 for celebration," he adds. "Even though Valentine's Day originated in the west, these days young people in our country celebrate the occasion with equal enthusiasm."

"On this day people should



express their love and compassion for not just their significant others but also for everyone around them. We should help each other, learn to share and start working together."

"This Valentine's Day I'll be busy with shooting, but I intend to spend some time with my family, friends, and close ones in the afternoon," Shajol says.

Tisha

"To me Valentine's Day is like any other day. We express our love for parents on Mother's day and Father's day, and Valentine's Day is supposed to be spent with the one you love," Tisha says.

"Love can be expressed everyday, but a special day gives lovers an occasion to celebrate," she adds. "I'll

celebrate this Valentine's Day with my family. We usually go out for dinner on this day."

I have no classes today so I'll probably wake up late. I intend to spend some time with my friends and at night go out with my family," says Tisha.

"Thanks to globalisation, satellite TV, Facebook and other means of cultural exchange, trends are popularised fast throughout the world. If we can reject the bad and adopt the good things, then where's the



harm?"

Abida Sultana & Rafiqul Alam

They met on a Pehela Baishakh for the first time. They performed their first duet on another Pehela Baishakh and coincidentally, they got married on another Pehela Baishakh. The day is obviously significant to the artiste duo Abida Sultana and Rafiqul Alam. Abida and Rafiq are one of the most prominent singer couples in Bangladesh. Although they often perform together, they solo careers are equally impressive.

Rafiqul Alam sees Valentine's Day as something positive. He says, "Though this celebration started many years ago in Europe and North America, in the context of our culture, it's relatively new. I

think, in our national life we have fewer options for enjoyment. In this regard, Valentine's Day is a good occasion to cheer up. At present Valentine's Day is as special as Pehela Baishakh or Pehela Falgun to the youngsters."

Abida observes the day as a surplus. "Historically and traditionally Bengalis are loving and caring people. So, we don't need a special day to celebrate love. However, I consider it a surplus, as it gives me an occasion to celebrate



with my husband and son," she says.

Although Abida and Rafiq are busy with their stage performances, tours and albums, they make time for each other on this special day. "Over the last few years we have been celebrating Valentine's Day with much enthusiasm. Either Rafiq gets me a gift or I give him something special and we both give a special gift to our son. It's become a custom for us," says Abida.

However, this year they cannot celebrate the day, as both of them are quite busy with different programmes. At present, Abida is working on four albums, while Rafiq plans to release his next album on Pehela Baishakh.