

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Ekushey Book Fair

Venue: Bangla Academy
Date: February 1-28
Time: 3pm-9pm



Cultural Program

To mark Amar Ekushey
Organiser: Shammito Sangskritik Jole
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises
Date: February 8-21
Time: 4pm onwards



Solo Art Exhibition

Artist: Rashid Amin
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-26, R-3, Dhanmondi
Date: February 18-March 1
Time: 12pm-8pm



Theatre

Play: Half Akhrai
Troupe: Udichee
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: February 15
Time: 7:00 pm



Up close

NUSRAT JAHAN PRITOM

Rocker SI Tutul and top model-cum-actress Tania tied the knot over a decade ago.

The Daily Star had a chat with the duo to update readers with the history that they share and their lives today.

SI Tutul gave us glimpses of how they became a match. "The story begins sometime around '94/'95. From the start, Tania and I were in the media and we occasionally bumped into each other. She used to go for ramps and I used to go for shows. Then there was a tour around '97 in Miami, where we had a show and Tania was the anchor. You can say that's where we really crossed each other's lives as we saw each other so frequently, and worked together.

"I don't know when and where I developed an affection for her. By then we had also become good friends. There was this one moment that changed everything. I am not the sort who would tattle-tale but I went straight to the point and proposed to her. As it was out of the blue, she was shocked. I preferred a direct approach. I asked her to take two days to think about it, and that if she didn't agree, I wouldn't want our friendship to be destroyed in any way. Then we got back to our conversation. However I noticed that she was really silent.

"After two days when I approached her again, she had that same thoughtful look. She didn't say anything for a long time, and all of a sudden she broke the silence with a "Love you".

"One day I asked her to come with me to a shop to see a diamond ring that I was buying for someone and as I had no knowledge of these she should help me choose one. Finally when she selected a very beautiful ring; I told her that it was her engagement ring.

"Then came the climax--the part of convincing families. She hadn't told her family yet, and being the only daughter, this was a nail-biting experience. Back then, I was doing averagely in terms of bank account. And I had to face the truth, I was bachelor living on my own then in the city. I marched to her mother and asked for her hand. She was also shocked at the beginning. But those pensive moments soon dwindled away. Call it hypnotism or what--she soon began to like me as her would-be son-in-law as well. She said that money was not the criteria but an educated person; a good person was what she wanted for her daughter.

"Well, that was then. And now, we have two wonderful kids, loving parents-in-laws, and a great family. We had to go through many struggles to make it to this day, and yet we are finally here, with the Grace of the Almighty. We just wish for the prayers of our fans."

Tania shares tit-bits of her life with Tutul

"As a father, he is a wonderful, caring being. Even if he comes late at night, he will draw the kids near him and give them a big hug.

"We are more like friends. He is very sweet to my friends, that is the male ones, and I also have a good relationship with his friends. What matters is that we both have a great understanding.

"As a lover, well, that depends on how you take it. For one thing, there is a lot of propaganda in films about his thing called love. Like it is portrayed that if my husband loves me, then he will decorate the whole house with thousands of

Heart to heart with Tutul and Tania



flowers. In practical life, this is rather far-fetched. Perhaps we would sit and talk about our kids. You can say that the phenomenon is like I am staggering on this road of life, and have found this caring partner with whom I can go on the rest of the journey.

"He tries to make up to me if he has erred and I too don't just sit and sulk but we talk it over and try to reason out. This sharing and caring is what makes life beautiful.

"As a media couple, we are termed a lot as being a 'sweet' couple, I guess that's the reason why we are not like very formal, or trying hard to maintain a look. When both of us are together at a place, no one will believe that we are parents of two kids. We have so much fun. I kind of believe that fun is not for a particular age--it's for every age. Like there was a time when I saw that my aunts would be shy to put on make-up or teep, as it was "not the right age" but that kind of mindset no longer exists in the 21st century around the world. However in our culture, it is still predominant and I am trying to overcome these boundaries. Maybe for this reason we are appreciated in the media world."

Udichi to stage "Half Akhrai"

A CORRESPONDENT

Udichi will stage its 15th play "Half Akhrai" at the Experimental Theatre hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on February 15, at 6:30 pm. The play is written by Ratan Siddique and directed by Azad Abul Kalam. The cast of the play comprises Aminul Islam Tapan, Maruf Rahman, Shahidul Alam Dipu, Ziaur Rahman Litu, Amit Ranjan De, Nazmul Haq Babu, Alamgir Hossain, Ratan Deva, Anwarul Haq, Fahmida Haq Kali, Rifat, Ainul Islam Apu, Shamima Akter Mukta, Sharmin Akter Rini, Asrafunnahar Mala, Hamidul Islam Hillol and Masum.

Plot of the play: In 1804, the 'Akhrai' team was formed by Ramnidhi Gupta, father of Bangla 'Tappa' song in Calcutta where he applied his unique singing style. Gradually his style and songs won public appreciation. Nidhubabu believed that the sole objective of music was to provide humour and this art could not be mastered by ordinary individuals; both the creator and music fans were aristocrats. He abdicated the post of



A scene from the play.

principal and was replaced by his favourite student Mohonchand Basu.

Loyal and rigid personality Mohonchand Basu took a diametrically opposite position once he had taken over as principal. He believed that music was for the people. He presented Baisnab Padabali, Mangalkabya, Nathgitika full of theatricality in his own style. This epic poetry became popular throughout his presentation on stage. Ramnidhi

Gupta could not accept such radical changes and a fissure developed within the team. Mohonchand Basu abandoned the team and formed "Half Akhrai". Within a year his team became very popular in Calcutta. Meanwhile the anti Raj people got involved with the team. One night a mysterious fire claimed the lives of most of the team. Lonely Mohonchand Basu began to form new team.

"Half Akhrai" revolves

around the historic episode of Nidhubabu and Mohonchand. Here is an annexation of historic characters Ramnidhi Gupta, his beloved Barangna Srimoti, his pupil Mohonchand, rebellious Ganganarayan and historically insignificant characters Shamdasa, Harishchandra, Sattaya, Balram, Chandralekha, Kund, Shaybo, Nikunja, Surgeon, Kesto, Tara and several others.

The essence of song

"Praner Khela" held at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts

A CORRESPONDENT

As part of its initiative to promote Bangla song, Bengal Foundation has regularly been holding "Praner Khela". Sponsored by Eastern Bank Ltd, the event features performances by up and coming artistes as well as senior singers.

On February 12, the "Praner Khela" at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, featured performances by veteran singer Shuman Chowdhury. Two upcoming singers -- Nilufar Jahan and Shuma Rani Roy also performed at the event.

Nilufar Jahan currently teaches at the Tagore department, Chhayanaut. She graduated from Chhayanaut and stood first in Tagore songs.

Shuma Rani Roy graduated from Shantiniketan and



Shuman Chowdhury sings at the programme.

current teaches at Kazi Nazrul University, Mymensingh.

Both Shoma and Nilufar gained "Uttam Maan" at "Teen Kobir Gaan" (songs of three poets -- DL Roy, Atul Prashad and Rajanikant) category at "Bengal Bikash Prothibha Onneyshon", the

talent hunt by Bengal Foundation.

The programme started with Shuma Rani Roy performing "Ami Alokey Poritey", an Atul Prashad number. The artiste next performed a DL Roy number "Ekbaar Gaal Bhora Maa

Daakey" and another Atul Prashad track "Ami Badhinu." Nilufar Jahan performed two songs -- "Dek Maa Eibar Duar Khuley" of Atul Prashad and a Rajanikant song "Maer Deoa Mota Kapor."

Shumon Chowdhury was the final performer of the day. The artiste began his performance with a Tagore number "Sharthak Janam Amar Jonmechhi Ei Deshey", The slow paced song, accompanied by harmonium and keyboard, enthralled the audience who greeted the artiste with a hearty round of applause.

Other songs performed by the artiste included "Ekbaar Tora Ma Bolia Daak", "Key Boshiley Aazi", "Bashonti Hei Bhuban Mohini", "Shondha Godhuli Laganey", "Bhoria Proran Shunetechhi" and "Aji-e-Kushum Haar".

Do you think that the younger generation views a career on stage as a full time profession?

Riya, Chittagong



Azad Abul Kalam: There are two sides of the story. The troupes that are involved in theatre activities on stage across the country depend only on personal contributions and donations. However, an enthusiast, adequately trained in acting can start a career in acting on TV or film other than a career on stage.

fan mail



Get closer to the stars. We've been flooded by requests from our readers for a one on one with their favourite artistes via mail. Starting today, we introduce a monthly column where you can fire away all your questions and get their responses double quick.

Both of you are accomplished singers, but does professional jealousy take over sometimes?



Munmun Karim, Gulshan, Dhaka

Fahmida Nabi: There is never such feeling between us sisters. I will simply say that everyone needs a competitor to become successful, Samina is very talented when it comes to singing.

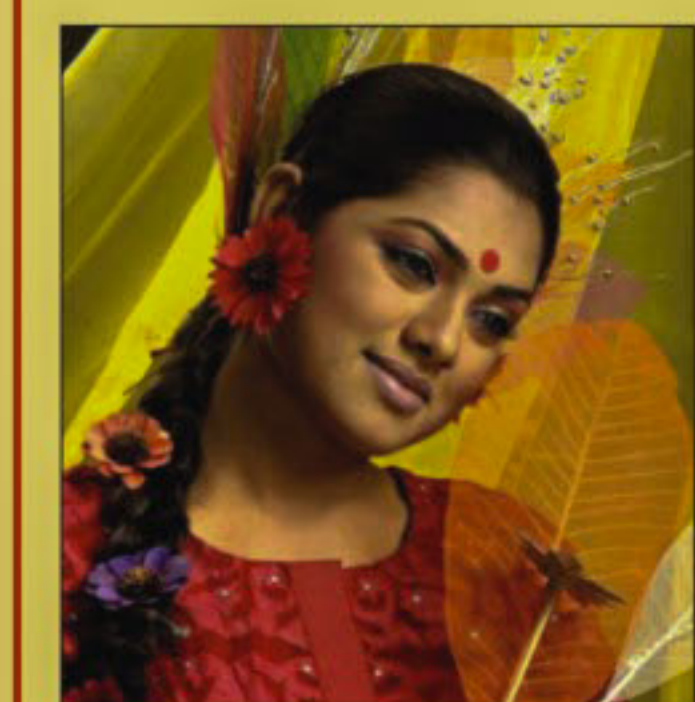
If both of you had to participate in a contest, what would your reaction be?

Fahmida Nabi: We simply love to perform on stage together but if there is ever such a contest, I will try to give it everything but if Samina wins I will be more happy. I will take part in the contest not to compete but to have a great time with my sister.

Samina Chowdhury: When it comes to our profession, jealousy between us is totally out of the question. Since childhood we have grown up together singing, I used to play the harmonium and Fahmida used to sing. Even today I would play the harmonium for Fahmida and if I am around during her performance Fahmida feels more confident and performs a lot better. I wish every success in her life.

What is the 'culture shock' like, when one moves from the stage to the silver screen?

Aruna, Dhanmondi, Dhaka



Tisha: During the transition, I had not felt it in anyway in the beginning because I was engulfed in so many experiences. But of course the response from the fans was great. As the world on stage and the world in the silver screen are so diverse, it's basically one memorable experience. But this also means that the expectations from me are also a lot more now, so I have to be careful.

What is your reaction after winning the National Award for the film "Chondrogrohon"?

Jahangir Khan, Azimpur, Dhaka



Riaz: This is the third time that I have received a National Award, and I am simply overwhelmed. I convey my thanks to my dearest fans, viewers, jury board, family relatives, and of course to the Almighty for bringing me to this step. When I heard that I got this prestigious award, I felt like I was at the top of the world. I had worked really hard, and when I got this, all my hard work paid off.