

# SHILAIDAHA KUTHIBARI

## A haven for TAGORE

PHOTO COURTESY: MAHMUDA TULI



ZAHANGIR ALAM, back from Shilaidaha

Shilaidaha Kuthibari at Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia is one of the must see stops in the itinerary of Tagore enthusiasts. The beautiful red sprawling building surrounded by a large expanse of trees, plants and blooming flowers, is located about 20 km away from Kushtia town. The Kuthibari inextricably holds the memory of Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore who made frequent visits here in connection with his "Zamindari" (estate).

The Kuthibari is a picturesque three-storied, pyramid-shaped, terraced bungalow, constructed with bricks, timber, corrugated tin sheets and Raniganj tiles. The bungalow nestles amidst 11 acres of orchards of mango, jackfruit and other trees, a flower garden and two ponds.

The peace and tranquility the Kuthibari inspired Tagore to pen some of his most unforgettable verses thus contributing to the enrichment of Bengali Literature. Many prominent personalities -- scientist Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, dramatist and music composer DL Roy and litterateur Promoth Chowdhury, visited Tagore at this location.

Tagore stayed intermittently between 1891

and 1901 at Shilaidaha Kuthibari. Sitting at Kuthibari or on a boat on Padma, Tagore wrote a number of masterpieces such as "Sonar Tori", "Chitra", "Chaitali", "Katha O Kahini", "Kshanika", most of the poems from "Naibedya" and "Kheya", and songs from "Gitanjali" and "Gitimalya". It was here, in 1912, that the poet started translating his "Gitanjali" into English, which earned him the Nobel Prize in 1913.

Tagore was deeply attached to Shilaidaha and Padma, which is evident in his "Chhinna Patrabali." Rabindranath Tagore once wrote in a letter, "The holy place of my literary pursuits during my youth and middle age was the village of Shilaidaha kissed by the waves of Padma."

Shilaidaha is a relatively modern name; its old name was Khorshedpur. Before the Thakurs of Jorasanko acquired the village in the middle of the 19th century, there stood an indigo-Kuthi reportedly built by a planter named Shelly. A deep whirlpool used to form there at the confluence of the Gadai and the Padma, and hence the village was known as "Shelly-daha", which ultimately came to be known as 'Shilaidaha'. Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of

Rabindranath Tagore, became the owner of this Zamindari in 1807 by means of a will executed in his favour by Ramlochan Tagore. Rabindranath assumed the responsibility of looking after the Zamindari and came to Shilaidaha for the first time in November 1889.

Shilaidaha Kuthibari is now a protected national monument. The renovation of Kuthibari has been completed by the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Cultural Affairs. It is known as Tagore Memorial Museum where Tagore memorabilia like his bed, wardrobe, iron chest, lawn mower, framed pictures and a replica of a houseboat are displayed here. Tagore aficionados and art lovers will certainly be pleased to see some rare photos, (of?) gifted by Pranab Mukherjee, President of the Government of India, and some exquisite paintings including a self-portrait by Tagore.

In Tagore's lifetime, the river used to flow beside the Kuthibari. But over a course of time, the river has changed direction and now is far away from Tagore's haven. However, the surrounding landscape, large pond with bojra (boat), are still wonderful to see.



### WHAT'S ON

**Star Melodies**  
Tagore's Lyrical Dance-Drama Songs  
Venue: Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct  
Date: May 13  
Time: 6:30pm

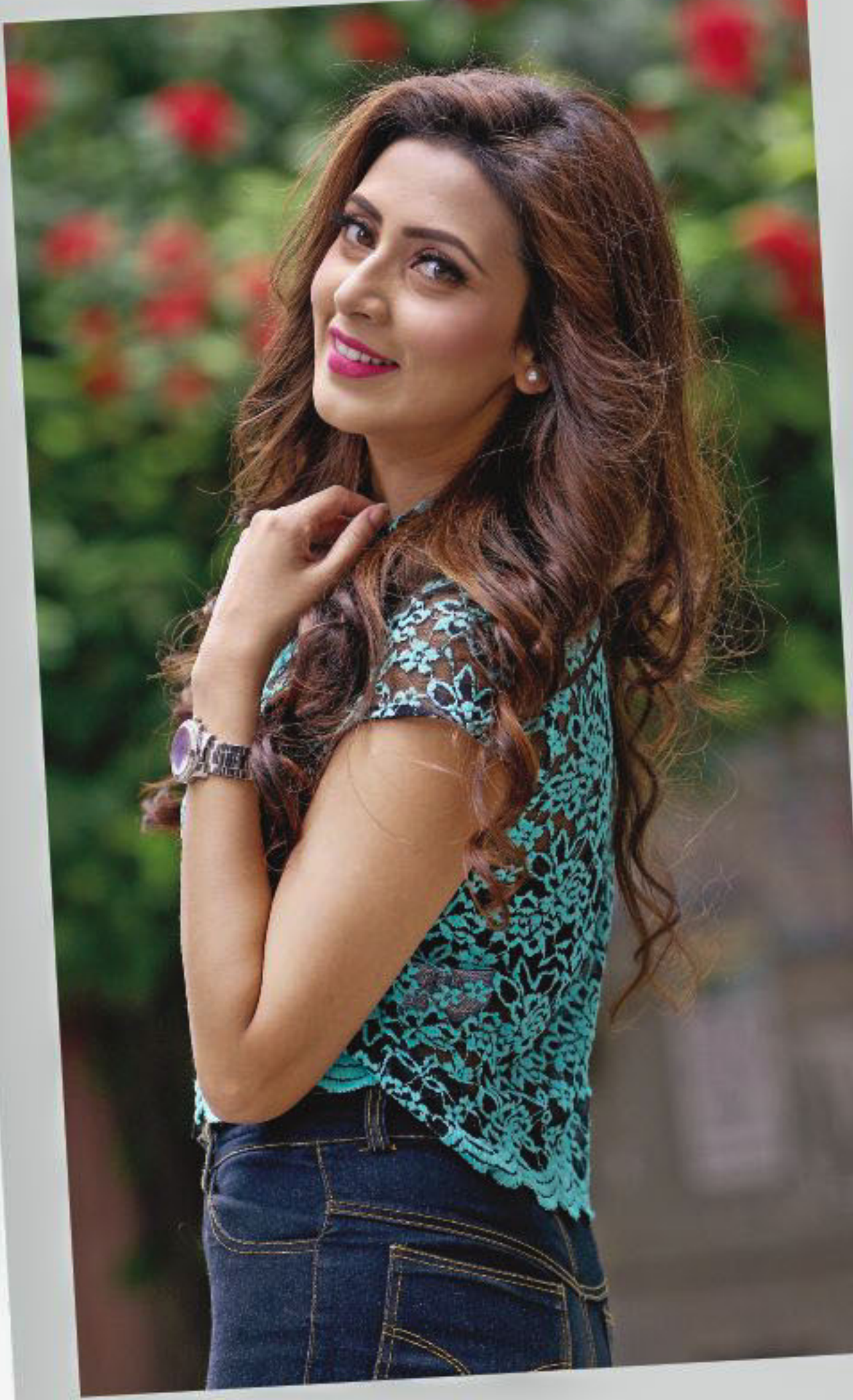
**Art Exhibition**  
Intimate Fears  
Artist: Anisuzzaman Sheel  
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge  
Date: May 7-June 4  
Time: 12-8pm

**SHAKOOR**  
Solo Painting Exhibition  
Retrospective  
Artist: Abdus Shakoor  
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery  
Date: May 1-15  
Time: 12-8pm

**Solo Painting Exhibition**  
Summer in Colour  
Artist: Nabo Kumar Bhadra  
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka  
Date: April 29-May 14  
Time: 3-9pm

**23rd Anniversary Festival**  
Katha Laitakala Academy  
Venue: Kendriyo Kochi-Kachar Mela Auditorium, Segunbagicha  
Date: May 14  
Time: 5pm

**Tagore Painting Exhibition**  
Venue: Nalini Kanta Bhattachali Gallery, Bangladesh National Museum  
Date: May 14  
Time: 4pm



## STARS REACT TO National Award wins

**SHAH ALAM SHAZU**  
The National Film Award is the biggest award for the artistes associated with the country's film industry. Winners of the 2014 National Film Awards received their statuettes on May 11, from no less than Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at a ceremony in the capital.

First-timer awardees -- actors Tariq Anam Khan and Bidya Sinha Mim, and musician Belal Khan, and four-time winner Ferdous shared their feelings of bagging the awards.

**Tariq Anam Khan** (Best actor in negative role, "Desha the Leader")  
I felt elated to have received the award from the Premier of Bangladesh. This is the biggest award for cinema in our country. Such recognition from the state level inspires an artiste to work harder. I am honoured and satisfied with my artistic efforts.

**Ferdous** (Best Actor, "Ek Cup Cha")  
This is the fourth time I received the honours. It's always great to achieve it. I work for the film industry of the country, and a unique feeling works in me with a serious sense of responsibility.

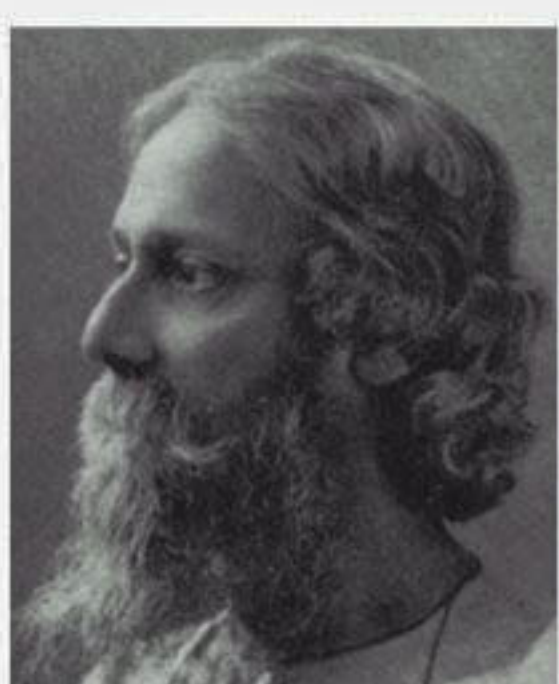
**Bidya Sinha Mim** (Best Actress, "Jonaki'r Alo")  
My joys know no bound. It feels like a dream. I work for the satisfaction of mine and for my fans and audience. As recognition to that, when I received the state award for film, I am feeling a never-ending joy in my heart. I am grateful to my director, my fans and family.

**Belal Khan** (Best Composer, "Nekaborer Mohaproyan")  
This is the best moment of my life. I am a man of music. I sing and compose songs alongside directing. The day will remain ever fresh in my memory as I took the award in the best composer category. This is a massive achievement for me.

### STAR MELODIES SOIREE TODAY

## Tagore's lyrical and dance-dramas in spotlight

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Star Melodies, The Daily Star's regular initiative to promote Bangla music, will present a soiree highlighting songs of Tagore's lyrical dramas and dance dramas today at 6:30pm at The Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct. The programme will feature songs by promising Tagore artistes -- Shuma Roy, Shimu De, Chhaya Karmakar, Nayeema Islam Raj, Dipanjan Mukherjee, Mustafizur Rahman, Anupam Kumar Paul and Jibon Chowdhury, performing songs from the popular Tagore lyrical and dance drama



productions "Shyama", "Mayar Khela", "Chitrangada" and "Shapmochon". Eminent dance exponent Sharmila Banerjee will present a brief demonstration on Rabindra Nritya dhara at the event, while noted Tagore singer Salma Akbar will talk about the musical aspect of the works. Sadya Afreen Mallick will comper the event. Seats are limited, and will be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis. Eastern Bank Limited and Chalacchitram are assisting in the programme.



## Alisha upbeat about "Ojante Bhalobasha"

**A CORRESPONDENT**  
One of the recent popular names in the film industry, Alisha Pradhan is returning with her third film. Directed by AJ Rana, the film, "Ojante Bhalobasha", that casts Saymon Sadik as the male lead, releases today. Alisha is clearly excited about her new film. "The role in the movie was very challenging and everyone thought it would be next to impossible to do play it. However, backed by my director and the crew, I was able to finish this assignment. I hope viewers will enjoy the film." Alisha and Saymon will visit a number of movie theatres to watch the film alongside the audience as part of their promotional bid. Meanwhile, Alisha's next film "Premer Kajol", directed by Zakir Hossain Raju, will release end of this year. The glamorous actress-model debuted on the big screen with Chashi Nazrul Islam's "Ontorongo", released last November, and went on to star in another film by Chashi Nazrul, "Bhul Jodi Hoy".