



Munmun Ahmed is a name familiar to the whole country. Her intricate footwork and enchanting twirls of Kathak can have the whole nation mesmerised. Following her footsteps is her daughter **Aporajita Mustafa**, who is one of the leading dancers among the younger generations of artistes. The duo make up one of the most influential mother-daughter combinations in the world of performing arts in Bangladesh, and to make things even better, their relationship is that of best friends. This year on mother's day, Aporajita spent a busy morning with classes and assignments. To make up for it, she came home and spent her evening editing all her mother's music for an upcoming dance tour. The *Star Weekend* caught up with the exceptional dancers to discuss motherhood and all its perks.



What, according to you, is the biggest similarity between the two of you?

Munmun: We're both quite different from each other actually. She doesn't even look like me!

Aporajita: We are both short-tempered, though. I think I get my temper from her.

Then what is the biggest distinctive difference between the two of you?

Munmun: She is very messy! And also, she likes eating out a lot. I would rather have a home cooked meal with the whole family.

Aporajita: Yeah, ammu's very hard-working unlike me. I usually find the short-cut ways of getting things done. Ammu will do it the way it was supposed to be done, no matter how tedious.

How do you feel watching each other on stage?

Munmun: When she was very young, my blood pressure would rise! But now, she has grown up to be a confident dancer, she is neat with her performances, and she has a passion for the form that is worthy of respect and appreciation. I feel proud when I see my baby on stage.

Aporajita: I absolutely love ammu on stage. Everytime, with every performance, I learn something new. She inspires me every single time!

One of your favourite memories together.

Munmun: There was this time when we travelled to India together when she was around 5. I remember her packing ALL her clothes and lugging her trolley bag around the house ready for her first trip. It still makes me laugh! Another is when we went to Australia, where all three of us had performed- me, her father Sujit Mustafa and Aporajita herself. And

she was so calm and composed. She would take care of my tracks when I would perform, and then go and change for her own performance. For a 7-year-old, she was very professional!

Aporajita: NTV's 3rd birthday! It was a performance in Chinmoyitree, where we had danced on a choreography depicting a mother-daughter relationship.

One message to your mother/daughter.

Munmun: Aporajita is a very emotional girl. She is strong in other aspects, but she sometimes lets her emotions get the best of her. I would like her to become emotionally stronger.

Aporajita: It's a cliché, but this is something I barely say, which is why she has lead herself to believe that I don't- but ammu, I do love you. Very much. I want you to know that.

What piece of advice would you give to new working mothers?

Munmun: Always make sure you know what your baby is doing. If you keep your child with your parents or relatives, that's fine. But if you are keeping them with a nanny or maid, it's best to install a CCTV camera to keep an eye on your child.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned from your mother?

Munmun: My mother has always taught me to be positive, think positive. She always said, 'if you want it, go and get it.' I still follow this advice of hers to this day.

Aporajita: Ammu taught me how to decide between right and wrong. I don't even have to go and ask her anymore. She taught me how to differentiate and make my own decisions.

— NAZIBA BASHER
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