



Winners of 'Aarong Dairy-Channel i Banglar Gaan 2016'-From left: Yasmin Ankon (2nd runner-up), Khairul Islam (1st runner-up), Sharmin Akter (winner) & Al Amin (2nd runner-up)

THE MELODY OF OUR ROOTS

To begin with, could you brief our readers about how you all got involved with the competition?

Sharmin: My father saw the campaign on TV and registered me as a candidate and informed me that I should give it a shot as I've grown up listening to folk songs from my grandfather and father. Earlier, I've auditioned for various other reality TV shows as a singer, but I didn't succeed. Finally when I participated in 'Aarong Dairy-Channel i Banglar Gaan 2016', I emerged as a champion.

Khairul: I was informed by my mother about the competition. I, being a student of folk music in Chhayanaut, she knew my depth of appreciation for the art and wanted me to part take in the event. I've auditioned for a few other singing shows, but I was fed-up and told myself that this would be my last try. I gave it a shot and succeeded.

Ankon: I was informed by my mother about a show regarding folk artists. She asked me to check it out. So I did and got myself registered. Growing up in Chapai Nawabganj, I had a strong feeling that I should audition from the Rajshahi division. At the time, I was in Dhaka, so I had

to travel overnight to make it to the selection on time and then I made it.

Al Amin: I have attended other singing based reality TV shows earlier, so when my well-wishers heard about this one, they insisted that I should attend it. So I decided to give it a try. Even though I reside in Dhaka, I felt I should attend the audition from my hometown Rajshahi, so I too had to travel overnight to participate.

We would like to know who are the idols that you all look up to and have inspired you all to come this far?

Sharmin: I've always admired Momtaz mam. I like the "truth" in her voice.

Khairul: I consider my gurus to be Nadira Begum and Farida Parvin mam, and it was a blessing to have learnt from such respectful personalities.

Ankon: As my specialty in Lalon sangeet, I

always look up to Farida Parvin mam. She seems to do justice to the evergreen songs of Lalon Fakir.

Al Amin: My idol would be ustad Shofi Mondol. I was lucky enough to be mentored by him.

What are your future endeavours regarding folk music?

Sharmin: I grew up in a family that respected and practiced folk music with immense devotion. I want to continue that same practice for as long as I live. I want to keep the spirit of Baul music alive through my voice and present it to every listener across the globe.

Khairul: As I have studied folk music, I want to surround my life around it. I have a band for which I compose songs and we play with local instruments. Even though I have completed my

honours in English, I want to prosper as a folk artist. The music that we make has the potential to stir the 'patriot' in every Bangladeshi. I've seen tears in the eyes of our listeners and that proves the depth of folk music. I want to win the world with the richness of my culture.

Ankon: We came under the limelight as folk artists, and I believe we should stick to it. In the contest, we worked a lot with folk-fusion and similarly, I want to uphold my culture to the new generation and the world. Even when I'm no more, I want my songs to fulfil my absence.

Al Amin: We often see a lot of new talents emerge from these reality shows, but the irony of it is that they are short-lived. Therefore, my plan is to cultivate the opportunity that I've gotten so far and proceed in my career as a folk artist as I believe folk music to be the true essence of Bangladesh.

On behalf of the Showbiz team, we wish all the winners best of luck to nurture the roots of Bangla music in the years ahead.

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Interviewed by Zahid Akbar & transcribed by Minam Haq

