



A moment from the get-together



# Dinner with Runa and Alamgir

NASHID KAMAL

It all started with a phone call. The greatest artist of Bangladesh who has put our country in the world map, gave me a short tinkle to invite me at their place for dinner. Their meaning, famous legendary actor of Bangladesh, Alamgir whose acting has always impressed me and Runa Laila.

When I entered around eight thirty pm, it was a very small gathering, with actress Purnima and veteran legendary actress Shabnam seated in one side with Runa Laila, attired in lovely fuschia sari and adorned with her sweet smile. I had the opportunity of meeting Shabnam and Robin Ghosh's son Ronnie for the first time, shocked to see his startling resemblance with his Dad! Almost like seeing Robin Ghosh come alive!

As I settled down to enjoy the evening, I learnt that this was their new apartment adorned and furnished in details by Alamgir. Runa Laila was very happy to share that, a corner of the living room showed a terracotta with musical notes, film negatives, setar and some other objects which Alamgir bhai explained were the chief artifacts of their lives. On the door opening to the dining room, the frosted glass contained an image of a 'shadherlau', the song that earned so



**Above: Actor Farooq cutting his birthday cake along with Suchanda and Shabnam.**

**Side: (From Left) Actors Farooq, Alamgir & Ferdous**



much popularity for Runa Laila, explained Alamgir. Her prizes from the national level were all displayed in the corner, shiny, bright, like their lives, so artistically carved by God, himself. Some of their pictures, both together and from their own vocations were hanging on the wall. One of Runa Laila from her Zia Mohiuddin show and one of Alamgir bhai in a famous Bangla movie adorned the walls. 'Bless them' thought I, as I took snaps with Ankhi Alamgir and her two wonderful daughters (who were expert selfie

takers), sitting in the other side with actor Ferdous.

Then came actress Rozina (she is mostly living in London these days) with her nephew Sami who took most of the pictures for the evening. It was the first time ever that I met actress Rozina who looked exactly as if she hadn't aged a day. Next to arrive were actress Babita Akhter Poppy, with her sisters Suchanda and Champa, all of whom I was meeting after eons of years. When my aunt Ferdausi Rahman (she was also invited) was a playback singer I got the opportunity of meeting Shabnam, Suchanda and Babita. Then came Farooq with his wife, my dancer friend Dolly with husband Iqbal and my college friend Shahnaz Huda. It was a treat indeed and there were two

other couples.

As we all got comfortable, sharing stories, taking photos, admiring each other, then we learnt from the gracious host Alamgir bhai that it was a surprise party for actor Farooq's birthday (which was the day before 18 August). A huge chocolate cake was brought and amidst much laughter and greetings, sing song, the cake was cut. He was seated next to Auntie Shabnam, who was the senior-most there, what love and respect was shown towards her! However, we were not given cuts from the cake, had to wait for our sumptuous dinner first!

Actress Purnima is well known for being able to mimic others (singers and actors) and she put us into rolls of laughter as she imitated everyone Babita, Alamgir, Runa Laila and oh my God, we laughed and giggled as if we were teenagers, eyes popping with water. We took some memorable pictures, especially with Babita and Farooq who have starred in so many hit movies.

Then came the dinner with home cooked murghpuloa, beef curry, prawn curry, just naming a few so that we can digest properly (these are the tips of the iceberg, there were at least 15 items), which we finished with zest and helped ourselves to the cake.

For me it was a beautiful evening, I took leave from Runa Laila, who has always been my idol from my teenage days and I will always remember her love for me, my daughter and always will feel lucky to be invited to meet such august company and have an enjoyable time.

The writer is an Academic, Singer & Writer