


WHAT'S ON

Ekushey Book Fair
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan
Date: February 1-28
Time: 3-8pm



Chobi Mela IX
Title: Transition
Venue: BSA Art Gallery, Northbrook Hall, BAFA, Beauty Boarding
Date: February 3-16

CHOBIMELA
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL OF
PHOTOGRAPHY
BANGLADESH
2017

Terracotta Fair and Exhibition
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum
Date: February 11-18
Time: 10am-5pm



Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: The Naked
Artist: Tilotama Bhowmick
Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka
Date: Feb 10-18
Time: 3pm-9pm



Friend to Friend: Celebrating Spring and Friendship
Venue: Under the banyan tree in front of Kala Bhaban, DU
Date: Feb 14
Time: 11am-12:30 pm




STARS SHARE STORIES OF LOVE AND HEARTBREAKS

SHAH ALAM SHAZU AND ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Valentine's Day, the day of romance is upon us, and amongst the many tokens of love and ardent desires, exist the shunned. They are the secret admirers who never make their identities known, or the ones doomed to feelings of affection never returned. The Daily Star hosted a celebrity gathering where artistes shared little-known stories of love about their lives, including accounts of breaking hearts and having theirs broken. Mir Sabbir, Muhin, Chaity, Beauty, Nishita, Kornia, Putul, Shanu, and Swagata came dressed in red to symbolise the occasion, full of colourful tales to tell. Below are excerpts from the conversation that evening.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Sabbir: When I was a university student at IUB's Chittagong campus, the day after a show I walked through the gate to find everyone giving me coy looks and giggling at me. Even the guard at the gates knew something was up! I was perplexed by all the attention I was getting and when I went up to the notice boards, I saw someone had written "I Love Sabbir" on all three boards. There were two Sabbirs at university, one whom people called 'gaari Sabbir' as he had a lot of cars - and to eliminate any confusion the clever admirer put a picture of a microphone below the message. As a performer, I was used to receiving many gifts and tokens of admiration back in those days. People jokingly called me "Gift Sabbir."

Putul: My views are similar to Shagota's, I had never really been in love with anyone, nor paid attention to my admirers. One of them was quite persistent in pursuing me, and it had gotten on my nerves. He was of large build, and one day to fend him off I told him to lose some weight first. I know it was rude, but I did not know what else to say then to have him leave me alone. However, I looked him up on Facebook years after the incident, and he looked quite unchanged. I guess he didn't like me that much then!



Muhin: When I was a fourth grader - I know, I started quite young - I had a crush on a neighbor. The room where I studied had a window above the table, and I was able to catch glimpses everyday in the building across mine where she had lived a floor above. I wrote her a love letter, which remained in my pocket because I was not able to give it to her. This was soon intercepted by my mother, when she checked my pants before doing the laundry, and passed them to my father saying, "Look how romantic your son is, writing letters at this age! God knows what he'll do next!" My father was a member of the police force, and was transferred around the country from time to time, and we had to move soon after. I never saw her again."



Swagata: My first love is my father, and no one can replace him. Growing up I would model my ideal partner based on his personality and qualities. My first priority is intelligence, and he should be even smarter than me. I used to receive a lot of attention, but I never paid heed. One of my admirers managed to call my father once, and asked him to convey his feelings for me. My father said, "Please feel free to take her, she's a handful and I find her too hard to handle." The man promptly stopped speaking and never called again!



Chaity: Valentine's Day was not as mainstream as it is now in our teen years. One time, I received a package at my doorstep, addressed to me. We were quite taken aback and scared too, as it did not have the name of the sender, nor did we understand that it could be a Valentine's gift. At first we thought it was a bomb or something, but upon opening it found a very cute showpiece. I had received many gifts, but I was too engrossed in my studies and other activities to really pay attention. One of the most disturbing items I ever got was a love letter, written to me in blood. I hope to never see such things again!



Shanu: This happened a long time ago, when I was in Sylhet. There was a Norwegian person named Harry who was working with the TV crew. I was one of the Manipuri dancers in the programme, and when he saw me, he fell in love and was determined to marry me. In hopes of winning me over he started to get to know the Manipuri culture, and began to adapt himself so much that he was wearing the traditional Manipuri attires and attended our festivals. We saw him as a respected guest and appreciated his efforts, but had no idea what his actual motives were. Soon thereafter he sent a proposal through my maternal uncle. We were surprised, but declined politely saying we preferred to marry within our own culture. But the real reason was that the attraction was not mutual."



Kornia: I had a crush on someone when I was in school, and I used to keep his picture inside my books. The attraction was mutual and he had given me the photo, but our interaction was limited to the occasional greetings when we ran into each other. I got caught by my parents and was beaten afterwards! As a young girl I was a movie buff, and would always see myself in the shoes of the leading lady, and my hero would be the best student in class. I was attracted to intelligence since I was a young girl.



Nishita: This is a story that I haven't actively experienced, but was narrated to me by my parents. After my stint at Closeup One, an ardent fan used to come and visit my house, and try to convince my parents to let him speak to me. Someone later told him that since I am a Buddhist, I will only pay attention to him if he converts to Buddhism. He scoured for temples in the country to help him with his mission, but there are none in Bangladesh that performs such rites. He then had the notion that if he travels to Burma, he will be able to find a temple to help him. He stole his mother's jewelry to finance his journey, and was detained at the airport. Officials found him crying and pleading saying that he loves me, and that he has to become a Buddhist to win me over."

Beauty: When I was a seventh or eighth grader, there was a boy that lived in my town and we had known each other since we were children. His name is Hafiz and he lived in a hostel nearby, and had carved the initials "HB" on his window. The trees that lined the pond to my house were also carved with those initials. But I was quite clueless and never understood what it meant. He wrote me letters, and had passed them onto my cousin. My cousin never gave them to me immediately, and one day she handed me a large bundle out of the blue, saying that he was in love with me. He then came to our house, and my family took him aside and said that while they understood his feelings, he should know that we are too young for all this and must focus on studies.



USHERING IN PAHELA FALGUN

Cultural programmes held in the capital

ZAHANGIR ALOM

With the onset of Pahela Falgun, nature gets a new lease of life. Like previous years, the city dwellers hail the season with joys and melodies. It's a day painted with bright colours and joyous tunes in the air. Yellow, orange and red seem to be the colours of choice for the women with flowers in their hair. Dhaka, especially the Dhaka University vicinity, took a festive look. Colourful rallies and cultural programmes welcomed Spring, and the sprouting of fresh leaves on trees, blossoming flowers and the songs of cuckoo herald the festive season.



To usher in Pahela Falgun, the first day of Spring, Jatiya Basanta Utshab Uddjan Parishad (JBUUP) held day-long programmes at four different venues - Bakultala of Charukala (Faculty of Fine Art, DU), Rabindra Sarobar of Dhanmondi, Bahadur Shah Park of Lakshmibazar, and open stage of Rabindra Smarani, Uttara in the capital yesterday.

Both prominent and promising singers, dancers and elocutionists of the country performed solo and group songs, dances and poems at the events. Sarangi artiste Matiar Rahman set off the morning session of the programme at Charukala while Dr. Asit Roy ropented Raga Bhinna Shadaj.

Artistes of Nritya Nandan, Dhriti Nartanalay, Nataraj, Spondon and Nriyakshya danced to several songs themed on Spring. Noted dancer-

choreographers -- Sharmila Banerjee, Warda Rihab, Laila Hasan, Anik Bose and Salma Munni choreographed the pieces respectively.

Noted Tagore singers Mita Haq and Fahim Hossain Chowdhury rendered solos while Artistes of Satyen Sen Shilpi Goshthi performed a folk song "Ayre Basanta". Dance presentations by several Chakma and Santal artistes added different colours to the programme.

The morning session came to an end with the presentation of a choral song "Orey Grihabashi" that was followed by a colourful procession. Cultural programmes were also held other three venues with solo and choral performances of songs, poems and dances. The leaders of the JBUUP spoke at the event. Desh TV aired the morning session of the programme live.



Indigenous artistes perform at the celebration.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED