

WHAT'S ON

Ekushey Book Fair

Organiser: Bangla Academy

Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan

Date: February 1-28

Time: 3-8pm

Bengal Sangskriti Utshab

Organiser: Bengal Foundation

Venue: AMA Muhith Sports Complex, Sylhet

Date: Feb 22-Mar 3

Time: 4pm onwards

Theatre

Play: Crutch-er Colonel

Troupe: BotTala

Venue: Mahila Samity Auditorium

Date: Feb 24-25

Time: 7pm

Concert

Jatra Biroti Live Sessions

Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani

Date: Feb 23-25

Time: 7pm

Solo Musical Programme

Marking 67<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary

Fakir Alamgir

Venue: Main Auditorium, Bangladesh National Museum

Date: February 24

Time: 6pm



Joler Gaan (top) and Adity Mohsin perform at the festival.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

# A 360° celebration of Bangladeshi Culture

## Bengal Sangskriti Utshab opens in Sylhet

FAHMIM FERDOUS, writes from Sylhet

Bengal Foundation has been contributing to a wide array of Bangladesh's cultural aspects for the better part of three decades, from finer aspects like classical music, fine arts and film to more deep-rooted ones like traditional crafts and theatre. But at the AMA Muhith Sports Complex in Sylhet on Wednesday, they brought all that together, and then some, to paint a magnificent picture of Bangladesh's culture as a whole. The Bengal Sangskriti Utshab Sylhet 2017 opened in the city amid much enthusiasm from locals, and overcoming a big weather-caused obstacle.

On-spot registration queues swelled up outside the entry gates by 4pm, as people of all walks of life – from dapperly-dressed youths to lungi-sporting commoner, from little kids to the elderly – flocked the venue. Shabnam Ferdousi's documentary "Born Together" started off the festival proceedings at the Syed Mujtaba Ali Mancha, and the Crafts Fair at the Gurusaday Dutt Chattar displayed traditional artisanal crafts from various parts of the country. The architecture exhibit, "Agami'r Sylhet" at the Kushiara Colonnade drew a large, rather curious crowd. The two other film screenings, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's "Television" and Nasiruddin Yousuff's "Guerrilla" also saw a houseful audience.

But through the elaborate arrangements, a closer look showed a few signs of the unexpected trouble that struck the festival a night before it began. On Sunday night, a big storm had taken down some of the temporary establishments, while a truss of the overhead enclosure structure had also fallen down. A lot of the structural parts of the festival had to be re-built last-minute, and the event management people at

Blues Communications did a superb work to bring the field back up to host the festival.

It was only fitting that the performances at the main stage named the Hason Raja Mancha, began with an art form of the region. Manipuri dance troupe Dhriti Nartanalaya, with noted dancer-choreographer Warda Rihab at the helm, presented the first performance, "Leichan", putting on show all the colours and vibrancy of Manipuri dance.



The Sylhet unit of Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad, performed patriotic songs next, including "Moder Gorob Moder Asha", "Bolo Bolo Re Bolo Shobe Bolo Re Bangalee'r Joy", and "Amra Shobai Bangalee".

The opening ceremony followed, chaired by Brac founder and Chairman Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, and including Bengal Foundation Chair Abul Khair, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, Bengal Foundation advisor AK Momen,

and Managing Directors of sponsors Dhaka Bank and Index Group – Syed Mahbubur Rahman and Zakia Tazin respectively.

Abul Khair, in his address, said: "We have been doing many activities for Bangladesh's culture, but could not do anything combining all of it, so we wanted to do it here in Sylhet. This festival gives a holistic impression of what Bangla culture can be," he said.

Asaduzzman Noor stressed on the practice of culture to eradicate social

people's interest in the festival at his native land, where he said 35,000 people had already registered to attend.

In his brief address, Sir Abed said the festival "creates a new chapter in Bangladesh's cultural practices."

Adity Mohsin was the next performer of the evening, and she went through a set-list of popular Rabindra Sangeet, opening with "O Amar Desher Mati", and performing numbers like "Ta Bole Bhabna Kora Cholbe Na", "Shedin Dujone", "Bhenge Mor Ghorer Chabi" and more.

The most-anticipated name on the opening day's bill, Joler Gaan took the stage next and formed an instant connection with the energetic audience, as Rahul Ananda greeted them in fluent Sylheti dialect. The group's natural ability to engage the audience and theatrical stage presence got the audience off their seats, dancing and singing along to "Jaore Tepantor", "Geetol Chithi", "Emon Jodi Hoto", and "Laal Balloon". But it was with their hit "Bokul Phool" that they really got the crowd in frenzy.

The festival's second day's performers included a group tabla recital by students of Parampara Sangeetalay, folk songs by Bhajan Baul, Nazrul Sangeet by renowned exponent Manomay Bhattacharya, and more folk songs by Chandana Majumdar and Shatabdi Roy. Film "Meghmalla" was screened, while Manipuri Theatre staged their play "Kohey Birangana".

The festival, dedicated to the memory of Gyantapas Professor Abdur Razzak, will continue till March 3, and also includes a literary conference (that begins today), a food stall with traditional delicacies of various regions of Bangladesh, and an art camp featuring eminent artists.

# JAYA to play circus acts!

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

National Award winning actor Jaya Ahsan has created ripples across the border during the course of her career. Though TV plays have taken a backseat, she has a busy shooting schedule for her upcoming movies. She has returned to Dhaka from Rajshahi after shooting wrapped up for "Beauty Circus". The heartthrob shared a few words about her experiences on the sets of "Beauty Circus" in a recent conversation with The Daily Star:



"Recently, I returned to Dhaka after shooting some scenes for "Beauty Circus" in Rajshahi's remote Santahar area. I went there for the first time and its natural beauty really floored me."

"The plot of the film is based on the lifestyle of circus artistes. I played the title role of Beauty in the film. During the shoot, I jumped from a great height without using a stuntman! That too in front of a crowd. I had great experiences during the shoot of the movie. I was completely immersed in my character throughout the course of filming."

"As Beauty is the lead character in the circus troupe, I have done a lot of preparation to portray the character perfectly. Besides, the work is very challenging. During the shoot I had to spend time with circus artistes in Santahar for several days. I could not have gained the required experiences otherwise."

"In our country, the circus is now on the verge of extinction. I hope that the new generation will learn more about this art through "Beauty Circus"."

"I have visited the circus once as a child. Therefore shooting for the film was a very nostalgic experience and I was able to revive a part of my life."

"I am now busy with movies. I'm going to do a film called 'Debi' which will be my first production. Post-production work for the film is underway. My production house is C Theye Cinema. I dream of doing some good movies."



PHOTO: STAR

## WEEKENDER

# "My mornings consist of struggling from one thing to the next..."

## TAWSIF MAHBUB

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Tawsif Mahbub has been an unstoppable force since he came into the lime-light for his role in the tele-film "18". The versatile actor is also a talented musician and model, and today with The Daily Star he shares other tidbits about his life:

**Describe your perfect day off.**

Tawsif: To sleep all day long, and wake up to good food, before sleeping again.

**When it comes to acting roles, what do you look for in a script before accepting the offer?**

Tawsif: The script has to be different

from what I've already done before.

**What is your morning routine?**

Tawsif: My mornings consist of struggling from one thing to the next; I struggle very hard to wake up, and when I do, I struggle to clean and wash my car because I don't have a driver. After that I struggle to fix my costume for the day, and then I struggle with traffic before I go to work.

**What has been the most significant change in your life once you began your path to stardom?**

Tawsif: I lost my privacy, which can be hard to cope with. I can't go outside without being recognised, and it can be very uncomfortable for me, as well as the people who are with me.

**What's your favourite haunt to hang out with friends?**

Tawsif: Our go to place is my balcony. It's a huge space that is around 600 sqft, and looks out on the Abahani field in Dhanmondi, which makes for a very pleasant view. We have cushions on the floor, and it becomes the perfect place to chill out, have coffee, and just be ourselves.

**Is there an interest you haven't been able to pursue, but always drew you in?**

Tawsif: I have always wanted to try singing. I am a guitarist and I had my own band, but I never sung. I dream of performing as a vocalist one day in front of a large audience.

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**Tamanna Chowdhury**  
Principal Dietician, Apollo Hospitals, Dhaka

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