



## Nooran Sisters, Kutumba, Mekaal Hasan and more

Performing today at the Dhaka International Folk Festival

A CORRESPONDENT

The second day of the Dhaka International Folk Festival 2017 at the capital's Army Stadium will see four artistes and groups making their debut on the festival stage, and one powerhouse duo that has been one of the biggest audience favourites in the event's history.

Upcoming Bangladeshi folk band Baula will be the opening band of the festival. (They were mistakenly listed as the first day's performers in yesterday's coverage of the festival on the Arts & Entertainment page; we regret the unintentional error). The trio of Prakash Banik, Joy Sinha and Mainuddin Khan Sayonto began their journey in 2013 as a group, and has gained popularity among listeners. Their simplistic musical arrangements often consisting only of a flute, a guitar and a banjo - bring out the flavours of Bangladesh's folk music.

Nepalese folk instrumental band Kutumba will bring the Himalayan breeze to the Dhaka audience, with their brand of authentic sounds on their debut performance in the festival. The Kathmandu-based band exclusively uses Nepalese traditional instruments, some of which may be familiar to the

Bangladeshi listeners - like the bamboo flute, sarangi, madal, sankha and sehnai, while others are unique to the mountainside nation - like the singing bowl, rain stick and Yak bell. They are arguably Nepal's most popular musical group internationally, and are credited with playing a key role in dissemination of Nepal's unique cultural diversity through their music.

Mekaal Hasan Band is also an internationally-renowned group, bringing Pakistan's signature blend of Sufi and rock music together. The band's leader, Mekaal Hasan, is a Berklee graduate and has fused his world musical influences with his roots to create a sound that has resonated with audiences everywhere. The band's energetic performance and complex musical arrangement has won them an array of fans in the subcontinent and beyond. The Lahore-based band's current lineup consists of three reputed Indian musicians - Gino Banks, Sheldon D'Silva and Sharmishtha Chatterjee, making it a one-of-a-kind Indo-Pak band.

Seasoned Bangladeshi folk singer Shahjahan Munshi will also perform for the first time at the grand festival today. With a singing career spanning five decades, the artiste from Manikganj has carved a niche for

himself with his sonorous and soulful vocals. Despite losing his eyesight at the age of 14, his music has touched the souls of many - in the country and beyond. In the early '90s, he traveled to France on invitation from the Alliance Française de Dhaka, and recorded an album there titled "Chants Mystiques Des Bauls du Bangladesh", and performed in concerts.

One of the most anticipated performances of the night are the Indian Sufi singing sisters Jyoti and Sultana Nooran, known best as the Nooran Sisters. Born in the Punjabi family of prominent Sufi singer Bibi Nooran, the duo discovered their musical calling as children, and has become one of the most popular Sufi groups in India. Their performance last year at the same stage was a highlight of the festival, where the sisters complemented each other in a hypnotic display of powerful vocals and passion.

The third edition of the Dhaka International Folk Festival is presented by Meril, powered by Dhaka Bank and organised by Sun Events. The festival, which has free entry for audiences who have completed online registration, will be live-streamed on the festival's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

## Desh Natok revives "Nityapuran" after 14 years A tribute to Dilip Chakraborty

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

The bold and energetic Dilip Chakraborty is best remembered for his unparalleled portrayal of Ekalabha, the tragic hero of Masum Reza's stage play "Nityapuran". The Desh Natok production was first brought to life 18 years ago, and was staged 56 times until 2004. The actor unexpectedly breathed his last five years ago, leaving behind performances that made an unforgettable impression on the audience. However, this evening will be a time for creating something new from the old, as Desh Natok revives "Nityapuran" in Dilip's memory after 14 years at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Experimental Theatre Hall at 7pm. The biggest element of surprise remains however, as to who will fill the shoes of Ekalabha.

Playwright and director Masum Reza informed The Daily Star that only Bonna Mirza will be present from the original casting line-up today and tomorrow (November 10-11). The popular actress will reprise her role of Draupadi, and the performer for Ekalabha will be announced before curtains rise before the show.

"It is hard to say how I feel right now. I miss Dilip Chakraborty dearly, and he will be on all our minds tomorrow," said Bonna Mirza.

Masum Reza also revealed that there will be some differences from the prior performances. "There will be some changes in choreography, props, and costumes, but the story is the same as ever. Much of the hype was due to the late Dilip Chakraborty's performance, so there is also a new expectation here," he said.

"Nityapuran", or "The Eternal Meeting", is a tale of woe about a failed hero. Ekalabha (or Eklavya) aspires to study archery under the guru of Guru Drona, who rejects him. To Drona's ire, Ekalabha becomes a commendable archer, which compels the Guru to ask for his thumb as a sacrifice. The seven characters featured in the play are from The Mahabharata, but the plot is a new take on the epic narrative.

"In the usual reading of The Mahabharata, Arjun or Karna are regarded as heroes in terms of their might and prominence, but Ekalabha stood out as the better and more real hero to me. He wasn't very technical, and that is why he failed to protect himself in the end," stated Masum Reza.



A scene from Nityapuran.

## "Daily soaps are our way forward"

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Anondo Khaled began his journey in the entertainment industry on theatre, but has found big success everywhere he has ventured. From single-episode plays, serials, TV advertisements, a hit film ("Chhuye Dile Mon") and even music videos, he is one of the most recognizable faces of television today. The actor recently sat down with The Daily Star to talk about his thoughts on acting and our actors, and what he thinks is the way forward for the TV industry.

**Do you think a lot of our actors are being pigeonholed into certain types of characters?**

**Anondo:** Every actor has a range. Mosharraf Karim doing Apurbo's character in "Batch 27" would not work, nor would Apurbo as Sikander Box. I believe in range. I have a range and I play within it. Why should I compete with every actor? There is also a commercial aspect to it. In the last few years we have developed a young, urban viewer base for our TV plays. It's not just the rural backdrop plays or slapstick comedies. Actors like Tahsan, Siam, Tawsif or Jovan have their niche audience, as do Zahid Hasan or AKM Hasan. You have to cater to that audience; otherwise we will lose

them. Once in a while an actor can do an off-beat role. Maybe Tahsan will do a bus conductor role, and people will love it. Or Mosharraf Karim will play home minister. But that will not be a



regular occurrence, and it shouldn't be either.

**Speaking of range, which actor of today do you think has a wide acting range?**

**Anondo:** Allen Shubhro. If you see

even his recent works, from "Bikel Bela'r Pakhi" to "Hotel Albatross", he is a very versatile actor.

**What are your thoughts on the content on on-demand and streaming services like YouTube or**

**... Anondo Khaled**

So it's not just in Dhaka. Web-only series are getting lots of views. And I believe TV's 'monopoly' in this entertainment sector may not remain. YouTube content could give TV a strong competition.

**What do you think can help grow our TV audience?**

**Anondo:** I believe there is only one way out. We need to make more and better daily soaps. Our makers work so hard and bring out so many good plays during Eid, but not enough attention is given to five-days-a-week serials. Our serials have two episodes on Sunday and Monday, and by the next week the audience has forgotten about it. On the contrary, look how popular "Sultan Suleiman", which is a dubbed series from Turkey, is. We need to have five-days-a-week soaps, with limited advertisement, and they have to be repeated at a different time slot, like in the morning. During the two Eids, we get a huge audience but the rest of the year this audience watches India Zee Bangla and Star Jalsha. Unless we can popularise daily soaps, our industry will not truly be ours. The younger audience will go to YouTube, the other will go to Zee Bangla. Some channels are doing it; Deepo TV is already doing it, and Nagarik also has that plan in the pipeline.



## PRACHI DESAI learns guitar for "Kosha"

Bollywood actress Prachi Desai has learnt guitar for her upcoming film "Kosha", and says she always wanted to master playing the instrument.

"Kosha" is being described as a 'dark urban fairy tale', with the story revolving around a girl who is a band member and struggles with substance abuse.

"You always take back something from a film and for me learning guitar was just one of it. I always wanted to learn guitar, but never got an opportunity to do so," Prachi said in a statement.

"When I had to shoot this particular scene where I had to jam with a guitar I thought why not learn it so that it looks real. So yes, I learnt the instrument and I am happy to say that I am playing it for real in the scene," she added.

The director said: "The particular scene was a pivotal one in the film, and Prachi wanted to perfect the same so, she put in the extra hours."

The film is produced by late filmmaker Raj Kanwar's son Abhay, and directed by Amman Advaita. Five years after their Kanwar's demise, his sons Abhay and Karan are resurrecting their home banner with the film. A release date is yet to be announced.

## Robi and Bengal Communications join forces



Telecom operator Robi and digital cable television service provider Bengal Communications Limited have recently signed a corporate agreement that allows Robi & Airtel customers to subscribe Bengal Digital's service through Robi's Walk-In-Centers. Bengal Communications will also be availing a number of innovative digital services from Robi under the agreement, according to a press release.

The agreement also paves the way for Bengal Digital and Robi to cross bundle their products and services offers for their respective customers. In addition, Bengal Digital will use Robi's digital advertising platform, Adreach.

Robi's Managing Director and CEO, Mahtab Uddin Ahmed and Bengal Communications' Executive Chairman, Asfar Khair signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. The signing ceremony took place at the Robi's Corporate Office in Gulshan.