

A celebration of all things Bangladeshi

Prothom Alo and Unilever hosted a gala fashion show 'Sunsilk Noksha Biye Utsob' at the Grand Ballroom of the Pan Pacific Sonargaon on the 20th of December. A visually delightful stage welcomed the guests to the event themed 'Biyer Bajar Deshe.' With the aim to promote local fashion houses during the wedding season, this was their fourth bridal festival.

The show began with a "friendly banter between a married couple" and hosts for the evening model Piya and Faruq. They aptly set the stage for the final show that marked the end of the two-day festival. The opening song was performed by popular singers Konal, Puja and Shovvota, followed by an entertaining dance routine portraying a bride dressing up for her Gaye Holud by Samina Husain Prema and her team Bhabna.

Sunsilk presented a video of some easy to do hair-styles. Prothom Alo's feature editor Sumona Sharmin, spoke to encourage people to do wedding shopping in Bangladesh, especially as wedding couture is now a major part of the local industry.

The main event of the evening, the fashion show, had the audiences watching in awe as the stage came alive with models walking the ramp looking resplendent in dazzling wedding attires. An exquisite wedding ensemble was showcased with each bride in a different look. The men were not far behind looking stately and debonair in plush sherwanis and elegant suits. The fashion show was

a true testimony to the theme of the festival leaving all the invitees convinced that our country's designers are well equipped for creating wonderful wedding trousseaus.

The finale of the fashion show featured renowned designers Munira Emdad of Tangail Saree Kutir, Maya Rahman of Dressy Dale and Maheen Khan of Mayasir.

After the show, Nafees Anwar, head of personal care, Unilever Bangladesh Ltd, spoke, followed by Prothom Alo editor Motiur Rahman, who highlighted the wedding market of Bangladesh and its splendid growth. He also recounted that Bangladesh now has many successes under its belt and wished that we as a country keep striding forward in medical, education, politics and all other spheres.

The undisputed highlight of the show however was when our much-loved senior stars, namely Dilara Zaman, Shompa Reza, Sharmila Ahmed and Chitraklekha Guha, walked the ramp, at which the hosts lightheartedly pointed out that any bridal festival is incomplete without 'Ma and Shashuri'! Finally, to the absolute delight of the guests, the evening's conclusion was star studded with stars like Nobel, Ferdous and Shuvo walking the ramp with Mim, Nabila, Bubli, Purnima, Mehzabin and Nipun. All of them traditionally attired, received much love and applause.

By Samina Hossain



THOUGHT CRAFT

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December a season of happiness

The months have flown by, and so did December, one of the loveliest months of the year. There is a crisp feel to the air, and the winter flowers have begun to show their blooms — dahlias, roses and all the other delicate flowers that cannot blossom in the heat.

Best of all, the wedding season has arrived. People have already begun to receive exquisitely designed cards to weddings, musical evenings, 'holuds' and 'mehendis'. The cards are so beautiful that sometimes I enjoy just gazing at them, marvelling at the wonderful designs.

It is time for the ladies to bring out the heavy silk saris, the embroidered tissues, and precious hid jewels for the many events that will take place. There will be festive weddings at venues richly decorated with lights, candles, arches and canopies, draped with exotic blooms, garlands of roses and jasmine, or fragrant lilies in pink and white, or many other combinations, all symbolising a season of hope, happiness and dreams for a new life.

Weddings are filled with pleasure in many different ways. For me, one of the greatest pleasures is in admiring the beauty of the decorations. I especially recall one outdoor wedding, where it seemed a hundred candles had been placed around the bridal dais, the whole venue backed by a trellis of hanging lamps and leafy plants, a magical setting against the night sky.

On other occasions, I saw great halls draped with white orchids, as in some pale tropical paradise, or covered over with arcades of pink and white blooms. I loved one wedding in which the room was designed to look like a rich dark forest, illuminated by the glow of golden lamps suspended from the branches of trees.

In addition to the weddings there will be musical soirees featuring ghazals, wedding songs and shehnais, dhholki evenings, and dance performances in the days leading up to the main event.

For each one, there will be elaborate settings with different colours and themes. For those who create these fantasies, and most of all for those who are willing to pay the price, the fairy tale, ethereal and unique combinations are endless.

After the decorations and the preceding events, the next pleasure is in viewing the bride and groom. In most cases the grooms look like most grooms — nice inter-

changeable young men, but the brides are dazzling, radiant and bejewelled, dressed in costumes in all the colours of the rainbow, some in ivory, to go with diamonds or emeralds, some in pale pinks, some perhaps in traditional red to set off the multi-layered necklaces of rich gold, and more rarely, in blue to bring out the colour of cornflower-blue bridal sapphires.

Many of the female guests wear their richest clothes and jewels in honour of the season. I love admiring some young women's perfect heart shaped emerald rings, some other friend's magnificent Burma ruby necklace, the glittering diamonds and intricately wrought gold, but I have also enjoyed seeing creamy pearl necklaces with chiffon saris, like my own mother-in-law sometimes wore.

I remember one occasion when she was already past fifty years of age. When she entered the wedding dressed in her pearls and a pale grey chiffon sari dotted with sequins, almost everyone in the room turned to look. But then she had been a well-known beauty all her life.

For the senior generations of guests, who do not notice clothes and jewels, but do prize traditional fine cuisine, the most important and memorable thing will be the biriyani!

The perfect biriyani must be rich, pale and full of potatoes. Even the most elegant and distinguished of people can sometimes be heard calling 'aloo aano'. For these connoisseurs, there are also other fine points to be noted, so sometimes there are murmurs of there not being enough saffron or ghee. Such complaints are rare though, because the food is almost always superb.

In my opinion, Dhaka biriyani is the best I have ever eaten. The meat is pink and tender, the spices perfectly balanced and delicate, and the potatoes incomparable, tender morsels roasted to a soft gold. Not for me the so-called biryanis found elsewhere, muddled in with green chillies and cilantro, or concoctions masquerading as biriyani, with tomatoes, raisins, nuts and red chilli powder. Even the famed biryanis of Hyderabad and the United Provinces cannot compare with ours, but of course, I may be a little partial to everything from Dhaka.

December is almost my favourite month. And for reasons...

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*Till 31 December 2017



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