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Amra Kojon Reunion 2005

Cambridge, MA – After two years of a mega Bengali music show that had sold out, performers, organizers and their friends celebrated with music and *papri-chat* (a spicy Indian snack) at the Grace United Methodist Church in Cambridge on Saturday, July 30.

Acknowledgements were offered, sponsors thanked and books closed on a venture that cost Amra Kojon \$35,554.99.

The afternoon opened with a group of Amra Kojon performers singing *Purano shei diner kotha* (Those were the days) capturing the emotions that marked their earlier musical endeavor.

A DVD of the original Feb 9, 2003 show was screened and about 35 copies of the 2-disc DVD sold for \$10 each.

Celebrations were home-style with a personal touch as Amra Kojon participants welcomed visitors with *cha* (tea) and *adda* (informal discussion), two indispensable elements of Bengali culture.

Colorful sarees and jewelry were sported by children and adults alike and an open stage had performers and guests singing popular Bengali songs.

The Reunion drew about 300 visitors, to a hall decorated with Amra Kojon photographs and memorabilia – from well-wisher e-mails from Bangladesh and press clippings of the show, to the original program script written by poet Shahid Quadri, Amra Kojon's mentor.

Based on the spirit of unity and amity as the foundation for success, put forward so strongly by Amra Kojon, the reunion highlighted Amra Kojon's longstanding partner and co-sponsor, MIT's Bangladesh Students' Association. MIT BSA showcased their ongoing fund-raising project of "Sponsor a Child", more information on which can be obtained by e-mailing bd-exec@mit.edu.

Amra Kojon also invited Drishtipat, an internet-based human rights organization, with a stall highlighting their Boston local chapter launch, further details of which can be found at boston.drishtipat.org or through e-mail at info@boston.drishtipat.org.

The reunion ended after about four hours with a promise for more and the song *Kothau amar hariye jawa nei mana* (There is no place we cannot go)...



AMRA KOJON show - Feb. 9, 2003

Two years ago, about 120 amateurs came together to sing as one songs tracing 1,000 years of Bangla music.

The Feb 9, 2003 one-time show was sold out, with more than 200 people waiting for tickets outside the 1200-capacity Kresge Theatre in MIT on a cold winter week night in Cambridge, Mass.

Music lovers from both Bengals came together in a celebration of their motherland and language, beyond the borders of religion, country, politics and local organizations.

The unique endeavor was endearingly termed “A Festival of Friends” – the first ever successful attempt at putting aside individual differences of nationality, ethnicity or religion, and coming together to present our language, our culture, our heritage, from one common platform, united by our passionate love of music.

In its coverage, the Boston Globe cited the Amra Kojon event as the first opportunity to present the people of Bengal in a context that did not involve floods, natural calamities, poverty, or suffering. In essence, that is exactly what we had set forth to do: share OUR Bangla, share our traditions, culture and heritage in all its splendor and glory.

At a time when Bangladesh and W. Bengal (India) rarely make international news unless it's a devastating human tragedy, Amra Kojon is grateful to have received extensive coverage in local and Bangladeshi media -- from Voice of America and Boston Globe to the Cambridge Chronicle and India New England News.

Please find links to some of the press clippings on our Web site at www.amrakojon.org/NewsScans/NewsScans.html



Aug. 1, 2005

Press Release: Amra Kojon On the Road

Close your eyes.

Imagine Logan Airport, summer of 2007, and a group of 50 amateur Bengali musicians from Boston about to embark on a world tour taking *Bangla Gaan* (Bengali songs) across the world from USA to Bangladesh.

-- This is how Amra Kojon organizer Mohitosh Talukder, or "Taposh-da" as he is known, described their next venture at the reunion celebrations on Saturday, July 30 at the Grace United Methodist Church in Cambridge.

After the success of their 2003 show, Amra Kojon wants to realize a new dream of presenting Bangla, now an international language, and Bangla music to the rest of the world.

Their journey will begin at New York City, traveling through Canada, Europe, Middle East, Australia and finally to Dhaka, Bangladesh for the finale.

At each destination, they will present a different version of the show. Each show will include solo performances as well as an integral chorus component, integrating a creative use of visual and multi-media expressions – all with the trademark stamp of excellence and quality that is now associated with Amra Kojon.

All 12 shows will be covered by media representatives who will travel with the entourage, and will be aired live on a Bangla Channel. For three weeks, the world can travel with AK through live coverage, as they go door to door amid various cultures and groups of people and sing in Bangla.

Amra Kojon was the first step in demonstrating to the world that the Bengali community CAN create history, CAN make waves. With the Bangla Music World Tour, they will once more tread where no one has dared to venture before. Once more, they will leave a mark on the pages of history.

Amra Kojon is excited about launching this new venture and project is currently in its initial phase.

If you want to create history, if you want to do something that no other Bangla group has ever done before, if you want to share your love for Bangla music and the sweet language, come join us in our journey. Something of this magnitude requires all your help and support. Please contact us to learn more about the ways you can be associated as :

Performer
Local Organizer
Media Representative or
Sponsor

Anyone can participate providing they can make a honest commitment for three intense months of rehearsals and take a month's break from work or school. Participants will not have to pay anything except the cost of their own visa applications.

-- AMRA KOJON