

**WHAT'S ON**

**Group Exhibition**  
 Title: Parampara  
 Venue: Gallery Chittrak, Dhanmondi  
 Date: February 15 – 29  
 Time: 10 am – 8 pm

**Solo Exhibition**  
 Title: Parables of the Womb  
 Artist: Dilara Begum Jolly  
 Venue: Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi  
 Date: February 4 – March 28  
 Time: 2 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)

**Book Fair**  
 Title: Amar Ekushey Boi Mela  
 Organiser: Bangla Academy  
 Venue: Bangla Academy Premises  
 Date: Feb 2 - 29  
 Time: 3 pm - 8 pm; 11 am - 9 pm on weekends

**Art Exhibition**  
 Title: In/Out of the stones of our mind  
 Venue: Dwip Gallery  
 Date: February 19- 29  
 Time: 3pm to 9 pm (February 19 from 6pm to 9pm)

**Cartoon Exhibition**  
 Title: Shojonghati Rekha  
 Venue: Kala Kendra  
 Date: February 21 - March 17  
 Time: 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm



Razmoni Cinema Hall was recently closed down.



Madhumita Cinema Hall.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT**

**Shamim Ara Smriti's 'Ongona' portrays struggles of a working woman**

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Shamim Ara Smriti started her writing career with the release of three books in the Ekushey Boi Mela 2015. Her three debut books, *Je Byatha Ontorale*, *Morchikar Chhayatole* and *Fulkuri O Projapati* were praised by readers at the time. Since then, her books have been a constant in the book fairs.

This year, the author launched three books – a poetry book titled *Protibimbo*, a short story collection titled *Ekattorer Falgune*, children's *Esho Golpe Golpe Shikhi* and a novel, *Ongona* at the Ekushey Boi Mela. She has also edited children's book, *Bangbandhu Theke Bishobandhu Sheikh Mujib*.

The novel, *Ongona* portrays the struggles of Fatema, a hardworking and dedicated police officer. "This novel is about the honesty, strength, integrity and



PHOTO: COURTESY



bravery that lies in a working woman," shares the author. "I hope it helps readers to realise the true challenges of a woman's life. We should never be indifferent about the daily struggles that eventually strengthens us."

*Ongona* is Smriti's thirteenth book. "I always try to incorporate the struggles of women in my writings. Most of my books are women-centric," she adds.

Besides writing, Smriti is passionate about poetry recitation. She is also a panel editor of the magazine, *Bandhan*, which comes out thrice a month, and a member of Bangladesh Civil Service, Audit & Accounts Cadre. She plans to write more books for the forthcoming Ekushey Boi Mela as well. *Ongona*, is available at the Bishwa Shahitya Bhaban stall (pavilion 24) for BDT 300.

**Single-screen theatres going out of fashion in Bangladesh**

ZAHID AKBAR

The number of cinema theatres around the country has been decreasing sharply with time. Dating back to the nineties, when watching movies in theatres was a preferred and popular form of entertainment for most, nearly 1,500 movie theatres were active. Even a couple of years ago, about 250 single-screen halls

were in business. With the steep increase in the number of halls closing down permanently, only 70 cinema halls are actively operational at the moment.

25 districts, including Barguna, Bagerhat, Jhalokathi, Narail, Natore, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Panchagarh, Brahmanbaria, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Chuadanga, Khagrachari, Cox's Bazar, and Bandarban, do not have any active cinema halls today, according to Mia Alauddin, Advisor of Bangladesh Film Exhibitors' Association.

Different producers, distributors and film exhibitors have informed The

Daily Star that until 2000, there were 47 single-screen theatres actively running in Tangail. That number stands at merely 10 today. Similarly, in Jashore and Sirajganj, the number of theatres has gone down from 21 to 4 and 31 to 5, respectively.

The scenario is no different in Dhaka, as cinema complexes Gulistan, Naz, Moon, Mukul, Rupmahal in Sadarghat, Shabistan in Armanitola, Diana in Postogola, and Purnima in Kawran Bazar, along with Razmoni and Razia in Kakrail have closed down over the past years. While some blame the lack of good productions as the reason behind the declining number of cinema halls, others think that good movies strive to make an impact with lesser number of screening platforms.

Furthermore, the cinema theatres

which are active at the moment, are not in very good shape. "With the revenue generated from only a couple of blockbuster hits a year, it is almost impossible to cope with our maintenance expenses," asserts Iftekhar Uddin Naushad, President of Bangladesh Motion Picture Exhibitor Association, and owner of Modhumita. "With this being the case, movie halls will soon go extinct in the country."

Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar, President of Bangladesh Film Directors' Association also addressed the issue. "As the owners cannot profit from movie theatres, the halls are being demolished and replaced with supermarkets. However, we tend to forget — how will we be able to enjoy movies without cinema halls?" he laments.



SHARMIN JOYA

After the poster, teaser and songs of the film *Unoponchash Batash*, its official trailer, which was recently released, is garnering a lot of attention online. The much-anticipated project is Masud Hasan Ujjal's directorial debut in films, featuring the new pair of Sharlin Farzana and Imtiaz Barshon in the lead roles. The trailer suggests that the movie is a suspense-filled romantic story, with elements of science fiction. "I don't want to categorise the film into any specific genre," says Ujjal, who is a well-known television director. "The story is about passionate individuals pursuing their aims in life." According to the director, a country's

architecture has an impact on the bonds of people living in a location. *Unoponchash Batash* reflects the commitments of relationships, unconditional connections between human beings, and social responsibilities as well. Ujjal handled the story, screenplay, music and art direction of the film.

Ujjal further complimented Sharlin and Barshon for their dedication towards this project. "Both of them did a splendid job. We spent about five months grooming them, and I am absolutely satisfied with the way they have performed in *Unoponchash Batash*, as Ayon and Nira," he concludes.

*Unoponchash Batash*, produced by Red October Films, is expected to hit theatres nationwide on March 13.

**Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo's Kata Kuti A workshop on modern-day collage making**

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

'Kata Kuti', a daylong collage workshop by Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo, was held recently at Studio 6/6. It focused on modern-day collage making with simple manual and digital tools and techniques.

A collage is a visual representation of an assembly of different forms, materials and sources, resulting into whole new structures. The waste materials or the unnecessary objects in our homes can easily be turned into art by utilising various collage techniques. *Kata Kuti* was an introduction to creating an assemblage of different forms of visuals, materials and collected objects.

Apurbo took a peek into the history and practices of collage making while the participants actively made different types of collages on their ideas. The participants

were encouraged to express their own thoughts and ideas into objects of different dimensions. Mono print, digital collage and 3D collage were some of the techniques taught in the workshop.

Apurbo aims to teach people the skills and techniques he learned by experimenting on his own, as there are not enough creative art spaces in the country. The workshop was not just for the participants, as it was also a learning process for the artist himself. "They became immensely imaginative in their approaches as the workshop went on, going out of the studio to collect different objects at one point. The participants also experimented with digital and 3D collage-making, among other things. Their enthusiasm was incredible," explained Apurbo.

Apurbo is a journalist and a self-taught artist. He is the founder and curator of *Ghartera* – an ever emerging and transmuting platform for the arts. He also co-founded Bangladeshi Photographers (BP) in 2005 and is an Art Think South Asia fellow for 2019-2020.



A collage by Sabin Rahman, one of the participants. PHOTO: MONON MUNTAKA

**IPDC's 'Subodh' helps you buy books with an interest-free loan**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

IPDC Finance Ltd has introduced the first ever interest-free book loan titled *Subodh*, at Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2020. The initiative aims to mitigate the hindrance that book-lovers might financially have, during this month.

Under the theme, *Notun Boi-er Chran-e, Subodh Jaguk Pran-e*, IPDC launched the product at Bangla Academy premises on February 10.

One can avail a loan of up to BDT 3,000 and pay back via three installments. IPDC Managing Director and CEO Mominul Islam, prominent musician Partha Barua, Arif R Hossain, among others, were present at the launching ceremony.

The facility can be enjoyed during the book fair, until the end of this month. To avail the loan, one will need National ID card and bKash app only. All



PHOTO: STAR

information and help-related services are available at the IPDC Subodh stall (no 127), at the fair premises. Loans can be taken instantly from the booth.

Jannatul Islam Tonni, brand promoter, IPDC, mentioned, "We are providing the loan in three categories – upto BDT 1500 for students, upto BDT 2000 for businessmen, and BDT 3000 for service holders."

