

WHAT'S ON

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

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

Book Fair
Title: Amar Ekushey Boli 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 (and out of) the stones of our minds
Venue: Dwpip 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



PHOTO: STAR

“I want to keep working for as long as I can” – Mamunur Rashid

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Ekushey Padak and National Award winning actor, director and playwright Mamunur Rashid spearheads Aranyak Natyadal, one of the most popular theatre companies in Bangladesh. He has also served as the chairman for Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation twice. We sat down for a chat with the thespian, who celebrates his birthday today.

How do you feel on the occasion of your birthday?

Since my birthday only comes on leap years, it is something that I eagerly wait for. It is particularly a happy day for me.

Could you tell us a little about the celebrations that Aranyak Natyadal is hosting for your birthday?

Aranyak Natyadal has arranged a six-day celebration, from February 27 to March 3 at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Among other things, six of my plays will be staged throughout the event, which I am really excited about. We are happy that Samik Bandyopadhyay from India will be attending the programme.

Aranyak Natyadal is premiering their latest play at the event. What can you tell us about that?

The new play, *Kohe Facebook*, is Aranyak Natyadal's 62nd production. I have written and directed it. Working on this project was quite a challenge, but it has been a while since we have come up with a new play on the stage, so, we are all looking forward to the experience. *Kohe Facebook* will be staged at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy today.

What are your comments on the current state of the theatre arena of Bangladesh?

The sad fact is that artistic and cultural practices are not fully encouraged in Bangladesh – but the situation is much more positive in other parts of the world. However, if we overcome certain barriers, the theatre culture in our country will flourish.

What are your biggest aspirations as an artiste?

I feel that my best is yet to come. I think I still have not hit any milestones in my career. I am incredibly thankful to people for all their love and support over the years, but as an artiste, I still have a lot to accomplish. I want to keep working for as long as I can.

International Art Fest 2020 Nilphamari concludes today

ZAHANGIR ALOM writes from Nilsagor, Nilphamari

Nilphamari's Nilsagor offers an idyllic ambience covered with Siberian birds and greenery for the 350 artists from five countries, who are participating in the International Art Festival 2020 Nilphamari, which concludes today.

Eminent artists Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam, Mohammad Eunus, Shishir Bhattacharjee, Afzal Hossain, Sheikh Afzal Hossain, Ahmed Shamsuddoha, Jamal Ahmed, Tarun Ghosh, Mohammad Iqbal, Mustapha Khalid Palash and others, are working on acrylic paintings at the event. Promising artist Dinar Sultana Putul, the co-curator of the Contemporary Art Project of the festival, has made an earthen wall, depicting lines of traditional floral forms and pastel colours. Her installation is at the entrance of the venue. Watching Rafiqun Nabi's bold brushstrokes and aesthetic compositions, Monirul Islam's play with vast spaces, Mohammad Eunus' venture into poetic imagery, Shishir Bhattacharjee's lyrical lines on vibrant canvas, Ahmed Shamsuddoha's texture-based green artworks, Mustapha Khalid Palash's kaleidoscopic visions and geometric forms is a treat for anyone



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

who enjoys art.

Among the foreign artists, Koshal Kumar Hamal (Nepal) is working on feminine visages. Amazing texture and colour balance are two striking features of his artworks. The artist duo Tabassum and Yusuf are portraying abstract images

with acrylic colours and pen dots.

US-based artist Khurshid Alam Saleem is portraying abstract paintings at the international art camp.

Emerging artist from the art educational institutes of Bangladesh are collaborating with hundreds of

local school students. They are painting multifarious themes on canvas. The contemporary artists have already created their respective art projects representing different socio-political issues.

A seminar, 'Bangladesh-e Adhunik Charushilpa, Dwidha O Deshprem-e Galpo' with a discussion and Q/A session was held at the auditorium of Nilphamari Museum as part of the festival. Shawon Akand presented the keynote, while Professor Nisar Hossain, Dean, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka, was a discussant.

Nupur Khanam Duli is coordinating and presenting cultural performances by the local and participating artists, who have kept the venue vibrant with songs, dances, recitations and other activities. The 55 acres land of Nilsagor, together with its adjacent area, is teemed with different artistic activities. This year, the festival is organised under the tagline, 'Nature is Life, Art for brighter life'.

The Art Festival 2020 Nilphamari Organising Committee, in association with Vision 2021, Nilphamari and Art Bangla, Dhaka, deserves accolades for organising and making the festival a grand success.

Shykh Seraj and Debapriya Bhattacharya in a special episode of 'Hridoye Mati O Manush'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

2020 marks 17 years since the agricultural documentary show *Hridoye Mati O Manush*, first aired on Channel i. The show is directed and hosted by noted media personality and agriculture development activist Shykh Seraj. On the occasion, Debapriya Bhattacharya, eminent economist and public policy analyst, will make an appearance on the programme to engage in a discussion

with Shykh Seraj about the show's inception and influences.

Shykh Seraj has played a pivotal role in sparking the young population's interest in farming over the course of his popular show. He brought many unheard tales of our farmers into the limelight and reached an unparalleled height of brilliance in agricultural journalism.

The special episode, featuring Shykh Seraj and Debapriya Bhattacharya, will air tonight at 9:40 pm on Channel i.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Droho Dah Swapner Natya Ayojon Aranyak Natyadal begins celebrations for Mamunur Rashid's birthday

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Noted actor, director and playwright Mamunur Rashid celebrates his birthday today. Incidentally, his birthday comes only on leap years, as it falls on February 29. On this special occasion, Aranyak Natyadal has organised the six-day programme, *Droho Dah Swapner Natya Ayojon*, which commenced on February 28 at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and film critic Samik Bandyopadhyay attended the inaugural ceremony as guests, along with other prominent theatre personalities.

The inaugural day began with the lighting of candles. Noted artistes Bulbul Islam, Anima Roy and Sharmin Sathi Islam sang some of Mamunur



(From left) Hayat Mahmud, Samik Bandyopadhyay, Mamunur Rashid and Rashid Khan Menon at the inaugural ceremony.

PHOTO: PIYAS BISWA

Rashid's favourite songs. Bulbul Islam talked about his close friendship with Mamunur Rashid. The musical soiree concluded with an instrumental piece by Ustad Shahdat Hossain Khan on sarod.

The six-day programme will also feature discussions, dance recitals, seminars and plays. Aranyak Natyadal is set to stage their popular productions *Rarang* and *Sangkranti* during the festival. The group will also premiere their play, *Kohe Facebook*.

Young Star Theatre, Parbatipur and Bangla Theatre will also participate at the festival, while Samik Bandyopadhyay, Syed Manzoorul Islam, Ramendu Majumdar, Nasiruddin Yousuff and others will attend different sessions.

In fond memory of Muhammad Jahangir

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Prominent cultural activist, journalist and media personality, Muhammad Jahangir breathed his last at the age of 68, on July 10, 2019, after an uphill battle with cancer for years. He was the executive director of Centre for Development Communication and the coordinator of Nriyanchal.

His son Apurba Jahangir took the initiative to publish the memoir, *Oporajeyo Muhammad Jahangir*, in remembrance of his father. To that end, he has compiled quotes from Muhammad Jahangir's co-workers, friends and loved ones.

Eminent personalities of the country, including Dr Muhammad Yunus, Dr Anisuzzaman, Mustafa Monwar, Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Ahmed Rafiq, Sadi Mohammad, Sarah Kobori, Ramendu Majumdar, and Ataur Rahman shared their memories with Muhammad Jahangir in the book.

Apurba believes that his father still lives through his works. In the book's preface, Apurba shares that the book will help people know his father and his philosophies in a thorough way.

A discussion session on *Oporajeyo Muhammad Jahangir*, organised by Nriyanchal, will take place at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro today at 7pm. Noted dancers Shamim Ara Nipa and Shibli Mohammad will host the event.



PHOTO: MONON MUNTAKA

Medha Amio Pari: Providing spaces for the youth in creative economy

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Medha is a creative initiative and non-profit organisation, founded by fashion designer Emdad Hoque. He is currently the Vice-President of Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh. He has also worked for a long time with the British Council in their Creative Economy programme. Recently, a creative skill development session, *Medha Amio Pari*, was held at Shanta Sky Mark, Gulshan. It was the opening ceremony of Medha's new initiative, where young people were given a space to share their stories and learn about working opportunities in the field of creative economy.

Creative economy is constructed on the use of one's innovative imagination to increase the value of an idea. Keeping that in mind, Medha

aims to encourage the youth to explore their talents and endeavours in creativity. "Every individual has particular forms of creativity instilled in them," shares Emdad, who plans to host creative skill development workshops for teenagers on a regular basis. "If you are good at something, you can make that your profession."

In the short time since its inception, Medha has successfully attracted a good number of volunteers who are willing to help the youth refine their creative knowledge. "I have received good responses from different educational organisations, as well" says the founder.

A press conference of Medha will be held in Chittagong in the first week of April. More information on the conference will be announced soon.

EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT

Jannatun Nayeem Prity's 'Tala Bhangar Pala' sheds light on social cruelties

SHARMIN JOYA

Jannatun Nayeem Prity has earned appreciation at quite a young age for her bold writings. She received awards from UNICEF in 2014 and the Joy Bangla award in 2015 for her book on the Liberation War. *Tala Bhangar Pala*, her ninth publication, is a collection of 12 stories about the sufferings, violence and despair in our society. "I had to conduct thorough research before writing this book," shares the author. "I met few victims of rape, as my stories involve the horrifying experiences of molestation," says Prity. "These victims are not just females or children. They encompass any individual who has faced oppression, including men who were molested or raped."

The 12 stories represent different times and are written in various forms, such as satire and character experiences, including tales of war children, Birangona (war heroines) and freedom fighters, whom Prity interviewed before starting the book. "I am a fan of iconic writers like Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque and Gabriel Garcia Márquez. They inspire me," shares Prity.

The story, *Tala Bhangar Pala*, which is named after the book, is based on victims

the concrete case studies of of rape. "Gorto is one of the stories in *Tala Bhangar Pala* that is well-liked," says the author. "It is a story of a physically challenged person, who is blind and deaf and falls into the trap of a molester." The story will be translated in Spanish by Anisuzzaman. One of the most talked about stories of the author in this book is *Ekti Moyna Todonter Surothaal*.

Tala Bhangar Pala is published by Pendulum and available in stall 171 at a discounted price of BDT 135, at the Ekushey Boli Mela 2020.

