



Blissful Brindaban (Acrylic on canvas)



Raag Shyam Kalyan (Acrylic on canvas)



Esteemed guests at the opening ceremony.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Shamsul Alam Belal on the history of South Asia

SHARMIN JOYA

Shamsul Alam Belal, a senior journalist of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), is also a writer and actor. His fifth book, *South Asia- Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* documents the historical aspects of the region with chapters from *Indus Valley and the Genesis of South Asian Civilization to Quest for Economic Integration in South Asia*. The book is primarily divided into three parts that consists of the history of South Asia, the present condition and prospective future of the province. "Before anyone starts writing a historical book, it needs to be pursued from all research avenues and viewed from the perspective of a non-historian," says Belal, who will be retiring soon from journalism.

He adds that it takes a lot of research to write a book on history. "Despite the modern technological advances, not much has changed in this regard," says the author. "Historians today still use documents, books, essays and the like to record their findings." It took the author two years to complete the book.

Besides *South Asia- Yesterday Today and Tomorrow*, the other four books of the author are *The Silver Line In My Memory* (2013), a poetry book containing 150 poems, *United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, Israel, India and the Muslim world*, a collection of 65 selected articles written on various world issues (2015), *Bangladesh-From Ancient Age to Modern Era*, a background of how Bangladesh emerged as an independent country by coming across so many ups and downs over the decades and eras (2016) and *Jaipur Pitar Somadhite O Onyanyo Kobita*, a book of 100 Bangla poems, (2017).

The book, *South Asia- Yesterday Today and Tomorrow*, published by Dibyaproskash, came out in the market in January this year. It can be collected from Pathak Shamabesh.



SERENADING SOUL

Unfolding narratives of nature

PRYANKA CHOWDHURY

Artist and journalist Zahangir Alom enjoys the brilliant colours of nature. Although his studio practice has been vastly with oriental art, his canvases often speak different languages. From Pagan symbolism to primordial cultures of Bengal, the essence of unification with the divine are vividly present in the tints of his canvases. Professor Nisar Hossain, Dean, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka, offers the most precise review of Alom's work. "Often the students who are trained in an academy are afraid of taking risks. That fear is absent in Alom's brush strokes," he said.

Alom's second solo exhibition,



Dazzling Brahmaputra (Watercolour)



Artworks on exhibit at the event.

Serenading Soul, was recently inaugurated at Dhaka Gallery. Prominent artist Monirul Islam was the chief guest. Eminent artist Professor Mohammad Eunos, sculptor Hamiduzzaman Khan, Professor Nisar Hossain, Dean, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka, Founder of Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation, Durjoy Rahman, President of Samdani Art Foundation, Nadia Samdani and Co-Founder and Trustee of the Samdani Art Foundation, Rajeeb Samdani were also present.

The predominance of *ragas* and *Gaudiya Nritya* concepts results from Alom's comprehension of classical music and dance. *Gaudiya Nritya*, is one of the ancient forms of dance that has its roots in Bengal. It is

inspired by the Vaishnavism, which tells the tale of *Jiva-atma*, or the individual soul is the living entity and *Param-Atma* refers to the Supreme depicted by Radha and Krishna. Alom, intrigued by the mythological concepts of Bengal, narrates his interpretation with colour washed in *Madhur Rasa*.

Amid his robust acrylic and watercolour paintings, an etching work, titled *Homage to Kalidas Karmakar*, is sure to grab attention. Alom shares anecdotes behind including this standalone etching work in his exhibition. "Kalida challenged me during a workshop. He said he would teach me the techniques of etching in a couple of hours," explains Alom. "He then took

a marker and drew this fish and asked me to work on it. If Kalida was here today, I believe he would have been happy to see the outcome." The trio of Alom, Amit Nandi and their guru Malay Bala from Oriental Painting Studio is also known for their compassion for art.

A trip to Sandakphu inspired Alom immensely. The light that fell through the gaps between leaves, the sound of the flowing streams and the slopes of the mountains at Sandakphu reminded him of the *ragas* that filled the air of his practice studio. The abstract works fused with the rhythms and movements of classical music and his memories justifies the title of the exhibition being *Serenading Soul*. Alom dedicates his exhibition to his mother Jahanara Begum.

The collaborative and interactive performance, *Raag Rang*, with participation from renowned vocalist Alope Kumar Sen, instrumentalists Firoz Khan on sitar, Yousuf Khan on sarod, and Sabuj Ahmed on tabla, along with five celebrated dance artistes, Snata Shahrin (Kathak), Rachel Priyanka Perris (Gaudiya), Sudeshna Swayamprabha (Manipuri), Arthy Ahmed (Bharatanatyam) and Alka Das Pranti (Odishi) was to take place at the exhibition on March 20. However, owing to concerns over the rapidly spreading coronavirus, the soiree has been shifted to March 26 for the time being. Architect Mustapha Khalid Palash, Founder of Dhaka Gallery, announced it at the event.

BANGLADESH BANDS GEN NEXT

Folk Revolution

Bangladesh Bands Gen Next is a project aimed to promote young and upcoming bands by providing them with a unique platform to express their talents. The programme has selected 26 young bands from Chattogram for its first run.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Comprising of Shohag, Abbas, Jony, Rajib and Chopol, Folk Revolution is an alternative rock band, who dream of rocking the stage all around the country one day. Their debut track, *Atta*, is a treat

to music lovers. The programme is helmed by advertising agency Creato, and produced by 49 Blue. The programme is sponsored by Marks Full Cream Milk Powder. *Atta* is available on Marks' YouTube channel.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Release of 'Bishwo Shundori' postponed

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

As the threat of coronavirus continues to worry the world, the release of a number of films were postponed both at home and abroad. The latest film to join that list is TV director Chayanika Chowdhury's debut film, 'Bishwo Shundori', which was set to hit theatres on March 27.

Starring Siam Ahmed and Pori Moni among others, it is written by Rumman Rashid Khan, produced by Sun Motion Pictures Limited and distributed by Jaaz Multimedia. The makers of the film took this decision in solidarity with their partners, exhibitors, distributors and audiences, as multiplexes and single-screen theatres around the country have shut down. The new release date of the film will be announced soon.