

CULTURAL FEAST

Painting Exhibition

Mainstream Art



Artist: Proshantokumar Adhikari. Date: November 01-10, from 10am to 9pm. Venue: Zainul Gallery



Neel: Indigo Exhibition

Organiser: Aranya & Source (MCC). Venue: Aranya, 60 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani. Time: October 22-November 15. The event features daily demonstrations of dyeing and printing with indigo as well as information on its cultivation and extraction.

Islamic Calligraphy & Italian Reproduction Art

Venue: Art & Soul Gallery, Road 36.



House 16, Gulshan. Time: October 29-November 20, from 12pm to 4pm, 7pm to 9pm.

Attar: The fading fragrance

AFSAR AHMED

It is the essence of a bygone era that arises from the narrow lanes and narrower by-lanes. Preserved in these streets once frequented by the royalty is the fragrance of attar—the perfumes of kings and queens, which hark back to the fragrant era of tammadun and tehzeeb.

Attar—the Urdu transcript of which means 'divine fragrance' is originally derived from the Arabic word Itr, meaning perfume. The celestial cologne has, so long, maintained its antiquated existence in the Nawabi era of Dhaka, although the availability is now restricted only to a handful of shops in the Old City precincts and near the Baitul Mokarram Mosque.

According to the Holy Quran, Muslims cannot use any other perfumes but attar because of the alcoholic content in most of them, which is a religious prohibition. And that's why there are still people who go for the exotic scent during religious occasions like Eid and Jummaab.

What distinguishes attars from western perfumes is that they are oil-based and are made totally from organic materials. Old texts mention that the floral group, primarily used for attar manufacture, was rose, beli, jasmine, champa, molesari and tuberose along with roots like ginger and others. Sandal, cinnamon and aloe bark were also used. Heavy odours like musk and myrrh were also used with khus.

The traditional technique of attar-making has remained unchanged since the time of the Mughals. The process is slow, labour intensive and veiled in secrecy. There is a haze of fragrant



Stacks of various kinds of attar bottles ready for sales on the eve of Eid

mystery that surrounds almost every aspect of attar making. 'It is a craft that has a rich history and mythology of its own,' says Abbasuddin, an aged attar seller near Baitul Mokarram, on the apocryphal story of Mughal Queen Noor Jehan discovering the exotic Rose Attar. The story goes that Noor Jehan went for a morning bath and was delighted with the fragrance of the oily layer on the water which had been left overnight to keep it cool. When distilled, it turned out to be her favourite rose perfume.

There are hundreds of varieties of attar around the city. The most expensive brand Havoc comes from France and costs Tk. 30,000 per ounce. Kasturi, a musk of the deer navel, costs Tk. 800 per ounce while the Magnet costs Tk. 600 per ounce. However, the most popular one is the Swiss-made Jannat-ul-Ferdous—selling at Tk. 150 per vial of 10 grams.

There are a lot more in the cheaper range, for the poor and middle class consumers. Beli, Kacha Beli, Henna, Mushkamber, Vicky, Gul-e-Laila, Darbar range from Tk. 10 to Tk. 60 per ounce.

The imported perfume brands have overrun us and our business, weaning away our clientele,' laments Jamil Ahmed, who runs Kannauj Perfumery Attar House—one of the oldest and largest attar outlets in the city at Mitford Road. Bottled in attractive cut glasses of various shapes and sizes known as drums or shishis, a dash of musk is added to the attar to give it an international touch, Jamil informs. He rues the tendency of the younger generation to denigrate attar as outdated. 'It's a pity that the youth do not take pride in their heritage and history anymore,' he says.

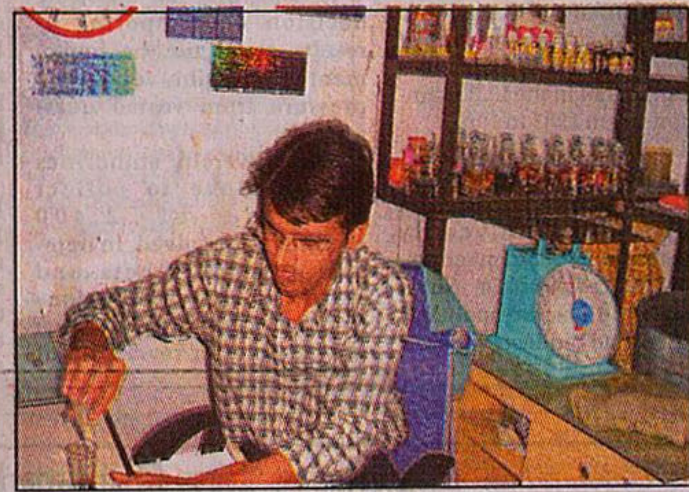
Recalling the erstwhile flourishing attar market, Jamil who is the third generation to inherit the business started by his ancestors, says, 'Previously, we used to have at least 100 people coming and checking out our ranges of exotic and exquisite perfumes. Today,

however, we have hardly a dozen people even though prices have been drastically reduced.'

There is a polarity of opinion about attar. Says North South University student Aber, 'Who would like to be labelled as out-fashioned by using attar these days? I would rather use an expensive Hugo Boss or a moderately priced Axe to be in tune with the times.' In total contrast, counters Mamun, 'I am seriously contemplating to switch over to attar from the usual deodorants and perfumes.'

The fact is that the enticing fragrance of yesteryears is slowly but surely being pushed into oblivion. 'The loss will mean parting with our own heritage. What is more distressing is that nothing can be done to undo the decline in attar's popularity,' says Hazi Ibrahim Khan, an attar lover.

Today as Bangladesh finds its new identity in the twenty-first century, its urban society is now much more in touch with foreign products and foreign lifestyles. Buying habits are changing. Western perfumes are now freely available over the counter. The traditional attar is suddenly an endangered species except on special days like Eid and Jummaab.



A young attar-specialist testing the magic potion

CHANNEL CLICK

Eid fiesta on Channel i

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Channel i's six-day long celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr feature drama Ektara Dotara. Written and directed by Rezanur Rahman, the drama will be telecast at 9:35pm on the day before Eid. Here is a highlight on the drama:

The story of Ektara Dotara is based on the greed of people and their conflicts. Although the theme is a serious one, the play itself is a comedy featuring Tania

Ahmed, Ahmed Rubel, Selim Mahubb, Sirajul Islam, Muhammad Bari, Parvin Mahbuba, Ashraf Kabir and others. Interestingly, to give a convincing portrayal, popular actor Selim Mahubb has actually shaved his head.

Synopsis: A group of skinhead people suddenly appear in a traditional village. They take shelter in a house where everybody finds out that the leader of the group, Bulbul, is in reality a rich guy who is also very kind to common people. But he has a quirk: he cannot stand people with long hair. He interviews people for hours and if satisfied he shaves the head with the permission of that person. Meanwhile, Ali and Arthokari, two mysterious characters, manage to get involved with the group and weird things start to happen.



Performers of the play Ektara Dotara

Afsar Ahmed: A trend setter in theatre

ERSHAD KAMOL

Theatre personalities all over the world are introducing a variety of experimental theatre forms. In Bangladesh, Dr Afsar Ahmed along with his colleagues has successfully developed a new form—neo-ethnic theatre—in the theatre lab of the Department of Drama and Dramatics at Jahangirnagar University.

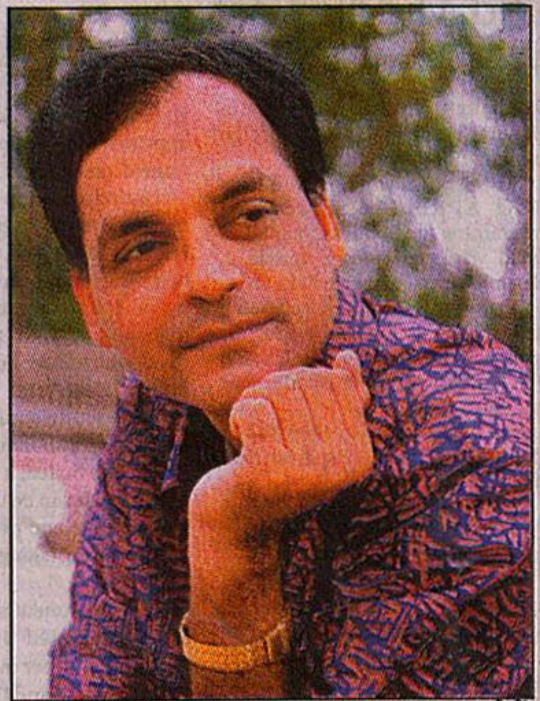
Afsar says, 'We have been practising neo-ethnic theatre in the theatre lab in the department of Drama and Dramatics for 12 years. A few theatrical groups have also staged neo-ethnic theatre in mainstream theatre in Dhaka based on our concept.'

What is neo-ethnic theatre? Afsar says, 'In the early 1990s, I did some ethnographic research on the ethnic communities in our country such as Marma, Chakma, Hajong and others. At that time I found that the ethnic people have unique myths and fables, which are aesthetically very rich. Some of these performing art forms are in classical mode. However, sometimes even the ethnic people in the urban areas do not stage these art forms. We call these performing art forms as ethnic theatre. Likewise, neo-ethnic theatre is based on the shape of the ethnic theatre in our theatre laboratory.'

Afsar has so far written and directed 14 neo-ethnic plays based on the ethnic theatre of Marma, Chakma, Garo and Hajong communities. These have been staged by the students of the drama department of Jahangirnagar University.

'In my work, I have sometimes created parallel myths to the original ones. Keeping the structure of the art forms unchanged, I have blended modern concepts for better expression,' Afsar adds.

Afsar is now making a documentary serial for ATN Bangla on the decaying cultural heritage of the country.



Dr Afsar Ahmed

Talking about this latest effort Afsar says, 'The documentary shows vignettes of our decaying culture such as our rural sports, rural marriage, folk songs, performing arts, heritage and archeological monuments.'

Bono, McCartney join Band Aid 20 lineup

BILLBOARD, London

Paul McCartney, U2 frontman Bono, Robbie Williams and Dido are among the performers lined up for the new recording of the all-star 'Band Aid' charity single Do They Know It's Christmas.

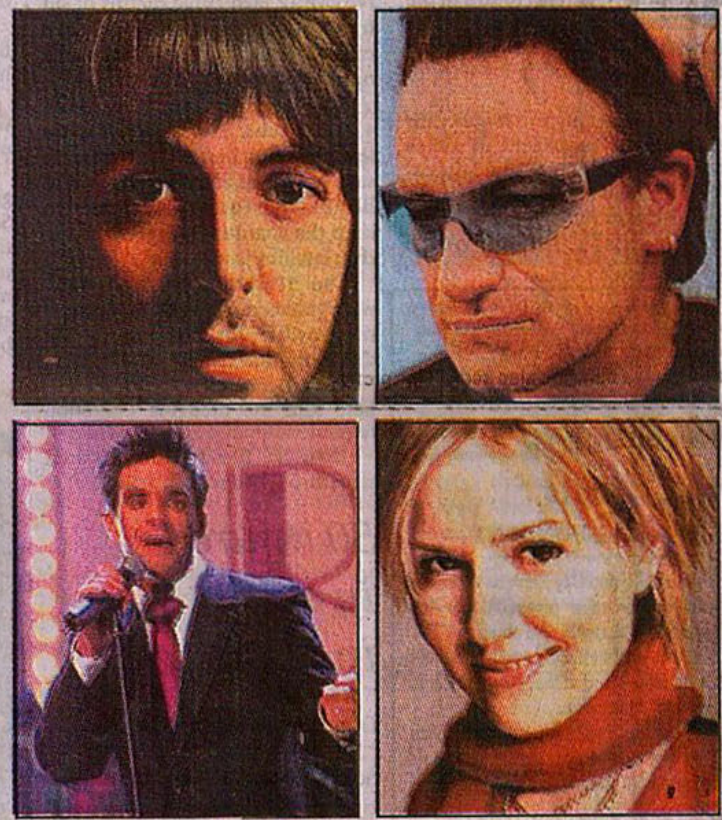
The tune, which will be credited to 'Band Aid 20' in acknowledgement of the anniversary of the 1984 release, will be issued on November 29 in the UK on Mercury/Universal.

Others on board include Snow Patrol and Natasha Bedingfield. McCartney will play bass on the track and Bono will reprise one of the most famous lines in the original lyric: 'Well tonight, thank God it's them instead of you.'

McCartney, Williams and Dido are understood to be recording their parts separately from the November 14 session at London's Air Studios; Williams recorded the whole track in Los Angeles earlier.

British artist Damien Hirst will design the sleeve artwork for the release, which will raise money for the Band Aid Trust's famine relief in Africa, specifically in the blighted Darfur region of Sudan.

Travis' Fran Healy will play guitar on the recording. 'It's dead exciting,' he told Billboard.com. 'When it was first recorded, I was 11 and I went everywhere looking for it and I couldn't find it, and now we're going to do the follow-up to it. It's going to be great, McCartney's doing it, Bono's going to sing his own line, and we're going to help out with some music, with Nigel (Godrich, who'll produce the single). I really wanted to get



(Clockwise from top left) Paul McCartney, Bono, Dido and Robbie Williams

Franz Ferdinand involved in it—I think they're going to do it.'

'Midge did a thumbnail sketch of the original with new music on it,' Healy continued. 'He's got the Dark-ness doing the guitars at the end, and he's changed the arrangement of it.

He shipped that over to LA where Nigel was working with McCartney...What I will say is you've got to buy the record because it's the only record that's going to save lives this side of Christmas, and you can't ask for more than that.'

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



The Abyss On Star Movies at 9:05pm Genre: Action/Adventure/Sci-Fi/Thriller/Drama Cast: Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio



Vim Monohar Iftar On Channel i at 5:45pm Cookery Show Hosted by Keka Ferdousy

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTB News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.

News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.

News (English) at 3:00 pm, 16:00 pm. Late Night News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00 am, 7:15 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30, 12:15 am. Telecast of BTB News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm. Telecast of BTB News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ntv News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 8:15 pm, 9:30 pm. News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm. Telecast of BTB News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

TARA BANGLA News-headlines (Bangla) at 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm. Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm. Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC WORLD Every hour on the hour

CHANNEL-i

- 09:45 Tiliyo Matra
10:45 Na Bola Kotla
12:00 Sa Re Ga Ma
12:30 AJ Dupurey O Citycell
01:00 Dekhar Gan Shonar Gan
01:30 Bangla Film: Man Shamman (Alamgir, Shabana)
04:10 Sharif Melamina
04:50 Sangeetmala
05:45 Ramadani Mobarok Kalela
05:45 Vim Monohar Iftar
06:00 Music Plus
06:30 Drama Serial: Jibon Shaykata
07:50 Drama Serial: Dr. Mahataber Swapno
08:25 Drama Serial: Boyosh Jakhon Ekush
09:35 Hridoyo Mafi O Manush
10:00 Drama Serial: Amader Chhobi

ATN BANGLA

- 10:30 Anandishree
11:05 Drama Serial: Amon Jodi hoto
11:50 Mega Serial: Mohona
12:25 Musical Programme
13:05 Dikhle Noyon Mella
01:35 CMV Bajna
02:30 School Beta
03:10 Drama Serial: Shirsho Bindu
03:45 Uro Cola Saaf Rang Mobarok Ho Mahe Ramadan
06:20 Tom and Jerry
08:00 Drama Serial: Lodia
08:30 Drama Serial: The New Shabji Opera
09:00 Drama Serial: Lal Neel Beguni
09:30 Drama Serial: Ek

Janome

- Eid Premiere
08:00 Aajker Shakal
08:30 Ranger Manush
09:20 Amra Akhkon Unish Kuri
10:05 Sheptaher Khabor
10:05 Dhakar Cinema
10:20 Ranger Manush
10:35 Pepsi Music Express
10:40 Drama: Kharai
10:45 Hridoyo Ramadan
10:55 Ilisher El Diney
11:00 Islam Shikhar Ashor
11:05 Shubho Shondhya
11:10 Shangskriti El Shoptaho
11:15 Drama Serial: Adokha Bhuban
11:25 Dindaran
10:15 Blue Crush
12:30 Carnival 05: Babylon Backdraft
1:30 The Bourne Identity
1:45 HBO Sneak Peek: XXX
7:15 My Best Friend's Wedding
9:30 The Glass House
11:45 Doppelganger

HBO

- 12:30 Kurukshetra
4:00 Main Hoon Na... Shah Rukh Khan
5:00 Desh Premi
8:30 Winners & Sinners
11:00 Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Carega
11:00 No Way Out
12:50 Death Becomes Her
2:30 The Grid Marathon
7:00 The Mummy
9:05 The Abyss
12:00 No Way Out

STAR GOLD

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STAR MOVIES

- 11:00 No Way Out
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STAR WORLD

- 1:30 The Kids From Room 402
2:00 Roborach

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

- 1:30 Riddles Of The Dead

STAR PLUS

- 1:00 Star Bestsellers
2:05 Hit Filmel Hit Sangeel
2:30 Mirch Masala
3:00 Musafir Hoon Yaaron
3:25 Film Topper - 301 Series
3:30 Ek Duuje Ke Liye
6:30 Meri Mrs Chanchala
7:30 Pya Bina
8:00 Pardey Ke Peechey
8:30 Dhoom Machaley Diwali Special
12:00 Yatra
2:30 Monster Farm
3:00 Inspector Gadget
3:30 The Kumars At No.42
4:00 Cops
4:30 Stupid Behavior Caught On Tape
5:00 When Hidden Cameras Attack
5:30 Britannia India's Child Genius
6:30 The X Files
7:30 Nash Bridges
8:30 Tia Wrestling
9:30 Multan X
10:30 Coupling
11:00 The Office
2:30 \$100 Taxi Ride
3:00 Game For It
3:30 National Geographic Special
4:30 Science Times
5:30 Wildlife Detectives
6:00 Wild Orphans
6:30 \$100 Taxi Ride
7:00 Game For It
7:30 Science Times
8:30 Air Crash Investigation
9:30 Nature's Fury
10:30 From The Heart
11:00 From The Heart
11:30 Innovation
2:30 The Crocodile Hunter
2:30 Animals A-Z Enter The Mantis
3:00 Animals A-Z Otters
3:00 Piranhas
3:30 Life Of Birds, The Fishing For A Living
4:30 On The Edge Mad Mike And Flatland Finals (R)
5:30 The most Extreme The Stunts
5:30 Pel Star 1 Episode 6
6:30 The Crocodile Hunter
7:30 Animals A-Z Warhogs: Hoggling The Limelight
8:00 Life Of Birds, The Signals And Songs
9:30 Wildlife Specials
10:30 Wild Encounters
11:30 Cousins First Primates
1:30 The Crocodile Hunter
2:30 Animals A-Z Enter The Mantis
3:00 Piranhas
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8:00 Life Of Birds, The Signals And Songs
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10:30 Wild Encounters
11:30 Cousins First Primates
6:00 English Premier Football League
6:00 Tottenham Hotspur Vs Charlton Athletic (S)
6:00 Nba Inside Stuff (R)
6:30 Tennis Masters Series
6:30 Paris France Quarterfinal #1(S)
8:00 Asian Tour Magazine Show Asian Tour Weekly 2004 (T)
8:30 Gillette World Sports Special Gilette World Sport 2004 (T)
8:54 English Premier Football League English Premier Football League 2004/05 Liverpool England Liverpool Vs Birmingham City (L)
11:00 English Premier Football League English Premier Football League 2004/05 London England Tottenham Hotspur Vs Charlton Athletic (S)
8:00 Asia Golf Travel Batam Indonesia (R)
8:30 Football Crazy (R)
9:30 Extreme Programming Sports Mania (R)
10:30 Coloured Lives
11:30 Proseors: The Lone Witness
12:00 World Of Rugby Irb
12:00 World Of Rugby (T)
12:00 English Premier League Preview (R)
11:30 Locker Room Football
12:00 Champions League Extra Uefa Champions League Extra Group Phase 1 Matchweek 4(T)
2:00 Champions League Extra Uefa Champions League Extra Group Phase 1 Matchweek 4(T)
3:00 Nba Action (R)
3:30 Nba Basketball Memphis Tn Usa Houston Rockets Vs Memphis Grizzlies (R)
6:00 Sportscenter
6:05 Epl Saturday Premier-ship Saturday (L)
8:00 WWE Velocity
9:00 Speed: Asia Zone
9:30 Karding Combatoe
9:30 Winning Post
10:00 Trans World Sports
11:00 Italian Serie A Inter Milan V Lazio
1:00 Legends: Shane Warne
2:00 Italian Serie A- Highlights
3:00 ATP Tennis: Ep 1
3:30 ICC Cricket World
4:30 Sportswatch
4:30 Winning Post
5:00 Gamer TV
5:30 WWE: Experience
6:30 Speed: Asia Zone
7:00 Karding Combatoe
7:00 Winning Post
7:30 Gillette World Sport
8:00 Indianas Tour of Pak: 1st ODI H/Ls
10:00 ICC Cricket World
10:30 ATP Tennis: Ep 1
11:00 WWE: Experience