

CULTURAL FEAS

Ekushey Special Programmes

Title: Amar Ekushey 2005
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Bangla Academy premises
Date: February 01-28
Schedule:

February 01-28
Ekushey Book Fair
Time: Weekdays: From 3pm to 9pm;
 Weekends: From 11am to 12 noon and 2pm to 9pm; On Feb 21: from 8am to 9pm

February 19
Programme: Discussion followed by musical soiree
Topic: Practice of Bangla literature abroad

Discussants: Babul Siraji, Mojammel Hossain Mintu, Salimullah Khan, Fakhruzzaman Chowdhury
Time: 4pm

February 20
Programme: Discussion followed by musical soiree and the announcement of Bangla Academy Literature Award 2004
Topic: The conscience of Ekush in the essays of Bangladeshi

Discussants: AH Ahmed Kamal, Chowdhury Zahirul Haque, Muhammad Abul Kashem, Shirajul Islam Chowdhury
Time: 4pm

February 21
Programme: Poetry recitation and discussion followed by musical soiree
Topic: Special speech on language movement

Participants: Faruq Alamgir, Mansur Musa, Abdul Karim, Wakil Ahmed
Time: 7:30am and 4pm

Film Festival
Freshgel Banglar Chhobi 2005
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society

Venue: TSC Auditorium, Dhaka University
Date: February 12-20
Schedule:

Feb 20
 10:00am Dahan
 01:00pm Matir Mayna
 04:00pm Manda Meyer Upakhan
 07:00pm Lalon

Musical Soiree

Title: She Ashebey Amar Mon Boley
Organiser: Nandan
Venue: Bangladesh YWCA Bhaban, 3/23, Iqbal Road, Muhammadpur
Date: February 20, at 6:30pm

Exhibition

Title: Third Solo Exhibition
Artist: Ronni Ahmed
Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Road
Date: 18-26 February, from 10am 12am and 5pm to 9pm

Title: Valentine's Photo Exhibit
Artist: Nabila Rahman
Venue: The Art & Soul Gallery, House 16, Road 36, Gulshan
Date: 14-20 February, from 11am to 8pm

Title: Nature and Life
Artist: Golam Faruque Bebul
Venue: Gallery Chitrak, House 21, Road 4, Dhamondi
Date: February 14-24, from 10am to 8pm

Artist: Fahmid Akhtar Kakoli
Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts
Date: February 16-22

Artist: Liudmila Yakovleva
Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, House 510, Road 7, Dhamondi
Date: February 17-23

Title: Chitrakabya
Artist: Abdulah-Al-Masum
Venue: BPS Gallery, House 63/2, Science Laboratory Road
Date: February 11-March 11, from 10am to 8pm

Ekushey on artists' canvas

Display of paintings on Language Movement

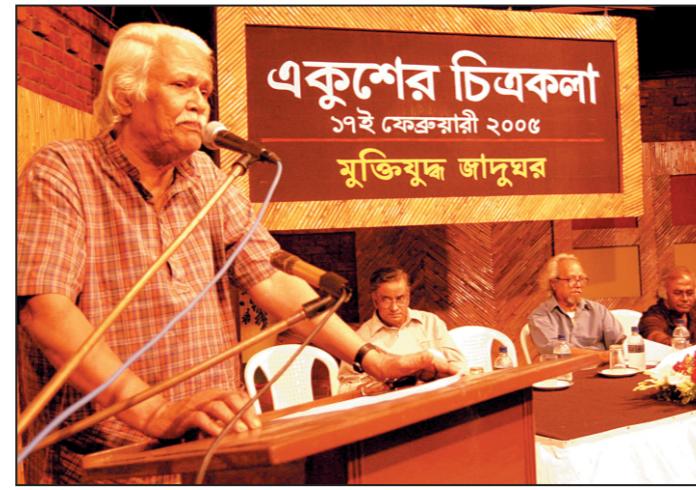
NOVERA DEEPTA

"**A**MONG the people in the world of art and culture, Bangladeshi artists took a leading role in the die-hard struggle of establishing Bangla as the state language of the then East Pakistan," art critic Abul Hasnat remarked in his keynote paper at a discussion programme titled "Paintings of Ekush" at the Liberation War Museum on February 17. In the brief but informative paper Abul Hasnat presented the chronological history of how the artists contributed in the Language Movement like all other Bangalees at that time.

Quoting from the memoir of master artist Quamrul Hasan, Hasnat said that from the very beginning artists such as Aminul Islam, Murtaza Bashir, Imdad Hossain, Rashid Chowdhury and Quamrul Hassan got involved with the movement as they used to paint posters with spirited slogans. "On February 21, 1952, Murtaza Bashir, Imdad Hossain and many other artists participated in the historic event by taking the injured activists to hospital. To observe the Martyrs' Day our painters have always participated with their artistic weapons sharpened with the true spirit of Ekush," he added.

Besides organising *Prothab Feri* and publishing collections on Ekushey, the artists started organising painting exhibitions in the Shaheed Minar premises from 1965 onwards. In 1969 they also painted the events of 1952 in chronological order on canvas.

The spirit of Ekush captured the minds of the pioneer artists,



Artist Imdad Hossain speaking at the event; (L-R) Abul Hasnat, Aminul Islam and Robiul Hossain are also seen

as was evident in their creations from their creations during 1950s-1970s. Despite limitations, newspapers like the *Daily Ittefaq*, *the Bangladesh Observer* and the *Daily Shangbad* published supplements on Ekush during the pre-Liberation period. Quamrul Hassan, Qayyum Chowdhury, Hashem Khan, Zainul Abedin and other prominent artists lent their brushes to illustrate these newspaper supplements.

Some of these reprinted illustrations by 46 artists during the 1953 to 1971 are now on display at the auditorium of the Liberation War Museum. Looking at the illustration such as Murtaza Barbir's portrayal of a procession in which both men and women participated, or Amirul Islam's presentation of chains in black that symbolised the agony caused

by the imprisoned state, one would vividly feel the spirit of that time.

Language activist artists Imdad Hossain and Aminul Islam reminisced on their experiences of 1952. Poet Rabiu Hossain also spoke at the occasion.

The discussion programme was followed by a cultural session. Recitation group Shawnan presented a compilation of poems titled *Ekushey February* directed by Ananya Laboni. The presentation was compiled from writings of Zahir Rayhan, Sikandar Abu Sha, Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Haque, Al Mahmud, Alauddin Al Azad, Nirmalendu Goon and Mahbub Ul Alam Chowdhury. Members of Uidchi also performed songs of Ekushey at the programme.

On his return to Bangladesh, Partha used to practise mime all by himself since there was no such institute or group of pantomime in the country at that time. At the same time, he organised some performances of pantomime during 1975-1981. His early shows used to be in the form of five or six short sketches. The costume was usually black tights and the face was painted white.

Partha's subjects were mainly entertaining in nature. Some of his famous mime pieces were *Jamna Theke Mityu* (From Birth to Death), *Balok O Pakhi* (The Boy and the Bird), *Projapoti* (Butterfly), *Photographer*, *Oushroob Bikre* (The Medicine Seller), *Bokhatey Chheler Parinoti* (The End of a Young Scoundrel), *Rickshawala* (The Rickshaw Puller) and *Machhi Dhora* (Fishing). Though generally entertaining, some of these pantomimes touched upon serious subjects.

In Paris, Partha attended the school of Etienne Decroux, the founder of corporal mime and later he worked with world's greatest mime Marcel Marceau.

Dialogues sans words

Partha Pratim talks about mime

HARUN UR RASHID

MIME is undoubtedly one of the most neglected sectors in the cultural arena of our country. "But the interesting point is that one has to learn mime for a career in theatre, dance or even modelling!" says Partha Pratim Majumder, the internationally acclaimed mime artiste of the country. Presently residing in Paris, Partha visited Dhaka recently. According to him, "This root medium of almost all performing arts deserves more attention and care."

Born in 1954, Partha was drawn to mime by his childhood affinity for the traditional *lathikhela*. "I can recall watching young men performing *lathikhela* at Muharram celebrations. What amused me is that the performance involved more body-movements than *lathikhela* itself!" Attracted by this feature of speaking out through body language and gestures, Partha soon went to Jogesh Dutta's mime academy in Kolkata. There he trained in mime from 1966 to 1972.

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Partha has written and choreographed a mimodrama named *Nightmare*, which was staged in Bangladesh in 1994. The performance was achieved with the collaboration of different group theatres and professional dancers of Dhaka. The mimodrama, concerning child abuse, was the first of its kind to be shown on South East Asian stages.

"I have incorporated expressions and gestures from the traditional art forms of Bangladesh just as Marceau has incorporated *musdras* from Indian Bharat Natyam and Japanese musical theatre genre known as Noh and Kabuki," says Partha about his deeply rooted interest in the country's traditional cultural activities.

Besides giving lectures and lessons at several European and American universities and institutions, Partha has worked in films and plays produced in Paris. Recently he has been



A sequence from the mimodrama *Nightmare*

featured on ads of four IBM products.

Regarding the present cultural activities Partha is a little frustrated. "In our youth we used to learn and perform in one medium with full devotion. However, I now notice the young generation, in particular, getting involved with several mediums without much commitment to them. This is very painful to me. This way we cannot develop our culture and make it known at the international level."

The practice of mime in the country is also negligible, according to Partha. "There is no institution where mime can be practised throughout the year. When I come to Bangladesh, a lot of children and young boys and girls come to me to learn some mime. But unfortunately, after I leave the practice does not continue anymore—their interest in mime withers completely," he says.

They are "differently abled"



Jewel Aich performing a magic trick on a girl from the audience

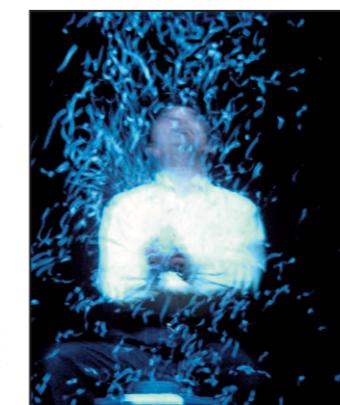
CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

acceptance and equal opportunities of education in the institute's 42 different branches across the country. To create social awareness about ID children, SWID Ramna Branch organised a fundraiser magic show by the famous illusionist Jewel Aich on February 17 at the Shishu Academy auditorium.

"ID, also known as mental retardation, is not a disease. The trauma and agony such afflicted people suffer is incomparable, as

they are unable to express themselves. With proper education and training the persons suffering from ID can be rehabilitated in the society. But for that social acceptance is necessary," said Sajida Humayun Kabir, acting president of SWID, Bangladesh. As she continued, "Ramma Branch, the largest branch of SWID, despite its limitations, endeavours to achieve the objective of integration, normalisation and rehabilitation through pragmatic measures for these innocent and helpless people. For this the sincere efforts of the family, community and volunteers are needed. And today's show seeks to generate public awareness as well as to mobilise financial support of the government, public bodies, trust and national and international societies."

Famous magician Jewel Aich also expressed his support to SWID, Bangladesh and displayed his brilliant magic in a jampacked auditorium. The audience was mesmerised with his spells and showmanship. With his recreation of the scene of his first snowfall experience in Toronto with cotton buds, his stand against racism by making a white feather into black and then into red, his cleaning of a little girl's throat with a sharpened sword,



Jewel Aich recreating illusion of snow-fall on stage

cutting a lady into three pieces, balancing a ball on a piece of cloth or making people or objects vanish the audience watched with bated breath.

A child with ID is like any other child who needs security, love, care and moral support from the society. And taking a cue from a famous song we should sing in unison: "We shall overcome...Deep in my heart/I do believe/That we are/Not alone today."



Pancakes with an altruistic cause

KARIM WAHEED

February is celebrated as the pancake-month in Europe and North America. Pancakes which are pretty effortless to make can be scrumptious and although people of all ages seem to be keen on pancakes, children devour them because of its syrupiness. Globally acclaimed chef Tommy Miah's restaurant Heritage along with the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) and Shishu Polli had arranged a pancake treat for the children on February 17 at CRP's Savar location.

Rubina Farouq, in charge of Tommy Miah's Institute of Hospitality Management, states, "This pancake treat is part of an annual fundraising event."

The children seemed elated to get a chance to savour Tommy's pancakes. Earlier Tommy had demonstrated how to make pancakes and the kids were amazed to learn that it only takes simple ingredients like flour, eggs, sugar, milk, oil, chocolate syrup, bay leaves, salt and water to make these mouth-watering pancakes. Some of the children compared these pancakes to *chapatis* or *patti shapta* cakes since they are similarly shaped. The pancakes were rolled with the syrup in it and some of the children were coming back for more

for obvious reasons. When asked the reason for this pancake treat, Tommy said "There is no serious agenda. February is the pancake-month and I figured pancakes would be a good way to share the bliss of good food with these children."

The enthusiastic response of the physically challenged children at Savar demonstrated that there is no dividing line between them and their able bodied counterparts. Even if it takes pancakes, the recent occasion served to rekindle the joy within these young citizens of the country. All thanks go to Tommy Miah's culinary skills.

A cultural event featuring performance by children from CRP was also arranged at the fundraising dinner at the Heritage restaurant yesterday.

TV GUIDE

BTW

08:15 Quiz Quiz
 08:40 Bishwa Protidin
 09:00 Satellite Programme
 12:15 Shangbadpater Pata

07:50 Dalchhut
 Drama Serial: Hashyo
 Lashyo
 08:25 Drama Serial: Swapno
 Buron
 09:35 Hridoye Mati O
 Manush
 10:00 Drama Serial: Ekhanai
 Megher Ghanaghata

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08:30 Ajaker Shakal
 Amra Ekhon Unish
 Kurn
 10:30 Bangla Feature Film:
 Amor Prem
 02:30 Drama Serial: Ure Jay
 03:15 Pepsi Music Express
 03:50 Drama: Hawa Nei
 04:25 Gallery
 05:15 Ithasher El Diney
 05:20 Alokap
 06:20 Shubho Shondhya
 06:50 Shonkshir El
 Shoptahe

08:15 Drama Serial: Jhut
 Jhamela
 08:50 Telefilm: Mamla Ek
 Koti Taka
 11:25 Dindarpan

ATN BANGLA

9:00 Anrodrishete

11:35 Drama Serial: Mohona

12:15 Dhaka Guide

12:30 Aaj Dure P O Citycell

Tarakotkhan

01:00 Bangla Film: Etotuka

Asha

01:25 Public Reaction

03:20 Banglar Gaan

04:20 Boi Mela Protidin

04:45 Sa Re Ga Ma

05:15 Janapader Khabar