

Ekushey observed with fervour

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

CULTURAL activists paid homage to Language Movement Martyrs with an array of programmes to uphold the dignity of the mother language throughout the day in the city and other district towns.

Here is a rundown of the major events:

Chhayanat

On the occasion of Ekushey, cultural organisation Chhayanat organised a solree of songs and poetry recital on February 21 at the Chhayanat Sangskritik Bhaban in Dhanmondi.

The programme began with a choir, *Amar bhaiyer rokter rangano*. Solo performances were rendered by Khairul Anam Shakil, Laisha Ahmed Lisa, Tuhin, Sohana Ahmed, Kalpana Anam, Nasima and Biman among others. The choir also presented three other songs - *Rokto Shimul*, *Milito praner kolorobe* and *Bhulbo na bhulbo na*. Naila Tarannam Kakoli and Hasan Anif recited poems.

Dr Sanjida Khatun, principal of Chhayant gave a speech on the importance of correct pronunciation of Bangla language. In her speech she criticised the way Bangla was pronounced in all walks of life and how English was becoming a dominant force in our country.

The programme ended with the National Anthem.

Padatik Nattya Sangsad

As in previous years, cultural organisation Padatik Nattya Sangsad (PNS) organised a daylong cultural programme to observe Ekushey. The event was held at the Bokultala, Institute of Fine Arts. PNS has staged special programmes on Ekushey since 1999. Titled 'Nobom Padatik Ekushey Sangskritik Sommelen',

the slogan of this year's programme was *Ekusher Chetona Korechhey Rochona Danober Porajoy*.

The event began with the members of Padatik Sangeet Sangsad rendering the National Anthem and *Amar bhaiyer rokter rangano Ekushey February*, the song of Ekushey, followed by the inaugural session.

The chair of the session was Language Movement Veteran Kamal Uddin Ahmed, the special guest was theatre personality and president of International Theatre Institute (ITI), Bangladesh, Ramendu Majumder. The welcome speech was given by Selim Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, chief coordinator, PNS.

In his speech the chief guest Kamal Uddin Ahmed said "Today Ekushey February is observed all around the world as the International Mother Language Day. This day reminds us of the great price we had to pay for our freedom." He asserted that the participation of the new generation in Ekushey and other such national events is very important as they are the future of the nation.

Ramendu Majumder emphasised the necessity to preserve the language of the indigenous people. He also expressed his concern about the edge that English has over Bangla.

After the speech the chief guest declared the opening session of the daylong cultural programme.

Artists of Padatik Sangeet Sangsad rendered three songs *Salam shaheed bhaiara salam*, *Badh bhenge dao* and *Bhulbona shei Ekushey February*. The second performance was staged by Bishwa Jit Ray. He rendered *Bornomalar jonno* and *Amar ekushey ar shoke nai*.

Popular Rabindra Sangeet singer Fahim Hossain Chowdhury, Lili Islam, Mohiuzzaman Moyna, Shusmita Ahmed Jhorna, Prokash, Nargis Chowdhury and others performed different numbers. Leading folk artistes Indra Mohon Raj Bongshi and Fakir Alamgir, and others presented Baul and spiritual songs.

Group songs were performed by Padatik Sangeet Sangsad, Udichi and Protiti

Several theatre troupes including Shubochon Nattya Sangsad, Udichi (drama wing), Theatre centre, Theatre Art Unit staged five presentations.

Other attractions of the day were group recitation, solo recitation and dance performance.

Discussion at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) organised a discussion session and cultural programme at the National Art Gallery Plaza. Eminent musicologist Dr Karunamaya Goswami was the main discussant. The programme was presided over by director general of BSA, Quamrul Hassan while Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury was the chief guest. After the discussion Subir Nandi, Khurshid Alam, Biman Biswas among others performed songs of Ekushey in the programme.

Cultural programme at Bokultala

Aktel organised a cultural programme on February 21 evening at Bokultala of Institute of Fine Arts. Promising artistes performed patriotic songs at the programme. Prachyanat staged the play *No Man's Land*. Rahul Ananda directed the play.



(Clockwise from top left) A boy carries a replica of Shaheed Minar, Artistes render songs at Chhayanat Sangskritik Bhaban, Child artistes perform at a cultural programme organised by Mymensingh district administration at Zainul Abedin Sangrahashala, Artistes perform at Bokultala

Exhibition Touching on dreams and everyday life



FAYZA HAQ

Kalidas Karmakar's ongoing exhibition at the Bengal Gallery, titled 'Alluvial dream and reality' takes its root in his work which he began four years ago called 'Alluvial faces'. Since Bangladesh is a delta country which is washed by the rains from the Himalayas to the Ganges and other rivers like the Jamuna and the Padma to the Bay of Bengal, the soil has built up slowly. Just as the soil of the country is soft so are the people that you find here. In summer the soil is hard and

cracked and so when the people here get strong they get very strong. My exhibition is a combination of the dreams of the people here and their struggles. In between dream and reality is a process of existence which I try to convey in paintings, drawings and installations," says Kalidas.

Kalidas has used sculpture, pillows, cottons, rice, lentils along with his paintings. Apart from scenic beauty and charm of human faces, he tries to depict the socio political existence of his people. Artists are sensitive and are touched by

what is happening around them. Through their brushes and paints they transform the insecurity and agony around them."For the last one year Bangladesh has seen socio-political happenings leading to frustration. I felt distressed when I heard about it living and working in New York. Consciously or subconsciously, the uncertainties are reflected in my work."

In the first room, there are the drawings of the different faces of the people -- some twisted with agony while others are happy. Along with them was an installation where a long pillow with blood stains is put on the floor. Around them are human heads. This mourns the demise of people who have died for the sake of democracy in the last few months.

In the next room is a display of amulets. "This is an ancient belief in our day to day life. When people can't solve their problems in the materialistic life they reach out to something spiritual. People don't want to be bogged down by their distress and even though there is no scientific reasoning people cling to amulets to solve their problems. This gives psychological energy for people to go ahead and get their goals," says Kalidas. Through the detailed work of the amulets the artist depicts the people's resorting to spiritual guidance.

In another room are 19 large paintings which reflect human energy and natural energy like lightning. Human figures are also brought in, although not in details but suggestions. By this the artist shows that mankind can solve their own problems if they really try hard enough. Although some people feel that many of his paintings are morbid and depict distress, Kalidas is optimistic about the people of Bangladesh. "I cannot paint people sitting contentedly in a boat or watching the moon when people around me are in distress," he says.

In the big display room are more figures in a mosquito net. There are earthenware vessels and oil lamps (*pradeep*) near them. There is *alpans* with lentil and rice. By all this the artist wishes to say that the common people of the country need leadership.

Kalidas has won awards in Japan, Poland and Bangladesh.

Nescafe Gourmet Coffee Carnival



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A two-day coffee festival and musical extravaganza, titled Nescafe Gourmet Coffee Carnival was held at the Kozmo Lounge, Dhanmondi, recently. This event was organised to attract young and trendy consumers celebrating the rich variety and tastes that a cup of coffee offers. The festival came alive with live demonstration of gourmet coffee making by experts and a fun trivia session with attractive prizes.

Naquib Khan performs at the event

As part of the event Nescafe Music Corner was formally launched by the popular musician of Bangladesh Naquib Khan. The crowd was mesmerised with his guitar performance and songs. Nescafe has undertaken this unique initiative to inspire the upcoming musicians to perform in a relaxed and trendy ambience. The second day was marked by an enchanting musical soiree featuring the well-known fusion artist Arnob.

Mobile technology based TV show 'Swapner Muthophone'

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

ATN Bangla has launched an entertainment show, *Swapner Muthophone*, based on mobile phone technology. Each episode of the show features news on mobile network operators and handset makers, celebrity interviews, witty skit and video clips on latest mobile

technology. The show also includes an interesting competition for the TV viewers participating from all over the country. Viewers of all mobile subscribers have to bid against each other in the game show through SMS.

The show is currently aired every Saturday at 11:05am.



Discussants at the show

HSBC to celebrate 100 years of Bangla music

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Limited in Bangladesh is holding a musical event titled "Shoto Borsher Bangla Gaan" for the second time to celebrate the 100 years of Bangla music on February 23, says a press release.

A panel of cultural personalities including Dr Korunamaya Goswami, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed selected a total of 40 songs from the last 100 years with two to three songs picked from each decade starting from 1905.

Mr Mahbub Ur Rahman, Corporate Banking Head of HSBC in Bangladesh, conceived the idea of the programme.

Popular artistes are expected to perform at the programme.



Event

Concert for Peace at Radisson Water Garden

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

"I think music in itself is healing. No matter what culture we're from Everyone loves music," --pop singer Billy Joel

The truth of this verse is apparent even in today's conflict-ridden world where peace and harmony are hard to come by. Music has cut across all barriers of nationality, gender, creed and age differences. The universal appeal of music was apparent recently when singers from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan got together to perform at a concert titled Concert for Peace at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel recently.

LRB, a popular name in the country's contemporary rock music scenario, featured in the concert and the group's performance made for great ambience. Other popular bands from two countries, Jal The Band from Pakistan and Shayne from India, performed at the event.

Ayub Bachchu took the audience on an exhilarating journey with his favourite numbers, *Rater tarar moto*, *Ural dibo akashey*, *Shei tumi*, *Mon chailey mon* and others. The added attraction of the event was the special fashion show by local models Emi, Mou, Lina and others.

Then Jal The Band cast its musical spell with the number *Teri yaad*. Other hit numbers performed by Jal included *Aadat*, *Dil Haaray Pukaray*, *Woh Lamhay*, *Panchi* as well as yet to be released songs from a new album. Currently the group is rapidly gaining popularity, particularly among South Asian bands.

Shayne David Hyrapiet from Kolkata wrapped up the concert with his melodic songs filled with depth and power. Shayne has been singing since 2001 and has now become one of the most recognised faces in the entertainment circuit of India.



Ayub Bachchu with models at the concert



Jal The Band holds centre stage

Books galore

'Etc Ekushey Boi Utshab'

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In this day of the small screen and computers, it is not surprising that book reading has been relegated to the backburner. However, with the Ekushey February celebrations in full swing many people are making a beeline for book fairs.

One such stop is the etc shop which is holding the Ekushey Boi Utshab (which runs till February 28).

A visit to etc's Gulshan outlet reveals a dazzling array of 25, 000 books. The star of the show is a set of *Rachonabali* (collected works) of Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Jibonando Das, Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyay and Manik Bandyopadhyay.

Capturing the spirit of the times is *Joi Bangla*, a collation of news-

paper articles in 1972. *Himur biye* (a novel) by Humayun Ahmed is reported to have sold out completely. Other popular titles are *Char Rokomer Bhalobhasha* by Anisul Haque and *Nari Dharmo Ittadi* by Gulam Murshid.

All in all there is something for everyone--ranging from literature, fiction, sport, management, history, religion, cookery to children's books. For the young ones are glossy, eye catching books such as *Illustrated Dictionary for Young Children*, *My First 1000 Words* to fictional works, as for example, *Narnia: The Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis.

It's about time to stop being a couch potato and get down to some serious reading.