

CULTURAL FEAST

Photography Exhibition

Title: Aesthetic Beauty of Trees
Photographer: Ismat Jahan
Venue: Art & Soul Gallery, House 16
Road 36, Gulshan Avenue
Date: April 5-18
Time: 11:00am-8pm

Title: The Lovers and the Leaves
Photographer: Abeer Hoque
Venue: Drik Gallery, House 58, Road 15A, Dhammardi

Date: April 5-10
Time: 3:00pm-8pm

Documentary Film Screening

Title: Doctor Johra Kazi
Venue: National Museum Auditorium, Shahbag
Date: April 7
Time: 4pm

Bhawaiya Festival

Organiser: Bhawaiya Angon
Venue: Shakot Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: April 8
Time: 3pm

Man's mechanised existence

Biplob Kor's first solo exhibition



Artworks by Biplob Kor

FAYZA HAQ

Biplob Kor has tried to give his work a new angle, using parts of digital machines in his paintings. Works by the young artist were on display recently at the Zoom Gallery of Alliance Francaise at the exhibition *Binary Oppositions*.

In the series *Automaton*, Biplob has tried to show the relationship between man and machine in the 21st century. He has taken different parts of the computer and used them as collage in his paintings. "Man and machine are two different things that are coexisting," Biplob says. In *Alternate generation-2* he has presented people's current preoccupation with test-tube babies. The piece shows a large foetus surrounded by smaller ones along with instruments and machines. "I'm merely presenting what is taking place today. I'm not moralising or taking sides," he

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

GOSHAI Madan Mohan is a man gifted with multiple skills. He is a *baul* singer and composes spiritual songs -- related to both Hinduism and Islam.

Born in Mymensingh town, Madan's creativity was apparent at a tender age. Inspired by his father late Makhan Sadhu, a prominent *kirtan* singer, Madan involved himself in the cultural arena and earned recognition.

Renowned in the locale as a *baul shadak* (devotee), Madan's passion for music and words is still at its peak at the age of 67. Having been acquainted with several *sadhus* (spiritual leaders), he used to recite from Geeta at Chaitanya Charanatit at Durgabari Temple, Haluaghata, Radhanath Sheba Ashram and other temples in the district.

He has composed over 400 spiritual songs. Quite a few renowned *baul* artists of the country have rendered songs composed by Madan Mohan.



Madan Mohan (C) along with other musicians

Eminent *baul* artists of the Mymensingh region as well as from other parts of the country including Sunil Karmaker, Jalal Uddin, Abdul Barek, Abdul Mannan, and Sadir

Uddin have attained much acclaim rendering songs composed by Madan.

"I received my first lessons from my father and I had the opportunity

to get acquainted with noted scholars of the country including Hafiz Maulana Faizur Rahman, Probir Goswami and Ambika Charan Goswami who played a key role in my spiritual development," said Madan. He also added that his parents were best as *kirtan* and they performed at festivals sponsored by the then Zamindars of Muktagacha.

Madan Mohan is a jeweller by profession. "I made a portrait of former President of Pakistan General Ayub Khan using 25 tola gold which is now preserved at a museum in Pakistan", said Madan adding he also crafted the Lila Devi Sheild, a crest for football tournament for the junior level students.

Madan Mohan arranges programmes featuring spiritual songs on various religious occasions where his disciples including *baul* artists and people from different religious groups come together. He intends to publish a book titled *Shatyer Shondhaney* (Searching for Truth) containing all his songs.



Ethnic Diversity Council

'Mayek Kantha' screened

ERSHAD KAMOL

The International Mother Language day is observed all over the world now. However, the ethnic minorities in Bangladesh are deprived of education in their own distinct languages. Abdur Rashid Mamun's docu-magazine *Mayek Kantha* features the necessity of education for ethnic minorities in their languages. Doing that Mamun has focused on the ongoing preschooling programmes initiated by several NGOs at different corners of the country, impediments to running these programmes and opinions of cultural personalities on the issue. The fact that only two ethnic groups -- Chakma and Marmas -- have their own alphabets, has also been featured in the docu-magazine.

Mayek Kantha was screened at the Liberation War Museum on April 5 as part of the ongoing Ethnic Diversity Council. The screening was followed by a discussion.

The programme was presided over by Professor Zehadul Karim. Eminent educationist Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui was the chief guest and Shahana Hayat, country director of Volunteer Overseas, Bangladesh was the special guest. Among other discussants were Dr Dwijendranath Sarkar and Bibhish Chakraborti. Abul Momen, editor of Chittagong Edition of the daily *Prothom Alo* was the moderator of the programme.

Discussants at the programme pointed out the hurdles in implementing education for minority groups in their own languages. They said that the educated individuals from the minority groups should work at the schools to teach their people. Discussants also focused on the responsibilities of the government.

Shahana Hayat said, "Ethnicity, language and culture are interre-



A scene from the docu-magazine

lated. So, for the existence of their identities, languages of these ethnic groups should be preserved."

Abul Momen said, "A few of these ethnic minorities have their own alphabets. They need to write their own textbooks but writing textbooks in any language is a challenging job. Then the question arises 'are they capable of writing textbooks on their own?'

Several ethnic minority groups live together in one area. Sometimes, the total number of population of a smaller community is around 200. Under these circumstances it is really difficult to run a school where children of an ethnic group will learn up to primary level in their own language. NGO schools are only preparing the children of these minority groups to adapt in mainstream education. I believe a language institute involving experts and the representatives of the minority groups can solve the crisis."

Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui said, "Like the English language, Bangla can also be enriched by incorporating elements from languages of these ethnic groups. In this case it's necessary to develop these languages."

Professor Zehadul Karim said, "The ethnic groups, which do not have their own alphabets, are strongly divided among themselves. As most of them have converted to Christianity, they use 'Roman' alphabet for their language. And only a few who believe that they have to live with Bengalis and need to learn Bangla for higher education use Bangla alphabet for their own language. So, we should work together to overcome this dilemma."

At the end of the programme, Dr Shourab Shikdar responded to questions from the audience on the documentary. He agreed with the audience that many ethnic minority groups such as Rakhains have not been featured in *Mayek Kantha*.

Painting competition to commemorate World Health Day



Youngsters participate in the competition

Automaton-2 features a human figure that is connected to many machine parts. These paintings are in sombre brown, black and white.

Biplob has been influenced by Cubism's collage along with Dadaism. Picasso and Dali are his favourite artists. In Bangladesh, Dhalai Al Mamun, Nisar Hussain and Mahbubur Rahman are his artists of choice.

Artist Rashid Amin says, "Biplob tries to do something which is different. He breaks up images of machines and mingles them with human forms. This gives the effect of collage. He tries to show how man has become mechanised in an allegoric manner. He is definitely unconventional."

Nisar Hussain says, "I was one of Biplob's teachers in his Master's studies in UDA. He was encouraged to go into new fields. He has incorporated three-dimensional objects in his two-dimensional paintings.

Biplob has taken part in eight major group exhibitions.



says.

Automaton-5 has a machine placed on a human head. Several wheels have been used in the composition. Everything is grey, black and brown. *Automaton-1* is a conglomeration of machine parts arranged around the image of a moon, which suggests that today even a romantic image can be mechanised. "This is the era of machines," Biplob stresses once more, "machines are made by men but today men have become totally dependent on machines."

Another painting contains a head with paper in different colours -- red, yellow brown and black -- falling all over it. *Digital time-3* shows a *Shadu* (wolf man) in red, reading a palm. "Old beliefs and new, coexist," Biplob comments. The human figures are surrounded by digital codes. *Automaton-3* deals with the subject of test-tube babies again and contains small human limbs.

hazards among the young. Cultural personality Sara Zaker attended the event. Each participant received a certificate. From hundreds of entries, the judges -- Tarun Ghosh, Kanakchampa Chakma and Naima Haque -- selected 12 best works. The winners will be awarded later at a reception.

SMC's managing director, Perveen Rashid; head of marketing, Mahbubur Rahman were also present at the occasion.

The contest was held to generate awareness on the threats of health

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