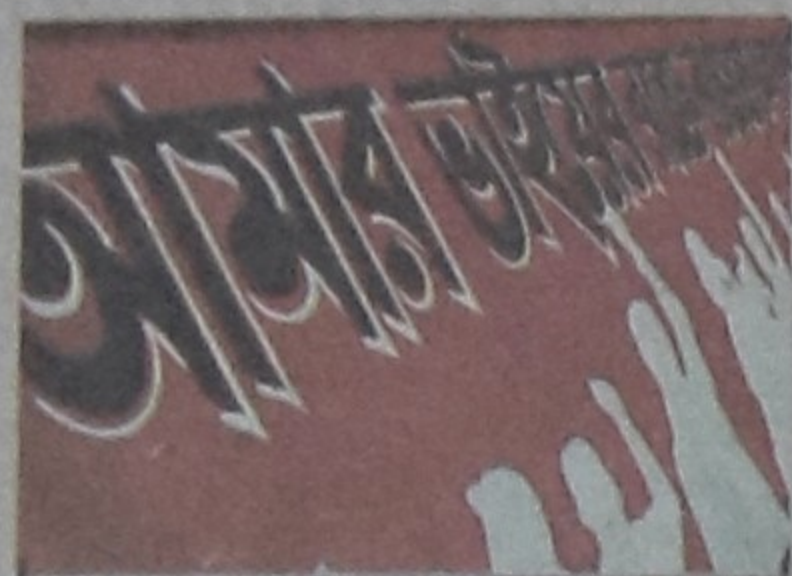


Ekushey Book Fair

Venue: Bangla Academy
Date: February 1-29
Time: 4pm onwards
11:00am onwards on weekly holidays



Solo Exhibition

Title: Epitaph To My Soul
Artist: Biplob Bipradas
Venue: Radius Centre, Bay's Galleria, 57 Gulshan Avenue.
Date: February 29-March 15



Film Screening

Title: Amaar Bhashar
Chalachchitra
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society
Venue: TSC Auditorium, DU
February 26
10:00am Tilli (India)
01:00pm Uttarer Khep (Bangladesh)
06:30pm Ahal (Bangladesh)



Book Launch and Discussion

Book: Mirpur Doshi
Badhyabumi
Venue: Billa Auditorium, House 20, Road 7, Dhanmondi
Date: February 26
Time: 4pm



Muktadhara: Pioneering the Ekushey Book Fair



Jawhar Lal Shaha at the Muktadhara stall, Amar Ekushey Granthamela '08

JAMIL MAHMUD

The month-long 'Amar Ekushey Granthamela' is perhaps the most eagerly awaited book fair in our country. Particularly enthused are the authors, publishers and readers.

However the mela has had a chequered history. The book fair was the brainchild of the late Chittaranjan Saha, founder of publishing house Muktadhara. He embarked on this front with a small sale in front of the Bangla Academy on February 21, 1972. Later other book publishers joined in unofficially.

Bangla Academy took over as the fair authority in 1978. In 1984 it was named 'Amar Ekushey Granthamela'. Gradually it became the official and hugely popular book fair in Bangladesh.

Recently The Daily Star spoke to Jawhar Lal Shaha, the current director of Muktadhara. The conversation covered Muktadhara's history and involvement with the 'Amar Ekushey Granthamela'.

"Muktadhara embarked on its journey in the course of the Liberation War. In those days, eminent authors and journalists, who were being forced to take shelter in Kolkata from Bangladesh, regularly gathered at Syed Ali Ahsan's (National Professor) temporary residence in Kolkata. All of them were fired with the zeal to do something for the country. Chittaranjan Shaha regularly met and encouraged them to write for the country and took the responsibility to publish their writing."

"After that the artistes established the Swadhin Bangla Shahitya Parishad and Chittaranjan established Muktadhara in Kolkata," said Jawhar Lal Shaha, who is also the brother-in-law of the late Chittaranjan.

Jawhar also pointed out that throughout the nine months of the Liberation War, Muktadhara published 32 books on the war. Talking about his role in the establishment of Muktadhara, Jawhar said, "I used to assist Chittaranjan Shaha in publishing."

After the Liberation War, Chittaranjan returned to Bangladesh and continued his mission by publishing creative works of noted and upcoming authors under the aegis of Muktadhara.

About Muktadhara's involvement with the Amar Ekushey Granthamela, Zahar Lal said that initially (in the early 70s) the Bangla Academy used to arrange only weekend programmes to mark Language Day. In the course of such an event, in 1972 Chittaranjan Shaha began to sell books at the Bangla Academy premise, while seated on the ground.

In 1974, Bangla Academy arranged a collection of literary books. In the same year, Chittaranjan further developed his idea and built a stall. Gradually some other publishing houses, including Khan Brothers, Chantika, Boighor and Chittagong Boighor, joined hands with Muktadhara. In 1978, the Bangla Academy, in collaboration with Bangladesh Pustak Prokashak O Bikteta Samiti, arranged the full-fledged book fair for the first time.

In the course of this year's festival, Muktadhara has brought out publications such as Ekush Shotokeer Television Shagbadikota written by Samia Zaman; Onok Ronger Foying by Dhruva Esh and Pratyagato, a translation by Abdul Hafiz. Aply, this year, the Bangla Academy has dedicated the book fair to the late Chittaranjan Shaha and placed a portrait of him at the fair. However Jawhar has urged the authorities to pay a fitting tribute to the pioneer by setting up a permanent stall or place for Muktadhara.

A betel chewing role for Joya

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The 25th episode of the drama serial *To Let* will be aired tonight at 8:25 pm on ntv. Matia Banu Shuku directs the serial. Joya Ahsan in the role of Nupur is a major attraction from the 18th episode onwards. Recently, Joya talked to this correspondent about her role in the serial.

"In the serial, Nupur, the wife of a mason, speaks in the typical Netrokona dialect. This is obviously quite tough for me since I'm not from that area. I often take help from my house-help (who is from Netrokona fortunately).

"Apart from this, the character constantly chews betel leaf. I had to practice chomping betel leaf prior to the shooting, which caused severe throat infection and I was hospitalised for a week," chuckles Joya.

In the part comic and part surreal serial, Nupur has a superpower -- the ability to hear things from a far greater distance than others. The serial is aired every Monday and Tuesday.



Geetanjali celebrates Bashanto



Artistes of Geetanjali sing at the programme

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Cultural organisation Geetanjali arranged a musical soiree to celebrate *Bashanto* (spring) at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library on February 24. The musical soiree featured songs of Tagore on spring.

The programme started with a recitation of *Aji dokkhino duwar khola*, by Jayanta Roy. A group rendition of *Biswabina robye* followed. Jayanta also recited excerpts from other Tagore works.

The programme featured solo renditions of *Mon je bole chini* by Farhat Hossain, *Ami tomar shongey* by Elham Nurat, *Aji dokkhino*

duwar khola by Sajed Akbar, *Tuire Bashanto shamiran* by Nahar Jamil, *Amar mallika boney* by Nargis Chowdhury and more.

Members of the organisation also rendered *Orey bokul parul*, *O manjari* and *Ami poth bholaek*.

The soiree wrapped up with the group performance of *Jhara jhara ranger jharna*.

An artiste performs at the "Concert for voting Cox's Bazar and Sundarban" at Rabindra Sarobar, Dhanmondi. Organised by Mind's Eye Media Communication recently, the event promoted voting for Cox's Bazar and Sundarban at the ongoing New Seven Wonders of Nature contest



Theatre festival in Netrakona

Mitali Sangha Netrakona celebrates 30th anniversary

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

A seven daylong theatre festival was held at the Mahua Auditorium in Netrakona town recently. The festival was organised by Mitali Sangha Netrakona on the occasion of its 30th founding anniversary.

The festival was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Netrakona, Ayat Ullah Majumder. Police Super of Netrakona, Mohammad Sakawat Hossain was present as the special guest. At the inauguration, Assistant Director of Film and Publication Directorate Quadrat-E-Khuda, local journalists, drama artistes and others were present.

The plays staged at the festival included *Bagdutta*, *Nawab Siraj-ud-Dowla*, *Ma-Mati-Manush*, *Nachmahal*, *Tajmahal*, *Mugal-E-Azam* and *Ekti Paisa*.



Actors in the play *Ma-Mati-Manush*

PHOTO: STAR

Zainul Fair in Mymensingh ends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The 15-day long 'Zainul Fair' featuring arts and handicrafts at the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Sangrashala ended recently.

The display included 125 paintings by 117 artistes of the greater Mymensingh region. Regular cultural programmes included *baul* songs, dance and drama. Display of almost extinct and in vogue musical instruments by Nawab and Co. seemed to pull in young music enthusiasts.

Greater Mymensingh Fine Arts Coordination Forum organised the fair with an intention to provide a platform to the artists hailing from the greater Mymensingh region.

Earlier a 13-member committee was formed with artistes Hossain Mohammed Faruq and Md. Farhad Hossain Tarafder, acting Principal of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Fine Arts Institute, as Convenor and Joint-Convenor respectively.

Dr. M Shamsur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University in Trishal inaugurated the fair.

The fair was also a reunion for noted artistes from the region. Biren Shome, Alokesh Ghosh, Rezaul Karim, Retendra Sharma, Debashish Pal, Sujon Dey, Kalam Akhand, Amirul Islam, Enamul Haque, Mofazzal Hossain and Shahjahan Ahmed Bikash attended the fair.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Tonight Banglavisision will telecast the 116th episode of TV serial *Mohanagar*. Written by Ferdous Hasan, the serial is jointly directed by Sajjad Suman and Ferdous Hasan.

The story revolves around the family of Anfar Miyan. Raj, one of the younger members of the family, is unemployed and carefree. His grandfather Anfar Miyan used to be a well-known politician and businessman. Dalim Minya, Angur Minya and Akhrot Minya -- Anfar Miyan's sons -- are a teacher, a government employee and a Naxalite respectively. Gradually Raj becomes rebellious after discovering the questionable family history.

Mamunur Rashid, Khairul Alam Sabuj, Afroza Banu, Sumaiya Shimu, Apurbo, Litu Anam, Bijori Barkatullah and Sharmin Shila play the lead roles in the serial.

Mahanagar is aired from Sunday to Thursday at 8:25 pm.

TV serial "Mahanagar" on Banglavisision tonight



A scene from *Mahanagar*

Transforming everyday materials

Clare Mitten's exhibition

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

British artist Clare Mitten, who held an exhibition "Transformer" at the Bengal Gallery, making extraordinary works from everyday materials, said, "I worked with the Fine Arts students of the Dhaka University. The exhibition is about transformation and using everyday materials to build new structures, taking them out of contexts and letting them become something different. We can re-evaluate the items in a new way."

"In the first workshop students made three dimensional sketches and they made them quickly in a day. They then combined their works with those of other students to make new forms."

"In a second workshop a new group of students came in and their job was to respond to what the earlier set of students had made. They looked at the objects and used them as still life. Thus their drawing became like reinventing."

"In the third workshop transformation continued and in the fourth workshop students were encouraged to undo what they had seen in front of them. Now what is seen in Bengal is a new transformation in the context of the gallery space. In order to bring them here we had to dismantle a lot of objects," said Clare.

Taken out of context, familiar objects became unfamiliar, and we can re-evaluate them as something other than the function they were designed for. A cardboard box might suggest mini architecture, or a wrapper might provide a pattern or colour -- just as a painter might choose a palette and brush.

The students of the first workshop collected bottles and packag-



ing, leaves, twigs, bamboos, string and wool, and from them, made new objects. Things were cut up, patched together, wrapped, balanced, suspended and decorated. Each student used the materials to make something different before working together to rearrange these new objects into temporary arrangements. They worked playfully to see what happened when something was turned upside down, or one object was placed

next to another -- exploring connections between things, to make a collaborative installation from individually made components.

Clare said that it has been an absolute delight to work with the students of DU because they had such enthusiasm and openness to try new things and a real hunger to find out a new way of working. They came in everyday above and beyond the workshop timings. The exhibition is a tribute to their hard work. There is joyfulness and lightness in the work.

Clare has been in Dhaka for six weeks and she had been given a generous space at the Fine Arts Department. This exhibition is officially the result of four days of work. The drawings, pointed out Clare, depict exquisite draughtsmanship.

Clare graduated from the Royal College of Arts in 2006 and has a studio in London with some other artists. Her family find her work quite funny but they always follow what she does with great interest.



Students at the workshop