

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tagore Death Anniversary

Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindrasangeet Shilpi Sangstha
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: August 6-7
Time: 5 pm everyday



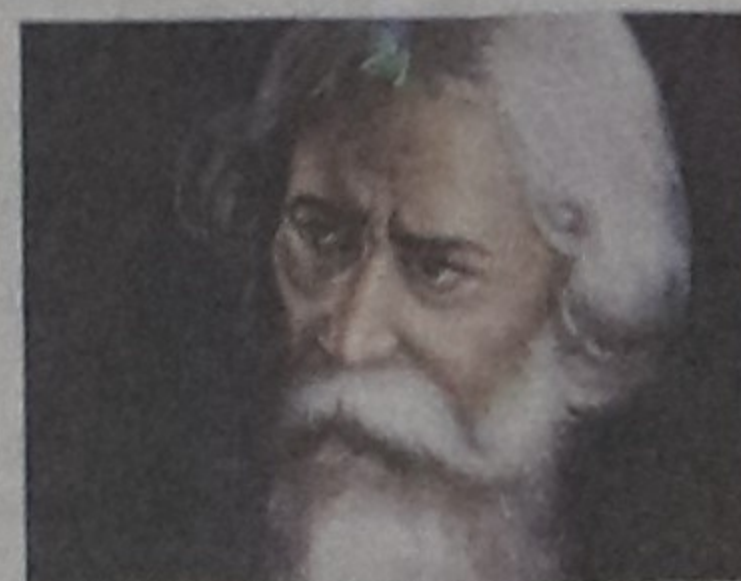
Theatre

Play: Rokto Karobi
Troupe: Naborik Natyasampraday
Venue: National Theatre Stage, BSA
Date: August 8
Time: 7pm



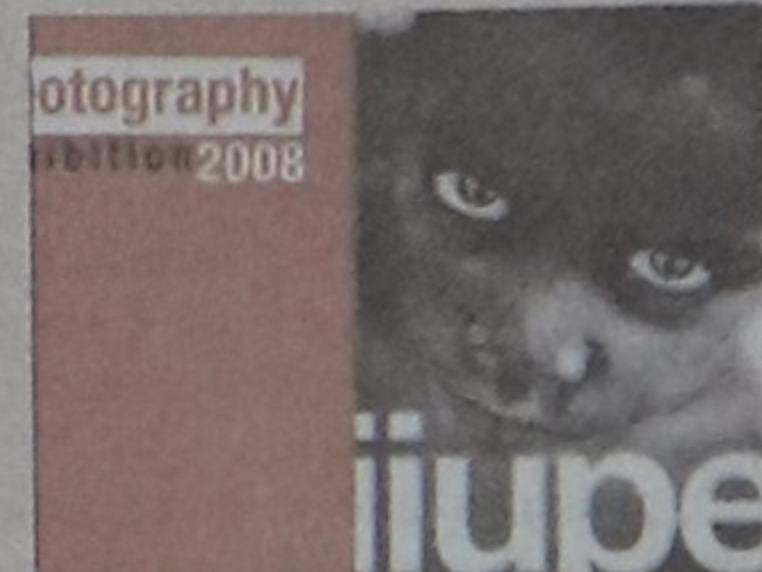
Tagore Death Anniversary

Organiser: Bangalee Shamagra
Venue: Bangalee Shamagra, Khayer Mansion, 235/2, Elephant Road
Date: August 8
Time: 10:30 am onwards



Photography Exhibition

Title: International Inter University Photography Exhibition
Organiser: NSU Photography Club
Venue: National Art Gallery, BSA
Date: August 3-9
Time: 11am-7pm



Documenting Shamsur Rahman

In conversation with filmmaker Amirul Arham

KARIM WAHEED

Bio-documentaries have proven to be quite popular around the globe, but somehow this genre has not caught on in our country.

"It's an effective medium to provide an insight into an individual's life and works, in particular when the audience concerned hasn't been exposed to the character," says France-based Bangladeshi filmmaker Amirul Arham.

Arham's celluloid ode to poet Shamsur Rahman -- a 90-minute documentary -- was screened at the Auditorium Guiment, Paris on March 3, 2008. The film will be screened today at 6 pm at Alliance Francaise, Dhaka.

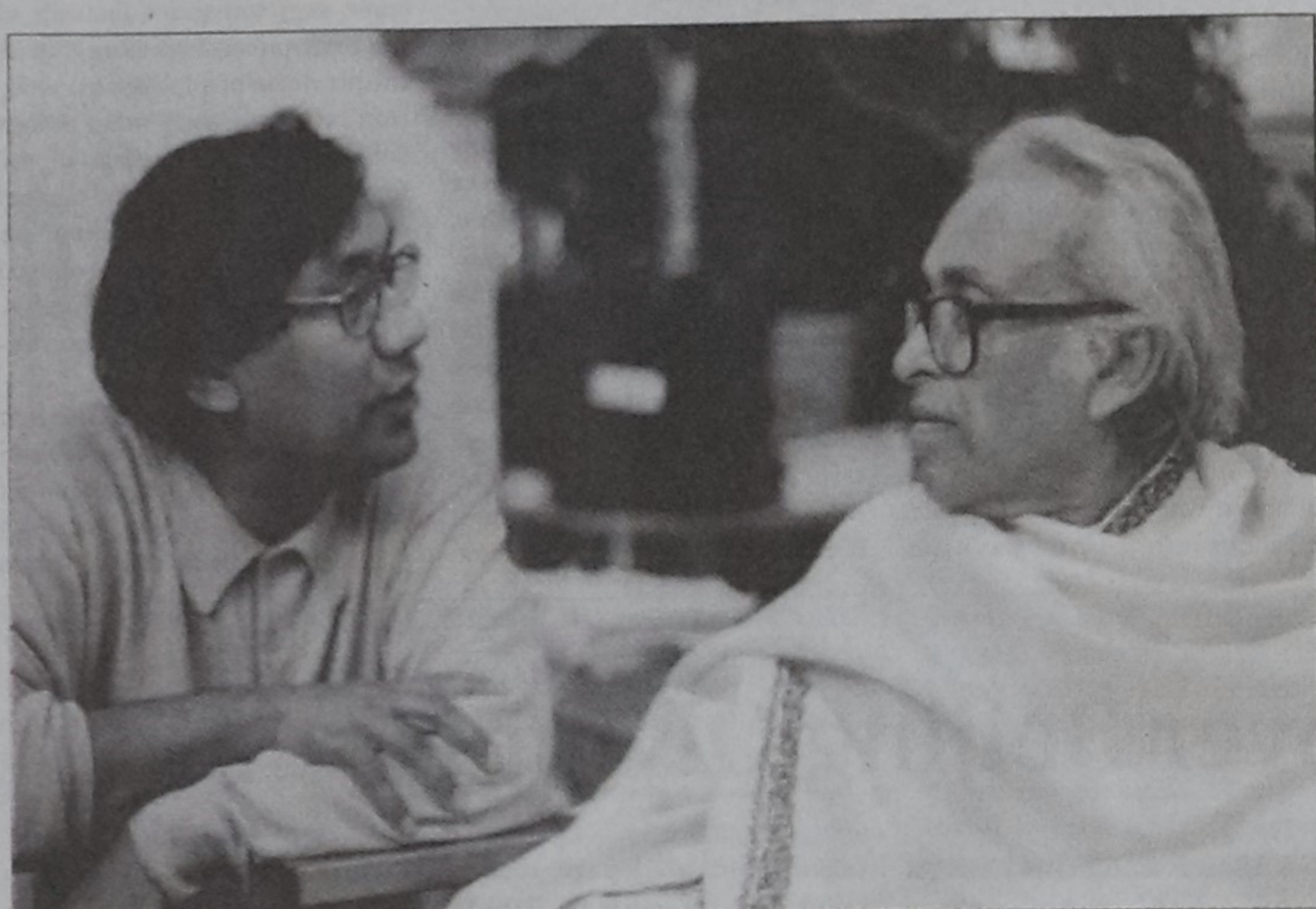
Arham is one of the founder members of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra and has been living in France since 1984. He had known Shamsur Rahman since 1972/73.

Between 2000 to '06, Arham documented the poet. In 2000, Shamsur Rahman visited France and Arham introduced him to the French literary circle.

Arham recalls, during his France trip, the poet was feeling unwell and after a thorough medical check-up, he was admitted to ICU. Shamsur Rahman stayed in a hospital for three days and the poet articulated that experience in his poem, *Arogya Niketan-e-Ekka*.

The poet Shamsur Rahman is part of a series of bio-documentaries. Arham is working on documentaries on poet Jibanananda Das, novelist and poet Sunil Gangopadhyay and educationist Abdullah Abu Sayeed.

Among Arham's award-winning and critically acclaimed documentaries are: *The Devil's Water* (Best



Amirul Arham (left) with poet Shamsur Rahman.

Documentary award at Terra International Film Festival, 2006), *The Lost Souls of Bangladesh* ("Coup de Coeur" at Chaudes-Aigues Film Festival, France, 2001), *Behind the Enemy* (on artist Shahabuddin's works, 1995) and *Sangraing* (on the indigenous communities of Bangladesh, 1992).

Arham has also ventured in feature films. In 1996 he started shooting for a film, titled *Eviction* - zooming in on the lives of slum-dwellers -- in Dhaka. The story delved in human values apparent in those who endure hard-knock lives as well as some affluent individuals who are often devoid of

these values. Shooting however came to a halt soon, as the then government felt that the film might be "damaging to the image of Bangladesh."

A project in the pipeline that sounds promising is *Pratya-bartan*. This feature film by Arham addresses the issue of "war-babies" (born to Bengali women consequent of their being raped by Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators during the Liberation War). While researching for the film, Arham met 27 French nationals of Bangladeshi origin who for the most part do not want to be associated with the "war baby" identity. Their reasoning is valid -- their

country of birth did not want them and in the last three decades has done nothing to make them change their minds.

Arham points out one issue regarding documentary filmmaking that cannot be overlooked -- funding. According to him, "Ensuring a certain standard when making a documentary requires adequate financial support. In Bangladesh, securing funds for bio-documentaries which don't have a 'commercial value' is almost impossible. But keeping the informative value of these films, this genre should be encouraged."

Nazrul Manch: Kindling interest in the National Poet

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Nazrul Mancha organised a painting competition for students at the auditorium of Progressive Model School here on August 1. The competition, titled "The Portrait of Poet Nazrul", coincided with the celebration of Nazrul Utsab. The function was held by Nazrul Mancha at the local Shilpakala Academy auditorium at the end of last month.

Some 76 students from 25 educational

institutions of the district took part in the competition in two groups. Of them, six winners were awarded prizes while all the participants were given certificates, according to sources.

At the inaugural session of the competition, ex-MP, Dr. Captain (Retd.) Mujibur Rahman Fakir, also convener of Nazrul Mancha local unit, AKM Mahmud Hossain Selim, Mohammad Amirul Islam were present. Member secretary of Nazrul Mancha advocate Moazzem Hossain Babul conducted the inau-

gural function.

The speakers at the inaugural session said that the competition was arranged to sensitise the younger generation to the immensely talented National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and his writings. "We take pride in Nazrul and we should work to spread the culture of Nazrul among the present generation and the generations to come. We should also aim to preserve our rich literature and culture," concluded the speakers.

GPA- 5 holders given reception in Khagrachhari



Dancers perform at the reception accorded to talented students.

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Khagrachhari Hill District Council (KHDC) Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura in a discussion said, that the meritorious students are our hope for the future. They will make use of their intellect

towards creating a corruption free country and make our nation proud.

He said this recently in a reception accorded jointly to the meritorious students, by Bengali daily *Pratham Alo* & cell phone company Aktel at the tribal cultural institute in Khagrachhari.

Khagrachhari Government College principal Bodhi Sattaya Dewan presided over the discussion while Khagrachhari Hill District Council (KHDC) Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura was present as chief guest.

He urged the students to study hard, which is the key to success.

Students have to work diligently to get GPA 5, which would make them more confident and self-reliant. Through their effort they will lead the future nation. He also announced a study tour facility to our neighboring country, to the best debater in the district.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohammad Shahdat Hossein said education is the backbone of a nation and can enlighten the society and the country as a whole. He urged them to make the society free from acid violence.

Khagrachhari Government College Principal Bodhi Sattaya Dewan urged the GPA-5 achievers of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) to work hard to build up a corruption-free society.

A total of 52 students have got GPA 5 from different educational organisations in Khagrachhari district.

Khagrachhari Government High School Headmistress Srila Talukder, Sub Editor of daily *Pratham Alo* Bisswajit Chowdhury, Aktel representative Faruk Hossen Sawon addressed the audience.

A colourful cultural function followed at the same venue.

Joss Stone goes Tudor

Joss Stone will play Anne of Cleves in the Showtime period serial "The Tudors," Reuters reported. The role will be the first major acting part for this British soul singer, who has had three gold albums in the United States.

Anne of Cleves lasted as the fourth wife of Henry VIII (played in the show by Jonathan Rhys Meyers), only six months. The king sent her away because her looks in real life did not measure up to the portrait he had been shown before the wedding.

Source: Internet



Zahir Raihan's birth anniversary celebrated

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

To celebrate the 73rd birth anniversary of the film legend Zahir Raihan, Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) and fortnightly entertainment magazine *Ananda Alo* jointly organised a programme at the Experimental Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on August 5.

According to the family sources, filmmaker-litterateur-Freedom Fighter and journalist Zahir Raihan was born on August 5, 1935 at Majupur under Feni district.

Information Secretary Jamil Osman was the chief guest while eminent playwright Syed Shamsul Haq and Raihan's sibling Shahenshah Begum attended the programme as special guests. Afzal Chowdhury, who was the cinematographer of most of Raihan's films, and popular cine-journalist Chinmoy Mutsuddi were other discussants at the programme. Rezanur Rahman, the editor of *Ananda Alo*, delivered welcome speech. The discussion was presided over by A.N.M. Badrul Amin, managing director of BFDC.

Discussants recalled the remarkable contribution of Zahir Raihan in our culture as well as his direct involvement in the Language Movement (1952) and



Raihan's younger sister Shahenshah Begum speaks at the programme

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Liberation War (1971). The speakers further focused on Raihan's compassion for the welfare of the oppressed all over the world.

Raihan's younger sister Shahenshah Begum expressed her opinion that Zahir Raihan is not getting his due respect in

Bangladesh. She also announced that her son is making a documentary on Zahir Raihan.

The discussion was followed by screening of clips from Raihan's documentary *Stop Genocide*, featuring the brutality of the Pakistani military during the Liberation War. Moreover, clips

from his incomplete English movie *Let There be Light*, in which he wanted to focus on the struggle of the oppressed in every corner of the globe, was screened.

Clips from an upcoming documentary on Zahir Raihan, by his nephew Sabbir Ahmed Shuvro, was also screened.

A Caravaggio stolen from Ukrainian museum



Taking of Christ by Caravaggio.

REUTERS, Odessa

Art experts in Ukraine last Friday lamented the theft of a work by 17th century Italian artist Caravaggio from a museum, describing it as a cultural catastrophe for ex-Soviet states.

Staff at the Museum of Western and Eastern Art in the Black Sea port of Odessa discovered the painting, called *The Taking of Christ*, or the *Kiss of Judas*, missing, cut from its frame when they arrived at work on Thursday.

As the museum had been closed the previous day, the thieves could have struck any time from Tuesday evening.

Police said they entered through a window, bypassing an outdated alarm system by removing a pane of glass rather than breaking it. They then escaped across the museum's roof.

"This is a cultural catastrophe, a

national tragedy. There is so little of art of such level in the former Soviet Union," said Vitaly Abramov, deputy head of a second museum in the city, the Odessa Art Museum.

"You cannot put a price on this and I am not talking about money here. It is, in every sense, priceless." Auction houses in London declined to give a valuation of a Caravaggio.

Television pictures showed the window where the thieves had entered, its alarm disabled and its frame in bad repair.

"We came in here to find that the wind was blowing the blinds around through a window with no pane," Lyudmila Saulenko, the museum's deputy director told reporters.

"And where the painting had hung we just saw its stretcher. The painting had been removed from its frame."

The painting had been bought

by a Russian ambassador to France and presented as a gift to a Russian prince before being turned over to the Odessa museum last century.

Doubts had been expressed about the painting's authenticity, but Soviet art experts in the 1950s confirmed the work was in fact by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. It underwent restoration work in 2006.

A version of the same painting by Caravaggio hangs in the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin.

News reports said city police had been urging the museum to update its alarm system, dating from the mid-1990s, but the suggestion was turned down on financial grounds.

"Thefts, of course, do occur in great museums like the Hermitage (in St Petersburg) or the Louvre (in Paris)," Abramov said. "But the answer is to put in a truly effective alarm system and not postpone this."