

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

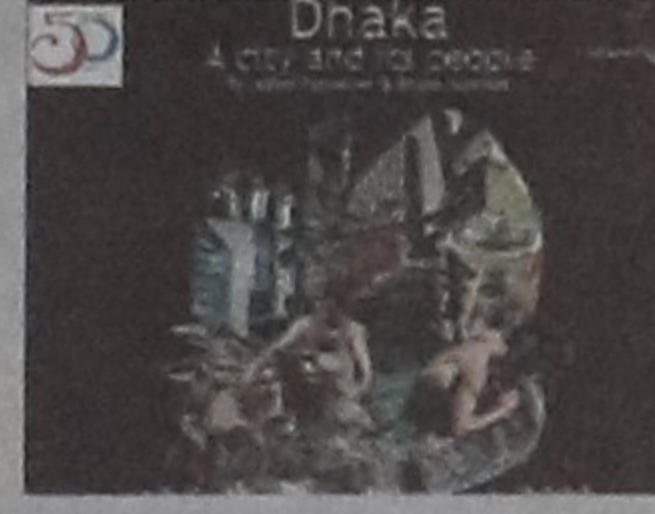
**Ekushey Boi Mela '09**  
 Organiser: Bangla Academy  
 Venue: Bangla Academy premises  
 Date: February 01-28



**Exhibition**  
 On February 21  
 Title: Dali & Others  
 Organiser: Bangladesh Heritage Foundation & Bangladesh Research and Publications  
 Venue: Billa Auditorium, H 22, Rd 7, Dhanmondi  
 Date: February 20-28  
 Time: 10am-8pm



**Photography Exhibition**  
 By Julien Pannetier and Bruno Valentin  
 Title: Dhaka, a City and its People  
 Venue: AFD, 26, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi  
 Date: February 19-March 5  
 Time: 9am-12pm, 5-8pm (Saturdays 5-8pm)



**Award**  
 Title: Shilu Abed Master Craftsperson Award '09  
 Organiser: National Crafts Council of Bangladesh  
 Venue: BRAC Inn Centre Auditorium, 75, Mohakhali  
 Date: March 5  
 Time: 6pm



## Boimela update

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Every year 'Ekushey Boimela' (book fair) at Dhaka University campus brings about a festive mood. The 'mela' is considered a major event in the urban scene, especially to those who like to read. Poets, writers, novelists and researchers eagerly wait for this fair to offer the readers their latest creative endeavors.

In the last 21 days, 256 story books, 407 novels, 164 essays, 494 collections of poems, 61 research-based books, 80 books of rhymes, 173 publications for adolescents, 69 biographies, one anthology of essays, 56 books on the Liberation War, 12 plays, 57 books on science, 42 travelogues, 33 publications on history, 31 on politics, 23 on health and medicine, 13 on computer related subjects, 24 on jokes and humour, 23 on religion and spirituality, 32 translations, one dictionary, 13 science fiction and 132 on a range of other issues have come out at the fair.

Discussions and cultural programmes are regular features at the 'mela' organised by Bangla Academy. The discussions address issues ranging from social, cultural, economic, political, literary and more. Poets, writers, novelists, scholars, researchers, professors and exponents take part in these discussions. Unfortunately though, attendances at these discussions are poor. Cultural programmes seem to be more popular with the average fair-goers. Music, dance, recitation and plays are regular features at these cultural programmes.

At the discussion programme on February 21, National Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui delivered an informative speech on our education system while director general of Bangla Academy Syed Mohammad Shahed presided over the programme. Seasoned artistes Abdul Jabbar, Bipul Bhattacharya, Shaheen Samad, Nomita Ghosh, Fakir Alamgir, Kalyani Ghosh, Syed Rezaur Rahman, Shibu Roy, Abdul Halim Khan and others performed at the cultural programme on February 21 at Bangla Academy premises.

## BSA observes Ekushey

Discussion, recitation, music and dance at Shilpakala

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy held a discussion and cultural programme to observe the International Mother Language Day at the National Theatre Stage. Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, director general of BSA, presided over the event. Dr. Syed Anwar Hossain, Professor, History Department, Dhaka University was the featured discussant.

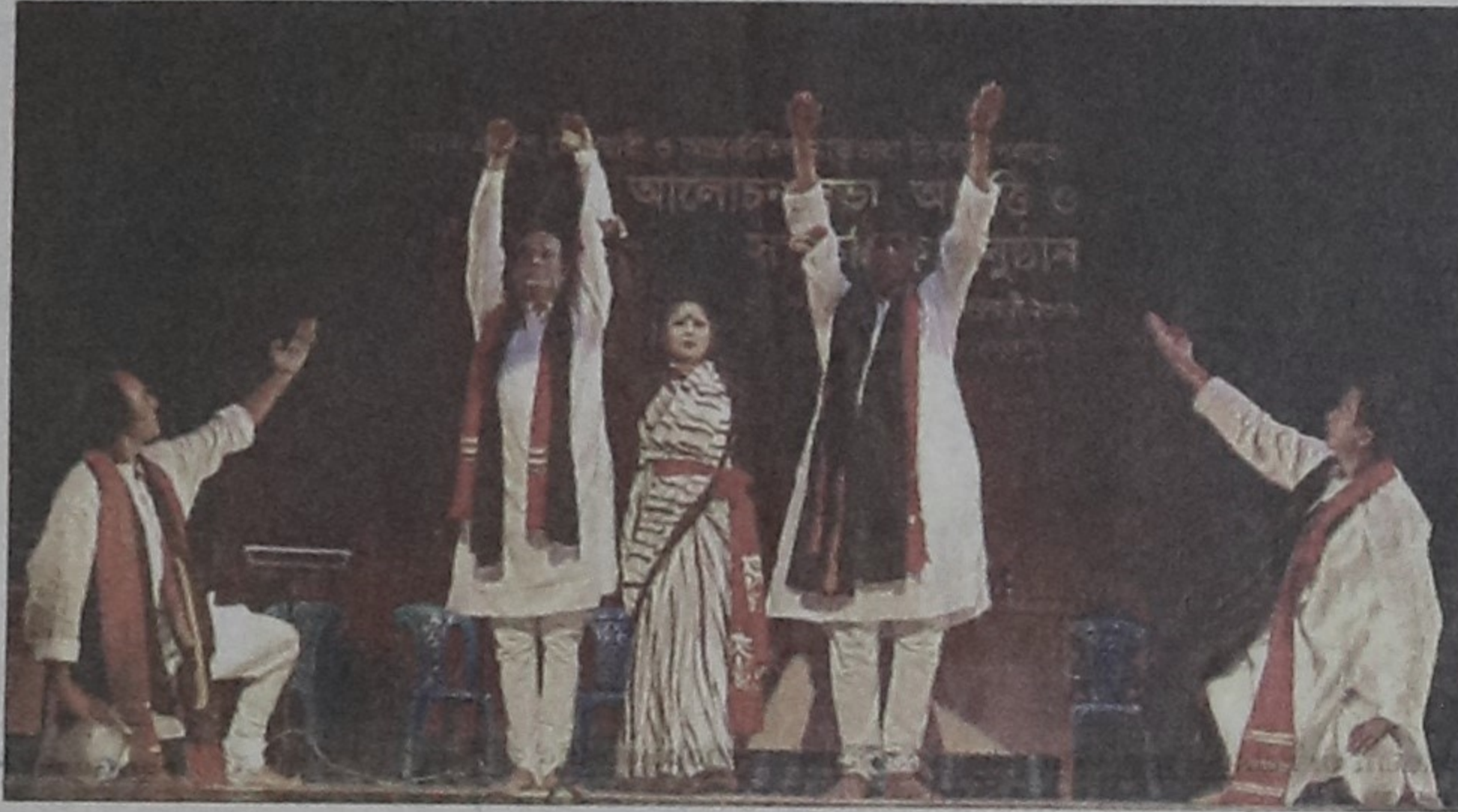
Dr. Hossain's speech shed light on background of the Language Movement, which according to the scholar had

its root in the Hindi-Urdu conflict that surfaced in pre-partition subcontinent. Though it was the language of only six percent of total population of Pakistan, Urdu was made the national language as it was considered the lingua franca of the South Asian Muslims. Hossain rejected the idea of imposing religious identity through a language by calling it an "illogical political exploitation."

In the context that several languages are dying, Hossain spoke on the significance of International Mother Language Day, a

contribution of the Bengalis, to preserve and cherish every language that exists in the world. He also demanded necessary steps to ensure a standard version of Bangla to be used everywhere in the country.

In his speech, Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam said, "Some of those who acted against our independence movement are now claiming to be Language Movement veterans. We should be aware of their intentions to misuse the spirit of Language Movement which led the nation towards a sovereign Bangladesh."



Artistes of BSA presented songs and dance at the programme.

PHOTO: MUMIT M

The cultural programme started with a chorus of the celebrated song -- considered the anthem of Ekushey -- "Amar bhair roktey rangano Ekushey February," by the artistes of BSA. The artistes also performed the ever-popular Abdul Latif song, "Ora amar mukher bhasha kaira nitey chaye."

Next was a group recitation of the poem, 'Ami-o

amar hobo." Noted Gano Sangeet artiste Fakir Alamgir entertained the audience with another Abdul Latif number, "Amar moto shukhi bhobey keu tho noi" -- a song that scorns the zombie-like imitation of western trends.

Artistes Laila Afroz and Kazi Arif recited poems at the event. Popular singer Samina Chowdhury's performance of the song 'Janity

che on a kon shey bedonatey" was highly appreciated by the audience. The song was written by Kabir Bakul and composed by Ali Akbar Rupu. The programme also included performances by several prominent and promising artistes of the country. A group recitation of "Bormomala" by Genesis Theatre wrapped up the event.

## Oscars set to shake up their act

LOS ANGELES, Reuters

After three months of movie critics awards, audience awards and industry awards, Hollywood finally gets down to business today (local time...) of giving out its Academy Awards, the world's top film honours.

Suspense surrounding the glamorous affair has shifted to whether host Hugh Jackman can dazzle audiences and stop the slide in television viewership.

Oscar producers Bill Condon and Laurence Mark "are proven showmen who know how to package entertainment and Hugh Jackman knows how to sell it," said Tom O'Neil, columnist for awards web site TheEnvelope.com.

That would be no small feat as the Oscars, which are given out by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, raise the curtain on their 81st ceremony.

Expected inside Hollywood's Kodak Theater and outside on the fashionable red carpet are the likes of Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Sean Penn, Meryl Streep and scores of other stars.

In recent years, comedians such as Jon Stewart and Chris Rock have hosted, warming up the crowd before awards are handed out in more than 20 categories ranging from best movies and performances to make-up design and even short films.

But viewership hit a record low of 32 million in 2008, down from 40 million in 2007. So, the academy hired movie musical producers Condon and Mark ("Dreamgirls") to shake up the show,

and they hired actor and song-and-dance man Jackman, who thrilled audiences as the host of Broadway's Tony Awards.

Condon, Mark and Jackman have been mostly quiet about their plans and have given very few interviews. The Los Angeles Times said on Saturday the pair brought in Australian director Baz Luhrmann ("Moulin Rouge") to stage



Hugh Jackman is hosting this year's Academy Awards ceremony.

one number and comic writer/director Judd Apatow ("Knocked Up") for comedy.

Still, the biggest draw for Oscars has always been having major blockbuster movies at the centre of the show and suspense over which films, actors and actresses will win awards.

This year, "Slumdog," which tells of a poor, young Indian man competing for

love and money on a TV game show, has earned hit status with roughly \$150 million in global ticket sales.

After winning awards from many industry groups including movie actors, directors, producers and writers, "Slumdog" is widely picked to win best film over "Milk," starring Penn as gay activist Harvey Milk and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," with Pitt as a man who ages backward.

The other two nominees are "Frost/Nixon," which recounts the historic interviews of disgraced former U.S. President Richard Nixon by British TV host David Frost, as well as drama "The Reader," starring Kate Winslet.

The best-actor race appears to be a two-way battle between Penn in "Milk" and Mickey Rourke as a faded athlete in "The Wrestler."

Winslet is tipped for best actress playing a German Nazi-era prison guard in "The Reader" over Meryl Streep as a nun who suspects sex abuse in a Catholic school in "Doubt".

Heath Ledger, who died in 2008 of an accidental prescription drug overdose, is favoured for best supporting actor as the villain Joker in Batman movie "The Dark Knight."

Pundits say supporting actress is wide open with Penelope Cruz in "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" up for the Oscar against Marisa Tomei in "The Wrestler," Taraji P. Henson for "Benjamin Button" and Viola Davis and Amy Adams, both in "Doubt".

Finally, fashionistas will be watching the gowns on the red carpet, and while experts say the recession has stars dressing down, they are quick to add the designs won't all be dull.

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### Film screening to raise funds

ABU KALAM RATAN, RU

To raise funds for the treatment of a Rajshahi University (RU) student afflicted by a spinal disease, a two-day film screening began here last Friday at the Momtajuddin Arts building on RU campus. A total of five Bangladeshi and foreign films were screened, said the organisers.

The young man, for whom the fundraiser was held, is Atul Chandra, a third year student at the university. Prothom Alo Bandhu Shabha, RU unit organised the film show.