


**WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK**

**Exhibit of Wood Engravings**  
 Title: Palashi Thekey Ekattur  
 Carpenter: Naresh Kumar Sutrachar  
 Organiser: Shudha  
 Venue: National Museum  
 Date: April 3-10  
 Time: 9:30am-4:30pm (Fridays 3:30-7:30pm)



**Baishakhi Exhibition**  
 Organiser: Troyee  
 Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, Rd 15/A (new), Dhanmondi  
 Date: April 8-9  
 Time: 10:30am-7:30pm



**Solo Art Exhibition**  
 Title: Lyrics of Line  
 Artist: Sanat Kar  
 Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (Old), Dhanmondi  
 Date: April 3-14  
 Time: 12-8pm



**35th Anniversary of RCSC**  
 Organiser: Russian Centre of Science and Culture  
 Venue: RCSC, H 42, Bhasha Shoinik MA Martin Road (Rd 7), Dhanmondi  
 Date: April 12  
 Time: 6:30pm



## HSBC-Kali O Kalom Tarun Kobi O Lekhak Purashkar

Obayed Akash and Simon Zakaria awarded

JAMIL MAHMUD

To encourage young authors of the country, monthly literary magazine Kali O Kalom and banking giant HSBC have jointly taken an initiative to honour and encourage them with "HSBC-Kali O Kalom Tarun Kobi O Lekhak Purashkar." At a programme at the Shaheed Zia Auditorium, National Museum, the awards for the year 2008 were formally conferred to Obayed Akash and Simon Zakaria on April 7. Akash and Zakaria received the honours for poetry and creative writing respectively.

The programme started with recitation by noted media personality and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor. Sanjay Prakash, chief executive officer of HSBC, welcomed the audience. Writer Selina Hossain, renowned educationist Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque were among distinguished guests at the programme.

In her speech, Selina Hossain said, "Any kind of recognition encourages authors to contribute more to the society. I hope this award will further the literary careers of Obayed and Simon."

Professor Siddiqui represented the four-member jury-board for the award; he was the chief of the panel. Professor Siddiqui announced the name of the awardees. Obayed Akash earned the award for his poetry "Shiter Prakar," while Simon Zakaria received the award for "Bangladesh-er Lokonatok: Bishoy O Aangik Baichitra," a research-based book on



(Front row-from left): Hasan Azizul Haque, Professor Anisuzzaman, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, Sanjay Prakash, Selina Hossain and Abul Hasnat seen with the awardees (back row) Simon Zakaria (left) and Obayed Akash.

the indigenous performing arts of rural Bengal.

Litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque gave a brief account on the winners and their award-winning works.

Akash, who is the literature editor of the Bangla daily Sangbad, has been involved with the little magazine movement for several years. He was born in 1973 in Rajbari.

Zakaria is an employee of Bangla Academy at present. Zakaria's research-based works in the fields of

folklore, theatre, anthropology and sociology have been highly appreciated. He was born in Kushtia in 1972.

The two awardees shared their reactions at the programme: Obayed Akash dedicated his award to his deceased mother, whom he lost at the age of four.

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit was the chief guest at the programme. The award carried a crest, a cheque for Tk one lakh, a certificate and complimentary subscription of

Kali O Kalom for each.

Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman presided over the programme. In his speech, Professor Anisuzzaman said that this initiative has provided him with an opportunity to get acquainted with creative young authors. Abul Hasnat, editor of Kali O Kalom, gave the vote of thanks at the programme.

The evening also included a solo musical performance by Tagore artiste Aditi Mohsin. Luva Nahid Chowdhury was the MC at the programme.

## Film Viewers' Forum embarks on its journey in Dinajpur

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Film Viewers' Forum, a platform of cine lovers of Dinajpur, was recently launched. On the inaugural day, four movies directed by Oscar winner Satyajit Ray were screened. These went down very well with cine goers as the private movie theatres are in a dilapidated condition.

Ray's four films were "Jono Aronnya" (1975), Kapurush O Mohapurush (1965), Charulata (1964) and Agantuk (1991).

Ziaul Haque convener of Film Viewers Forum, told The Daily Star that the Forum has already screened three shows in various parts of the district and the next films will be screened on April 17. He also went on to add that so far the non-profit Forum has 60



"Charulata" was screened on the occasion of the launch of the forum.

members who are at the forefront of the campaign to revive cinema, particularly with quality films from other countries.

## Telefilm Pirit on Desh TV tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Telefilm "Pirit" will be aired on Desh TV at 9:30pm tonight. Prashanta Adhikari has directed and written the script of the telefilm.

Addressing communal prejudice among the populace of the northern part of the country, "Pirit" zooms in on a couple -- Sujon and Putul. Sujon returns to his village from the city with his wife Putul. Putul is hearing impaired. Sujon somehow fails to make the villagers believe that Putul is his wife. The villagers raise questions about their relationship and

finally decide to have them remarry in the village.

Bigotry takes central stage, as according to customs Sujon must marry a banana tree before tying the knot with Putul. At this point it is revealed that Putul is pregnant. Hindu and Muslim communities of the village arrange separate 'panchayat' do address the issue.

One night Sujon and Putul decide to elope. The telefilm, in the dialect of greater Rangpur, has been shot in different locations of North Bengal. Joy Raj, Momo, Pran Roy, Shahana Sumi and Mostafizur Rahman have played the central roles.



A scene from the telefilm.

## Actor Kal Penn takes a job with White House



Kal Penn, known for his role as a stoned underachiever in the "Harold & Kumar" movies (and Gogol in the critically acclaimed "The Namesake"), is putting aside the doobie -- and his role as Dr. Kutner on Fox's "House" -- in exchange for a new job at the White House.

The actor has been hired as an associate director at the Office of Public Liaison, where he will help the Obama administration connect with arts and entertainment groups as well as the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, according to an Associated Press report.

Tuesday in an interview on its website in which Penn stated that he will "do outreach with the American public and with different organisations."

"House" viewers were shocked when his Kutner character committed suicide on Monday night's episode, to write him off the show.

The former "cynical independent" met Obama at a fundraiser in late 2007 and became a dedicated, high-profile presence in the campaign's youth-outreach efforts.

The New Jersey native said he has always had two passions: acting and politics. His Indian grandparents marched with Gandhi, and he has been studying international security at Stanford University. He spent a lot of time on the campaign trail and got an itch to continue working on the issues.

He mulled it over for months, then broached the idea to Obama during the inauguration. Penn also talked to presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett, who runs the White House public liaison shop, and his agents, managers and accountants. "This is what I really want to do," he told them.

Penn won't accept any acting jobs during his time in Washington, which he said would last "at least" a year or two.

Whatever Penn's future as an actor may hold, there will be no more "Harold and Kumar" sequels for now. And forget those lame stoner jokes or questions about legalising marijuana.

"I don't smoke weed in real life," he said, "so it's honestly not something I've given much thought to."

## Moushumi Bhowmik: Music erases boundaries

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

Singer-researcher-composer Moushumi Bhowmik was in Delhi recently for a presentation and performance of "Music as Absence, Memory and Desire: A journey through 'biraha' in the folk repertoire of Bengal." Kolkata-based Moushumi has a clear perspective of 'biraha.' In her words, "In Bengal, we don't categorise 'biraha' as a distinct tradition or genre. It is more an emotion and in Bengal the word means longing in a state of separation."

The separation, she asserts, could take many forms: a longing for union with the beloved or the Divine, physical disconnection in the sense of parting from one's homeland, or the longing for a person, and metaphysical (spiritual separation).

To illustrate her point, Moushumi sang several such songs: Among them, Lalon's "Ami apar hoye boshe achhi" and Deen Sharat's "Ghumey acheton go ma." She also played recording of the Blues, which she believes has parallels with 'biraha.' In this category was JB Lenoir's "Alabama Blues." The lyrics: "I will never



Moushumi Bhowmik with Abdur Rahman Boyati

go back to Alabama. That is not the place for me...They killed my sister and brother." Apart from this famous African-American Blues guitarist, singer and songwriter who recorded in the 1950s and 1960s, there was also a rendering of a song by Son House, an American Blues singer and guitarist. "The Blues," says the talented Moushumi, "are also songs of longing and separation. Like 'biraha,' the songs are about pain and suffering."

In her worldview, 'biraha' erases boundaries. "We have erased the (physical) boundaries because we are talking about the flow of music across borders."

The physical journeys could have their roots in poverty and the need to eke a living in other lands, be it overseas or within the homeland. It is not just the question of the migration of the Bengali people outside of Bengal but also a story of migrations into

Bengal and Kolkata from states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. "The people also bring their music with them," says Moushumi, adding, "Even the British colonisers brought their music with them and Bengali urban music was a melting pot of such diverse kinds of music."

And whether it is Moushumi's Sylheti London-based friend Moyez or the hard-pressed residents of Sadhusree village in Shalla, Sylhet (which remains waterlogged for a large part of the year), music is an integral part of their lives.

And what of the future of folk music? "Folk music will never die. It changes, it evolves," she says.

Moushumi's formidable endeavour has taken her, along with sound recordist Sukanta Majumdar, to many parts of Bengal. In Bangladesh, she says, she has travelled to Dhaka, Sylhet and Faridpur.

This project has been made possible by two grants from the India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) and she has spent over five years traversing the world of folk music of Bengal, recording voices and songs from an old but vibrant tradition.

## Grameen Jibon-jatra Mela in Khagrachhari

Generating interest in folk traditions

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

A two-day long fair titled, "Grameen Jibon-jatra Mela-1415," organised by a local NGO, Trinamul Unnayan Shangstha, ended yesterday at the Tribal Cultural Institute (TCI) under Sadar upazila in the hill district Khagrachhari.

The fair was organised to create awareness among the rural indigenous people on farming traditions. The event was jointly inaugurated by

President Award winning female farmer Enu Chakma and District Award winning farmer Haripodo Chakma.

A total of 25 stalls at the 'mela' featured various types of seeds indigenous to the region, everyday items, traditional tools used in farming and more.

The fair also generated interest in the traditional method of farming in the hilly areas, known as 'jhum' -- an integral part of the indigenous way of life.

Other attractions included beautiful hand-woven clothes made by indigenous women.

Executive director of local Trinamul Unnayan Shangstha, Ripon Chakma, told the daily star correspondent that they hold such types of 'mela' to generate interest among the locals on the traditional way of farming and culture.

"We want to discourage the use of hybrid seeds and encourage the farmers to use local varieties of seeds," he said.