

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Alluvial Soul & Soil
Artist: Kalidas Karmakar
Venue: Garden Gallery, H 23, Rd 4, Baridhara
Date: April 17-19
Time: 4pm-8pm



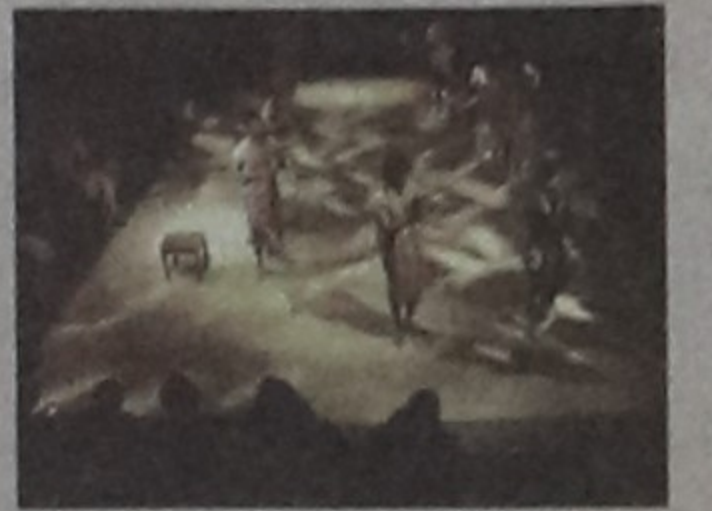
Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Searching
Artist: Nusrat Jahan Nazlee
Venue: Radius Centre-Bay's Galleria, 5th Floor, 57, Gulshan Avenue
Date: April 17-May 1



Int'l French Drama Festival
Organiser: AFD, Natukay and Fame School of Dance, Drama and Music
Venue: BSA, April 17 at 7pm, Play: Shaor Unmadini, Troupe: Fame School of Dance, Drama & Music, Chittagong



Theatre
Play: Half Akhrai
Troupe: Udichi
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Date: April 18
Time: 7pm



Washing away the woes of the year gone by

'Sangrai Utshab' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts



The Marma community in Khagrachhari brought out a rally on the occasion of 'Sangrai.'



'Pani khela' (water sport) is a fun part of the festival.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The Marma community celebrated 'Sangrai' in Chittagong Hill Tracts with much enthusiasm and fanfare.

'Sangrai' or 'Sangraine' in Marma means 'new year.' Marma Unnayan Shangshad has organised a weeklong programme to celebrate the community's biggest traditional function.

As part of the celebration, Marma Unnayan Shangshad also held a water sport festival, which ended on April 14. On new year, young Marma men and women playfully douse each other with water. It is believed that this tradition removes the woes, pain and sins of the last year and people are reinvigorated to have a good start.

Other ethnic communities in Khagrachhari also celebrate the festival to welcome the new year. The day's first programme, 'Sangrai Poaye,' was held on April 14. On this day, the Marmas wake up early, bathe and clean their houses and surroundings. They also decorate their homes with flowers, and offer wreaths to rivers, canals and springs, seeking divine blessings.

The festival, originating in the indigenous communities, is now celebrated by the local Bengalis with equal enthusiasm. Tourists flock to the area to attend the celebration.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Sangrai Utshab' (known for its 'water festival'), the biggest traditional social festival of the Marmas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), was celebrated with much gusto last Wednesday in Rangamati.

The day after the Bengali New Year, local Marmas held their 'water festival' at Chitmorang, under Kapatia upazila in Rangamati.

Marma Shangskritik Shangstha (MSS), Rangamati organised the function.

Dipankar Talukder, state minister for CHT Affairs, inaugurated the festival as the chief guest while president of MSS and also Kapati upazila chairman, Aungsu Ching Chowdhury chaired the programme.

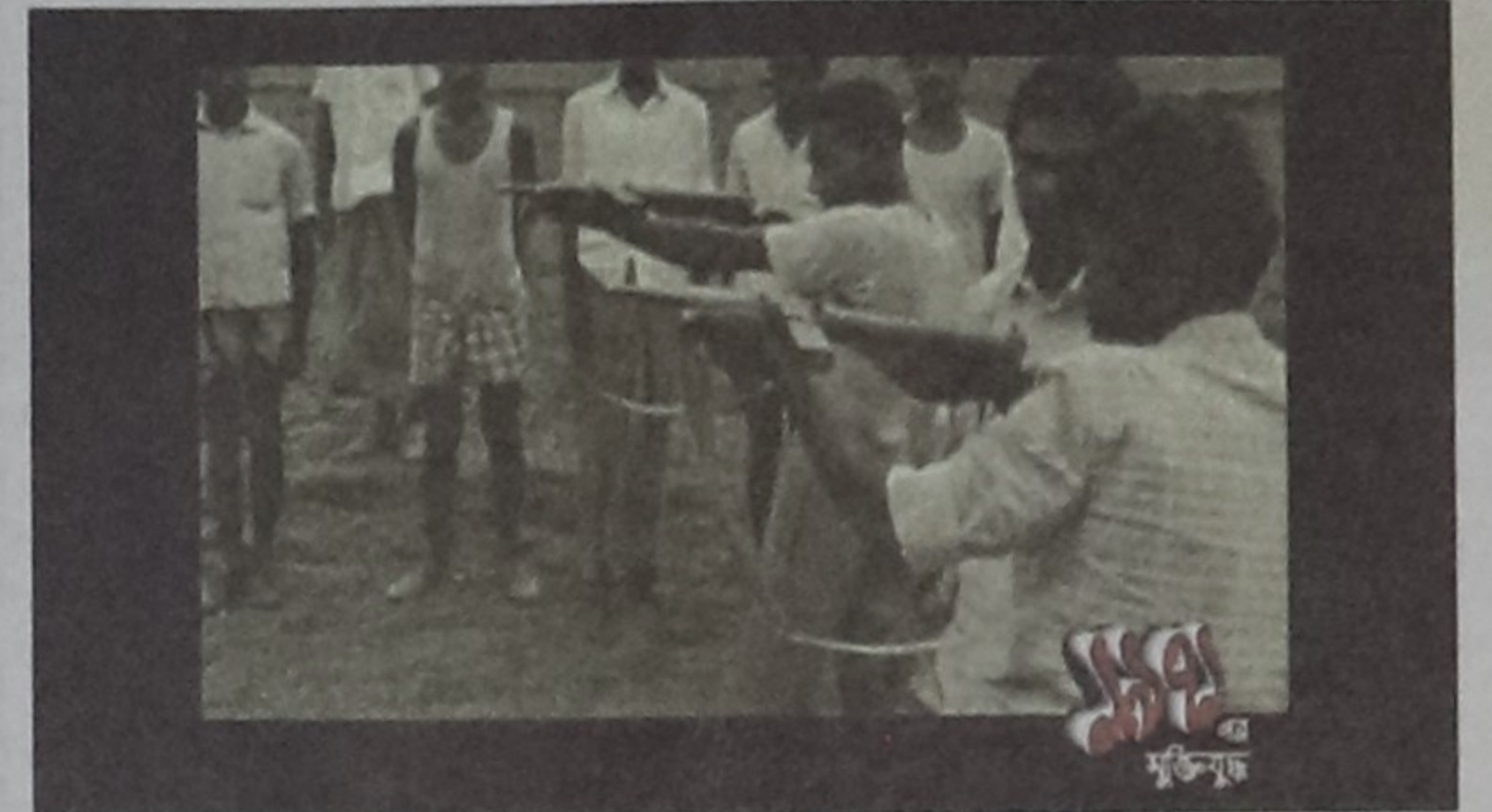
Aungsa Prue Marma, chairman of Kawkhali upazila and Chitmorang UP chairman Thoi Ching Marma also spoke on the occasion.

Marma leaders in their speeches conveyed that the traditions and cultures of indigenous communities are under threat due to political, economic and social discrepancies. They urged the government to ensure equal rights and privileges for the ethnic communities.

Thousands of indigenous people, mostly Marmas, from far-flung areas of three hill districts -- Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari -- thronged the festival venue at Chitmorang Bazaar to take part in traditional 'water sport.'

Young boys on one side, and girls on the other, drenched each other with water. It a fun-filled occasion for all.

BTV to air Muktiyuddher Itihash



A scene from "Muktiyuddher Itihash"

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

To mark the Mujibnagar Day, BTV will air the acclaimed documentary "Muktiyuddher Itihash" tonight after the 8pm news. The documentary was planned and directed by ATN Bangla chairman, Dr. Mahfuzur Rahman.

The documentary sheds light on several facets of the war, some of which have not received wide exposure so far. Rare video footages of the war and moving stories from refugee camps have also been included.

The documentary was previously aired on ATN Bangla and received rave reviews from the audience nationwide.



As part of Baishakhi celebration 1416, current and former students of Charukala (Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University) staged a 'Jatra Pala' under the Krishnachura tree on campus on April 15. FFA teacher Azhurul Islam Chanchal directed the pala titled "Aabeg Chhorano Murshidabad." The pala depicted the tale of Nawab Sarfaraz Khan. Over the last ten years, students of Charukala have been arranging 'Jatra Pala' as part of their Baishakhi celebration programme.

Gender Mela

Raising awareness against domestic violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Uddog, a Dinajpur-based NGO, held a day-long mela, a cultural programme, an art competition for rural children and a discussion to bridge the gender gap which often leads to domestic violence in rural areas.

The programme, including 'Gender Mela', was held at Ranipukur High School complex at Boterhat village under Biral upazila of Dinajpur recently. The programme was supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Chief guest, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, a lawmaker of Dinajpur-2 constituency inaugurated the 'Gender Mela'. The special guests at the inaugural session were Mohammad Ashraf Alam, Director Finance and Administration of Manusher Jonno Foundation and Mohammad Mokarram Hossain, chairman of Biral upazila of Dinajpur.

The well attended cultural programme was one of the high points of the function and the villagers enthusiastically participated in the motivation programme.

At a discussion, held in the course of the 'Gender Mela', the speakers laid emphasis on the need to curb domestic violence.

Mohammad Mokarram Hossain, upazila chairman of Biral upazila of Dinajpur, presided over the meeting.

Later, 16 couples from rural areas were honoured for not giving or taking dowry. The organisers asserted that around 482 persons had taken a pledge against dowry.

In addition, around 100 school children from Biral upazila participated in the art competition and received prizes from the chief guest Mohammad Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury.

The day-long mela also featured songs on domestic violence, poem recitation, Kobi Gaan and Jari Gaan. The curtains came down with a play performed by NGO representatives and local performers.



PHOTO: BANGLARACHOKH.COM

Artists dance at a cultural programme held at the Bangladesh High Commission in Washington DC to celebrate Pahela Baishakh 1416. The cultural programme featured dance, music and poetry recitation. A 'pitha utshab' was also part of the celebration, which drew hundreds of expatriate Bangladeshis.

Baishakhi festivities go on apace



A colourful rally in Tangail paraded the main streets of the town.

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A 'Barsho-boron Probhati' programme was held at Judge Court Compound in Thakurgaon on the first day of the Bangla year 1416.

Thakurgaon Nikkon Sangeet Bidyalay has been organising the programme at the venue every year since 1998. The programme was initiated in 1964 by Nikkon and was previously held at the Thakurgaon Public Club premises.

As daylight broke, notes of 'shana' filled the air and renowned classical artist Babar Ali rendered a 'Khayal'. A choral rendition of the Rabindra Sangeet, 'Natun pran dao, prano shokha aajishuprobhatey' followed.

General secretary of the school, Advocate Balam Guha Thakurata and executive director of ESDO, Muhammad Shahid-Uz-Zaman, spoke on the occasion.

The programme featured renditions of 'pancho kabir gaan', 'kirtan', folk and 'adhunik' Bangla songs and recitation. The programme ended with instrumentals.

People from all walks of life attended the

programme. Local social and cultural organisations chalked out several programmes to celebrate the Bangla New Year.

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Different socio-cultural organisations celebrated Pahela Baishakh in Kushtia. The programme included rally, discussion, cultural show and various events including sports related to the Bengali tradition. Kushtia municipality authority arranged the biggest programme -- the 'Grameen Mela' at the municipality ground. Different organisations jointly took part in it. At a discussion chaired by Municipality Mayor Anwar Ali, Prof. Sudeen Lahiri, M. Maniruzzaman, Advocate Lalim Haque and Dr. Sarwar Murshed also delivered speeches.

Kushtia Udichi, Shilpakala Academy, Shaily Academy and Parimol Theatre organised separate programmes in the town.

District administration arranged a cultural show at Kushtia Circuit House. Officials of district administration, police and their family

members took part in it.

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

'Pahela Baishakh' celebrations kicked off in Dinajpur, Panchagarh and Jaipurhat with grand public programmes, processions and street theatre performances.

Baishakhi Uddipan Parishad, Dinajpur organised a weeklong 'Baishakhi Mela' at Dinajpur Central Shaheed Minar on the occasion. The 'mela' was inaugurated by Md. Iqbalur Rahim, lawmaker of Dinajpur-3. Udichi, Dinajpur held a cultural programme at Dinajpur Institute premises to usher in the year 1416.

Md. Abdul Jalil, deputy commissioner of Dinajpur, inaugurated the programme at Dinajpur Institute premises while Md. Abu Kalam Siddique, police superintendent of Dinajpur, was present as special guest.

Besides, different social and cultural organisations held programmes at their respective institutes to celebrate the New Year.

Traders and entrepreneurs of the districts opened new ledgers that day, an age-old tradition that is still honoured.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

'Pahela Baishakh 1416' was observed in Jhenidah with 'Mangal Shobhajatra' (rally) carrying colourful festoons and placards and wearing masks. In the morning Sammito Sangskritik Jote, Ankor and Bihango Natya academy brought out rallies that paraded the main roads of the town.

The celebrations also included recitation, dress as you like, 'lathi khela', kite flying contest, dances and more.

Artists performed at the old DC Court complex. Many had face paintings and heartily joined in the celebration with having 'panta' and hilsa fish on the day.

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

'Pahela Baishakh 1416' was celebrated in Tangail in a traditional atmosphere.

Different government, non-government and socio-cultural organisations in the district organised various programmes to celebrate the day.

In the morning, a colourful rally brought out by the Tangail district administration paraded the main streets of the town.

A seven-day 'Baishakhi Mela' was organised at Shaheed Smriti Poura Udyan in the town. A three-day competition on music, dance and poetry recitation for children was organised by Tangail Shishu Academy at the same venue.

A vibrant cultural programme was held at Tangail Shaheed Minar premises in the evening.

Earlier, a traditional horse race was held at Ballukandi area in the town. Tangail Municipality organised the race where around 70 horses from different upazilas of Tangail and adjacent Mymensingh and Jamalpur districts took part.

Tangail lawmaker Sadar Abul Kashem attended the race and handed prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Among others, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Maksudur Rahman Patwari; Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman; Tangail additional deputy commissioner (general) K.M. Tariqul Islam and Tangail Municipality Mayor Jamilur Rahman Miron attended the event.