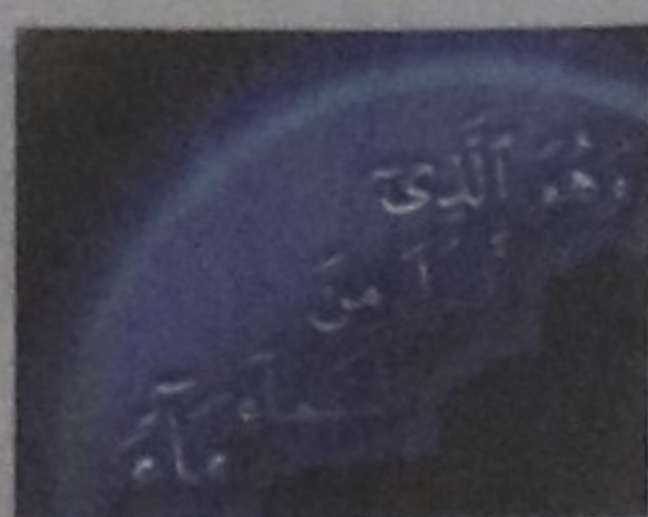


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Calligraphy Exhibition

Title: Calligraphy on Quranic Cosmology
Calligrapher: Syed Zulfikar Zahoor
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, Rd 15/A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: August 20-26
Time: 10am-6pm



Werner Herzog Retrospective

Organiser: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Venue: Goethe-Institut, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: September 2
Time: 5:30pm onwards



Nazrul Death Anniversary

Organiser: Nazrul Institute & Ministry of Cultural Affairs
Venue: Poot Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: August 24-29
Time: 3pm



Photography Exhibition

Title: Survivors
Artist: GMB Akash
Organiser: Alliance Francaise of Dhaka
Venue: Alliance Francaise of Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: August 14-27



The lesser-known identities of Murtaja Baseer

TAKIR HOSSAIN

"When I was in class X in 1948, I started writing short stories. I was a student of Bogra Coronation Institution. During that time, I also wrote a play for my class," says one of the leading painters of the country Murtaja Baseer.

Many are perhaps not familiar with Baseer's other identities. Baseer is also a poet, short story writer, novelist, researcher, numismatist and filmmaker.

"I had published a collection of short stories called 'Kanch-er Pakhir Gaan' in 1969. Noted scholar and dramatist Shaheed Munier Chowdhury reviewed it on television," recalls Baseer.

"Munier Chowdhury told me, 'Your skill in narrating conversations is very good. You should write plays,'" Baseer continues.

Murtaja Baseer is by nature a shy and reclusive person. His poetry is innovative and original. His perception and discoveries form his poems.

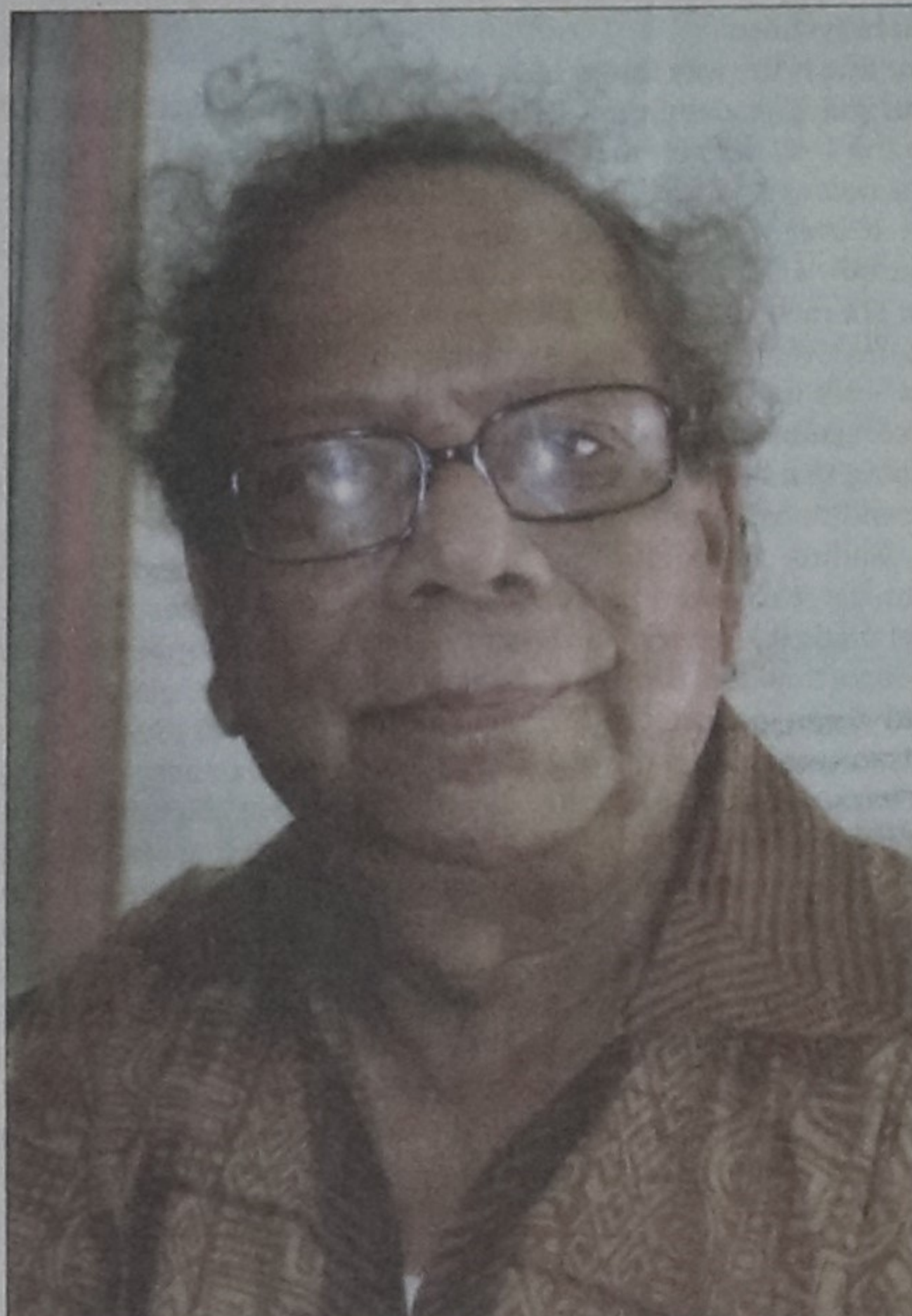
"In 1950, I was in jail for involvement with the Communist Party. Abdullah Al Muti-Sharfuddin, Ali Akshad, noted politicians Bari and Monu Miah were my

cellmates. We were in room no 14. During the five months in jail, I wrote poetry. When I'm in jovial mood, I like to paint. When I'm depressed, I like to write," Baseer says.

Baseer's first published poem was "Parbe Na." The poem delved deep into patriotism and socialism. It was included in "Ora Pran Dilo," a compilation of poems on Language Movement, which was published from Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1952. The cover was designed from a linocut of Somnath Hore, a veteran Indian painter-sculptor. Baseer did not write a single poem for 20 years after that. But his soul was always searching for inspiration.

Reading Baseer's poetry is like undergoing an emotional journey. As a poet, he is a modernist in the whole sense. His style is unquestionably unique, expressive and easily comprehensible. When readings his poems, one feels the yearnings of a lonely soul, unbound sorrow, the vacuum in a melancholic heart. Baseer's poems are voyages into fantasy.

"During the Liberation War, Baseer left the country for Paris with his family. Baseer stayed in Paris till June 1973.



While in Paris, he studied mosaic and etching at Beaux Arts, a recognised institute. During that period, he wrote 18 poems. Most of the poems are themed on romanticism, patriotism and individualism.

In 1973, Baseer returned to Bangladesh and joined Chittagong University as an assistant professor.

"In 1974, I wrote three poems while working on a mural at Rajshahi University. After that, I was continuously writing poetry. In 1976, my first book with 40 poems, 'Trasarenu' came out from Pranamichhil publication house in Dhaka. My second collection of poems, 'Tomakei Shudhu' and third book 'Esho Phire Anashua' were published in 1979 and 1985. My next volume of poems 'Shada Elegy' is waiting to be published," states Baseer.

Baseer has also written novels and was acclaimed for his meticulous style and unique choice of themes. In 1954, he got admitted in an art appreciation course in Kolkata Ashutosh Art Museum. During the time, he wrote a novel, titled "Ultramarine." The novel was based on the contemporary life of

Kolkata and the prevailing social dilemmas. Afterwards he wrote two more novels -- "Mitar Shanga Chat Shandha" and "Amitakhar." He has a collection of selected works, "Murtaja Baseer: Murta-O-Bimutra" (2001). He was a regular contributor of some defunct literary journals like "Dilruba," "Samakal" and "Saogat."

Baseer has also worked as a screenplay writer, art director and chief assistant director on the Bangla film "Nadi-o-Nari" in 1964, and as an art director on the Urdu film "Kaise Kahoon" in 1965.

Murtaja Baseer is a numismatist and researcher. In 1987, he received a fellowship from British Council for research on folk and traditional art. In 1988, he visited several museums in Delhi, Kolkata, Banaras and three hundreds villages under nine districts of West Bengal under the fellowship of ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations). His work "Mudra O Shilalipir Aloke Banglar Habshi Sultan O Tothkalin Samaj" was published in 2004. Several articles by Baseer have been published in Journal of the Numismatic Society of India, a prestigious publication.

Bangladeshi children participate in Iranian film festival

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Two Bangladeshi youngsters participated at an international film festival in Iran as members of the jury. Roudro Sakib Karim and Proma Roy -- both around fourteen -- were selected as members of the jury board at the 'Farabi International Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults.' The festival was held in the Iranian city Hamedan earlier this month.

It was the 23rd edition of the festival, which featured over 50 films including full-length feature, short and animation from different countries including Iran, India, Brazil and Argentina.

Roudro and Proma were two among the 15-member jury board, which included children below fourteen. After watching the films, the young enthusiasts took part in an open discussion and



Roudro Sakib Karim and Proma Roy in Iran.

selected the best film, informed Enamul Karim Nirjhar, noted filmmaker and father of Roudro. Nirjhar accompanied Roudro and

Proma as the guardian. Since its inception, the festival has been promoting films and videos from all over the world and its main pur-

pose is to entertain and educate children and young adults and also help them acquire a more critical appreciation of films.

TV Watch

Meghbondhu on Banglavisision

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

TV serial "Meghbondhu" will be aired tonight at 8:15pm on Banglavisision. The serial has been written by Shafiqur Rahman Shantonu and directed by Shokal Ahmed.

The story circles around three friends, Rakib, Sohan and Mamun have been friends since their student days, and are now colleagues. They have been working for a software firm for the last few years.

Bored of their routine life, they unanimously decide to take some time off from work. The trio take off for Nepal but do they have a fun time? Mosharraf Karim, Bijori, Romana and Tania play the central roles.



Bijori and Romana in a scene from "Meghbondhu".

Drama serial Hitlu on Ekushey TV tonight



Intekhab Dinar and Sumaiya Shimu in the serial.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Ekushey Television will telecast drama serial "Hitlu" tonight at 8:30pm. The serial is written by Iraj Ahmed and directed jointly by Abida Nasreen, Russell O'Neil and Ashrafur Alam Ripon.

The serial depicts the life of an unemployed bachelor, Hitlu. Hitlu is a vagabond with no permanent address, as he cannot afford to rent a house. He has little option but to sleep on the benches or under trees in parks. He comes across a widow and seeks refuge in her house. After moving in, Hitlu encounters some youths in the neighbourhood and the serial begins to unravel.

Intekhab Dinar, Sumaiya Shimu and Khaleda Akhter Kalpana enact the central roles in the serial.

Jet Li returns to Chinese films after 3 US movies

AP, Hong Kong

Jet Li is returning to Chinese film with a reportedly non-kung fu movie after three Hollywood productions, a publicist said Tuesday.

Li is due to start shooting the movie -- tentatively called "Ocean Paradise" in Chinese



-- Edko Film publicist Zhang Hongyan told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday. The film, due to be released next year, will be directed by a newcomer, Zhang said, declining to give further detail before the official announcement at a news conference in Beijing today. Hong Kong-based Edko

Film is the Chinese distributor for the movie.

The Chengdu Shangbao newspaper reported Tuesday that Li will not fight in the movie, but Zhang declined to confirm the report, only saying, "It's a movie that's very different from his previous movies."

Li's last three films were all American productions. His two most recent releases are "The Forbidden Kingdom" -- which marked his first on-screen collaboration with Jackie Chan -- and "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor." The 46-year-old action star just finished shooting the action thriller "The Expendables."

A former national martial arts champion in China, Li first made his name in the Hong Kong film industry with the "Once Upon a Time in China" series before moving on to Hollywood, where his credits also include "Lethal Weapon 4," "Romeo Must Die" and "Kiss of the Dragon."

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UPCOMING EXHIBITION/SEMINAR
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Gulshan 2, Dhaka
29/30th August, 10am - 7pm
Phone: Paul on 0174 1288642

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1st floor, 16-18 Ellingworth Pde
Box Hill Vic 3123 Australia
e: sales@townshend.com.au
www.townshend.com.au
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