

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

### Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Jai Bangla  
Artist: Shahabuddin  
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi  
Date: Sep 27-Oct 18  
Time: 12-8pm



### Solo Painting Exhibition

Artist: Mustafa Khalid Palash  
Venue: Asiatic Art Gallery, Nimtoli, Ramna  
Date: October 23  
Time: 10am-8pm



### Theatre Festival

Title: Dhaka Natyashab '09  
Organiser: Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation  
Venue: Zahir Raihan Cultural Centre, Shurapur  
Date: October 15-31  
Time: 7pm everyday



### Architecture Week

Venue: Open Sky Gallery, North South University, Basundhara Campus  
Date: October 17-22



## A social revolution through music

## A voice of secular values

### Anusheh wins Meeto Memorial Award for Young South Asian

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Singer Anusheh Anadil was conferred the first Meeto Memorial Award for Young South Asian on October 14 at a function at the India Habitat Centre -- one of the hubs of cultural activities in Delhi -- for her relentless fight against religious bigotry.

The other recipient of the award was Laxmi Ben Vankar who too had waged a battle against communalisation in the western state of Gujarat and worked for the upliftment of disadvantaged caste Hindus and Muslims.

Anusheh is known as a musician, songwriter, cultural activist and an ethnic crafts entrepreneur but it is largely her music that has made her a force to be reckoned with.

Though trained in classical music, she is also greatly influenced by the club music of Canada and the music of Lalon Shah.



Through her music, Anusheh passionately fights against religious intolerance and in October 2008, when a group of fundamentalists attempted to raze a sculpture of bauls in Dhaka, Anusheh and many young activists started a cultural movement to protest against bigotry and created a pressure group to foster values of secularism and cultural freedom.

Anusheh has carved out her own place in the Bangladeshi cultural scene and won several awards for her contribution to music and activism.

Recently, Link TV of USA made a documentary on the artiste who also campaigned extensively against drug abuse.

The Meeto Memorial Award was given to Anusheh for a composite of creative achievements in the field of music and craft, and promoting liberal thinking in Bangladesh, a citation of the award said.

## Three-day programme on Lalon's death anniversary starts today in Chheuria

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A three-day programme has been chalked out to observe the 119th death anniversary of Fakir Lalon Shah at Chheuria Lalon Akhra in Kushtia. The programme starts today.

Lalon Academy, an organisation

consisting of elected people to look after Lalon's shrine is organising the programme in association with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Banglalink is the sponsor of the programme.

Kushtia district administration is supervising the event.

The three-day programme includes

a 'Lalon Mela,' discussion and rendition of songs by artistes of Lalon Academy and bauls from across the country.

Special assistant to the Prime Minister Mahbubul Alam Hanif will inaugurate the programme. Abdul Mannan, Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia, will preside over it.

## Pop singer Leona Lewis attacked at book signing

Leona Lewis' book signing in London for her new memoir, "Dreams," took a frightening turn last Wednesday when the singer was attacked by a young man.

According to various news reports, Lewis was signing autographs and posing for pictures with fans when a man from the line stepped up and punched her in the head. He was quickly restrained by security guards and later arrested by police. The Associated Press reports that London's Metropolitan police said a 29-year-old man had been arrested on suspicion of assault and was being held in custody.

"Leona was the victim of an unprovoked attack," the singer's rep said in a statement. "The police were called immediately and medical attention has been sought. Leona is understandably shaken and apologizes to the fans she was unable

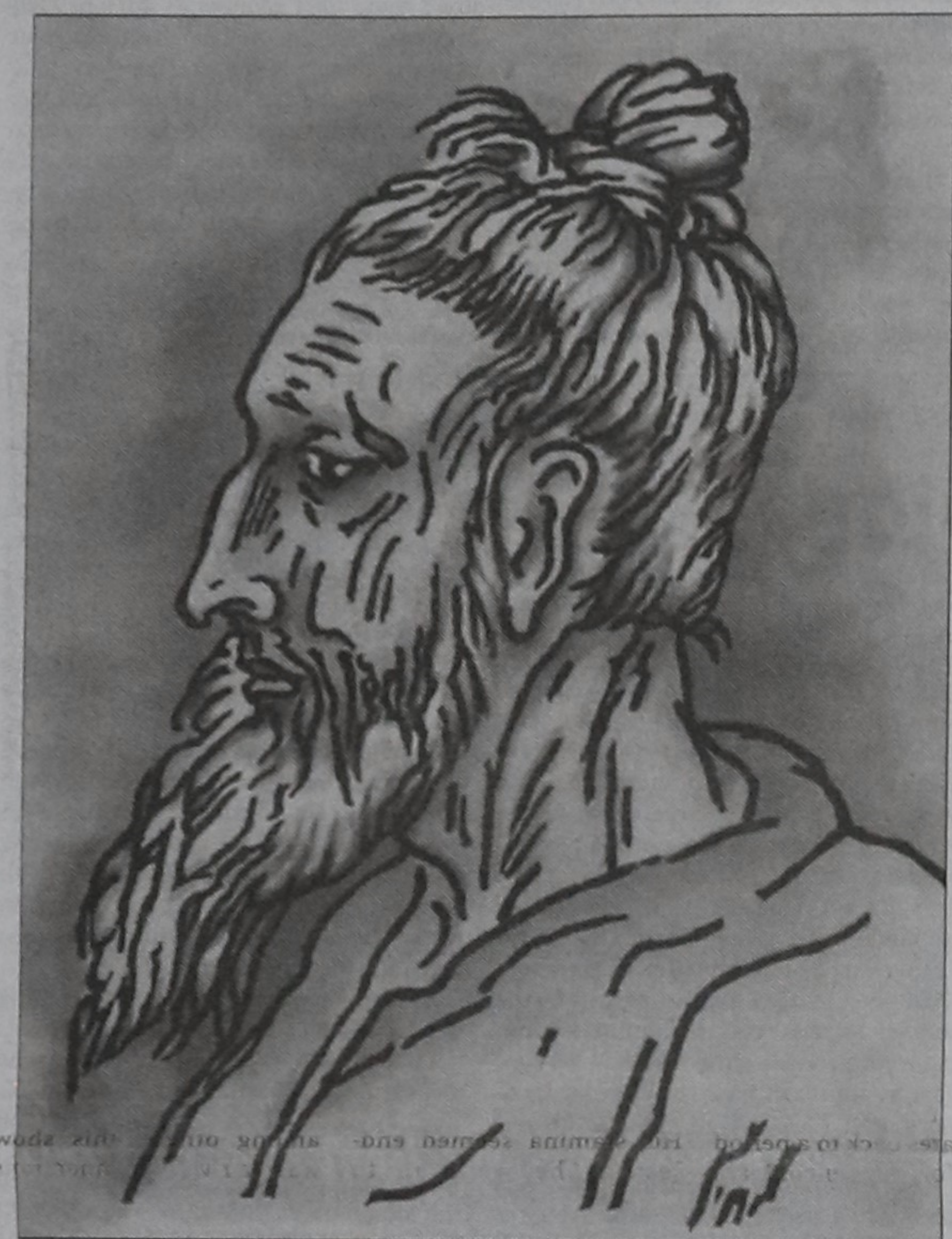
to meet and complete signings."

Photographs show Lewis leaving Waterstone's bookstore with sunglasses on and a pained expression on her face. Reports indicate she was taken to a doctor as a precautionary measure.

BBC News published a statement from Waterstone's that said, "There was an incident at our Leona Lewis signing this afternoon and the event was immediately stopped. We are now doing everything we can to support the police in their enquiries."

An eyewitness at the store told the BBC, "Lewis was running out with her hand over her eye, and I just saw a man on the floor. Suddenly the security all jumped on him and they were trying to pull him out and he was just laughing. He thought it was funny."

Source: Internet



JAMIL MAHMUD

Born just 17 years after the Battle of Palashi, Fakir Lalon Shah (1774-1890) lived over a century under the British rule. Though it is not apparent how the British Raj impacted Lalon's life and works, it can surely be said that Lalon had a vision of a major social reform. Apart from his mystic attributes, one of his main goals was to change the society riddled with religious bigotry.

Though there are debates regarding his religious identity -- some researchers believe he was born a Hindu, while some consider him a Muslim -- Lalon is known mainly a 'sufi' or a follower 'bhakti' tradition. Lalon left no trace of his birth or his origin and remained absolutely silent about his past, fearing that he would be cast into class, caste or communal identities by a fragmented and hierarchical society.

Throughout his whole life, Lalon sang of a society where all religions and beliefs

can maintain a harmonious existence.

Though Lalon is primarily identified as a mystic, philosopher, songwriter and composer, it wouldn't be an overstatement to call him a social reformer.

According to an essay by renowned Lalon researcher Professor Abul Ahsan Chowdhury, during Lalon's lifetime the undivided Bengal went through several historic events like the 'Chirasthayi Bandobasto,' Titumir's Rebellion, the Indigo Revolt and many more.

Some feel that perhaps, Lalon, who didn't receive formal education, was not aware of those social changes. But is that really the case? One of Lalon's contemporary social reformers was Kanganal Majumdar (1833-1896). Harinath took a stand against the mass exploitation by the British Raj and zamindars.

According to "Bratya Lokayato Lalon," a book written by Kolkata-based researcher Sudhir Chakrabarty, Harinath was about to be persecuted by local zamindars. Apparently it was Lalon and his disciples who came to Harinath's rescue.

Chakrabarty also wrote that Lalon and Kanganal Harinath maintained close ties and together played a vital role in social reform. Lalon would often go to Harinath's press and discuss social and political issues. The news of Lalon's death was published first in Harinath's paper. Lalon left around 10,000 disciples who have different religious backgrounds and his philosophy continues to draw people.

Lalon had also a close relationship with the zamindar family of Shilaidaha. The only sketch of Lalon that is found today was painted by the then zamindar of Shilaidaha Jyotirindranath Tagore.

Lalon's philosophical expression was based in oral and textual traditions, and expressed in songs and musical compositions. The lyrics of his songs were explicitly meant to engage in the philosophical discourses of Bengal. He critically re-appropriated the various philosophical positions emanating from the legacies of Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Islamic traditions, developing them into a coherent school of thought.

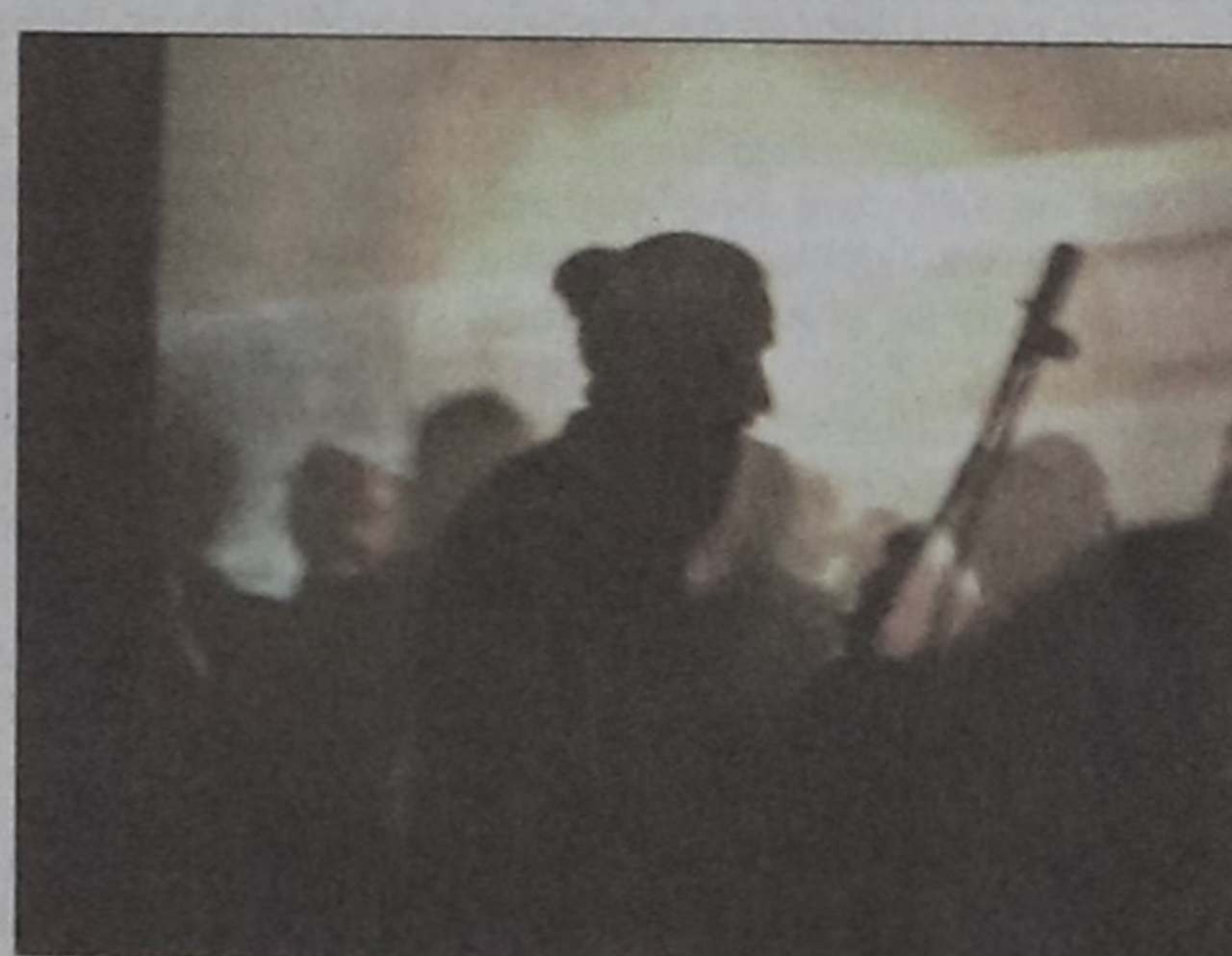
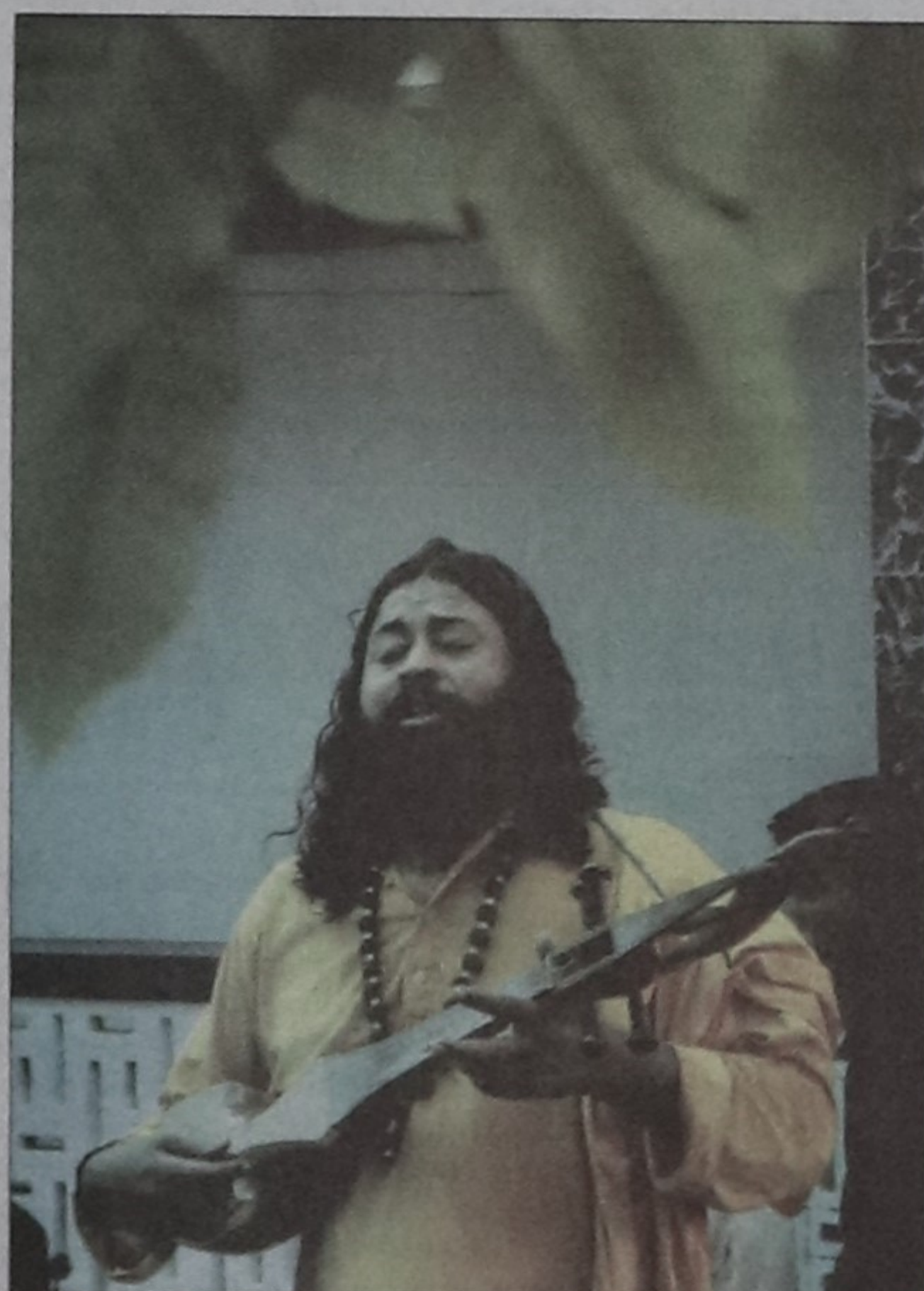


PHOTO: MUMIT M.

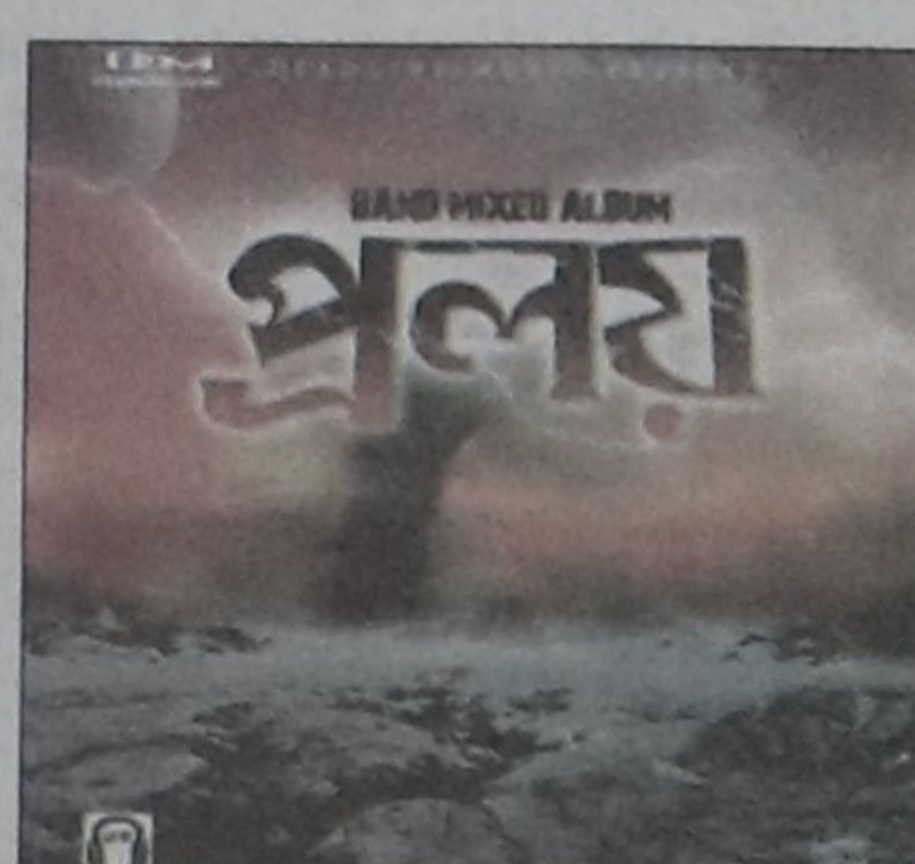
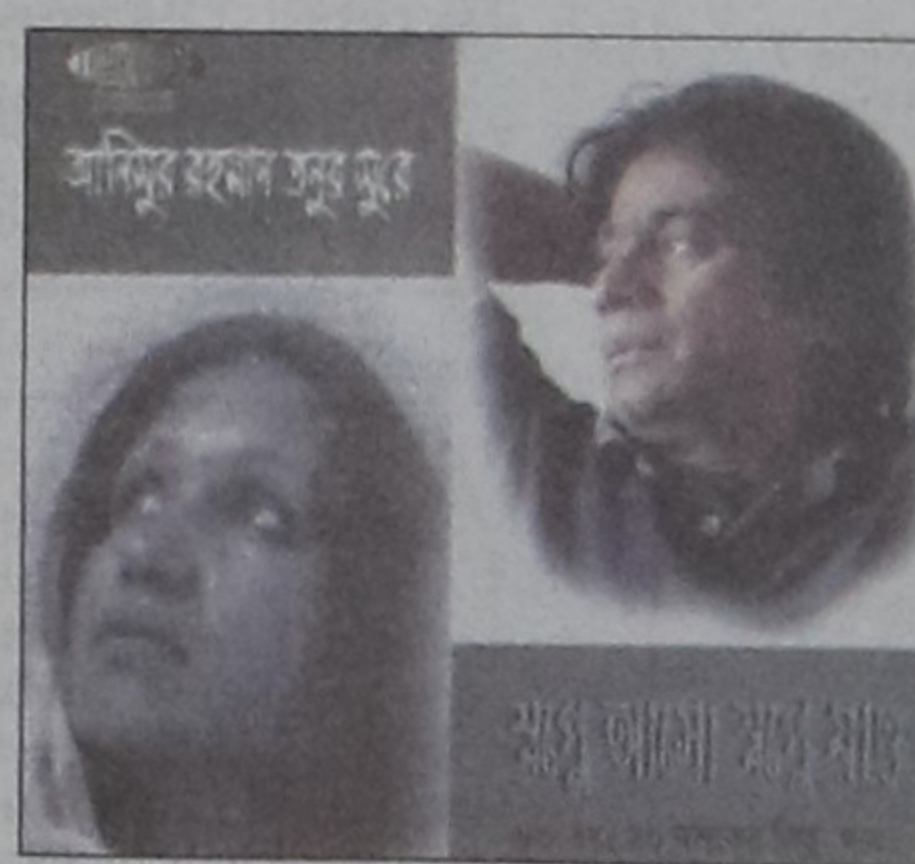


Every year, on the occasion of Lalon's death anniversary, Chheuria (in Kushtia district) wears a festive hue. Bauls from all over the country and West Bengal (India) congregate at Lalon's shrine. Another attraction is the three-day long 'Lalon Mela'. Through music and philosophical discourse, followers of Lalon remember the mystic bard.

## NEW RELEASES

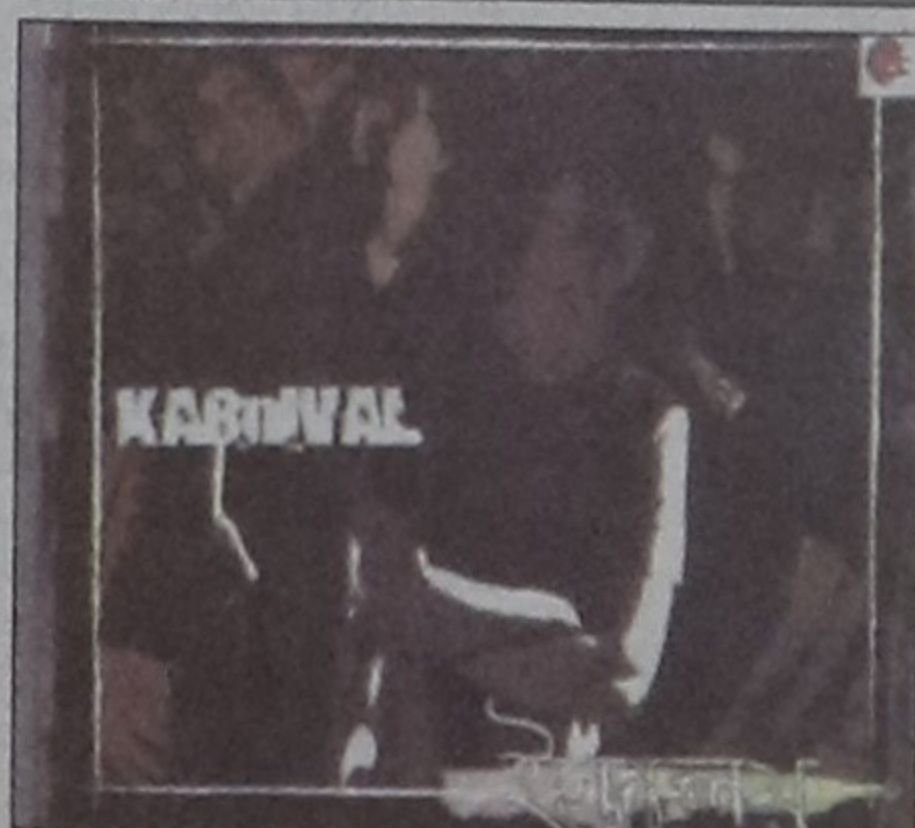
### AUDIO

Swapney Asho  
Swapney Jao  
Mixed album  
featuring songs  
from the 1980s  
and '90s  
Source: Light  
and Shade



Proloy  
Mixed  
album  
Source:  
Deadline  
Music

Indraloy  
Album featuring  
the band  
Karnival  
Source: Fahim  
Music



Bump Your  
Stereo  
Album featuring  
the band Blazin  
Annex  
Source:  
Agniveena