

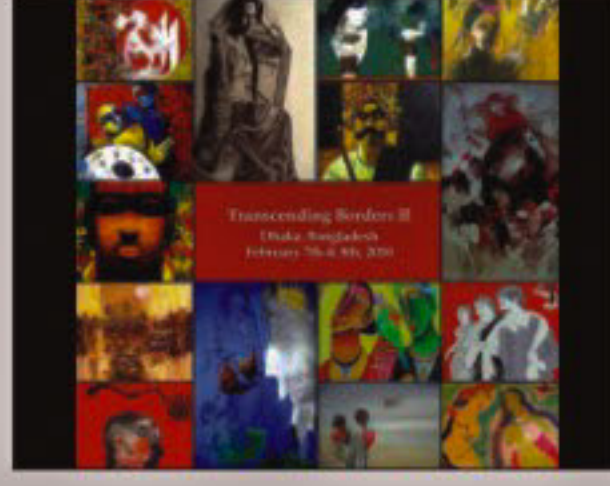
WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Ekushey Book Fair
 Venue: Bangla Academy
 Date: February 1-28
 Time: 3pm-9pm



Group Art Exhibition

Title: Transcending Borders II
 Venue: Radisson Water Garden Hotel, Airport Road, Dhaka
 Date: February 7-8
 Time: 11am-10pm



Film Screening

Title: Film For Fresher
 Organiser: Jahangirnagar Students' Film Society
 Venue: Central Auditorium, JU
 Date: February 7-8
 Time: 3pm onwards
 Today: 'Kebab Connection', 'In Bruges' & 'Love Me If You Dare'



Art Exhibition

Artists: Tajuddin Ahmed and Kamal Kabir
 Venue: Tivoli Art Gallery, F-33, Second Circle, DCC Market, Gulshan,
 Date: February 8-21
 Time: 10am-8pm



Boi Mela thoughts

Hasan Azizul Huq, an icon of Bangla literature

A CORRESPONDENT

Hasan Azizul Huq is an eminent writer, essayist and researcher. He is reputed for his short stories and meticulous writings.

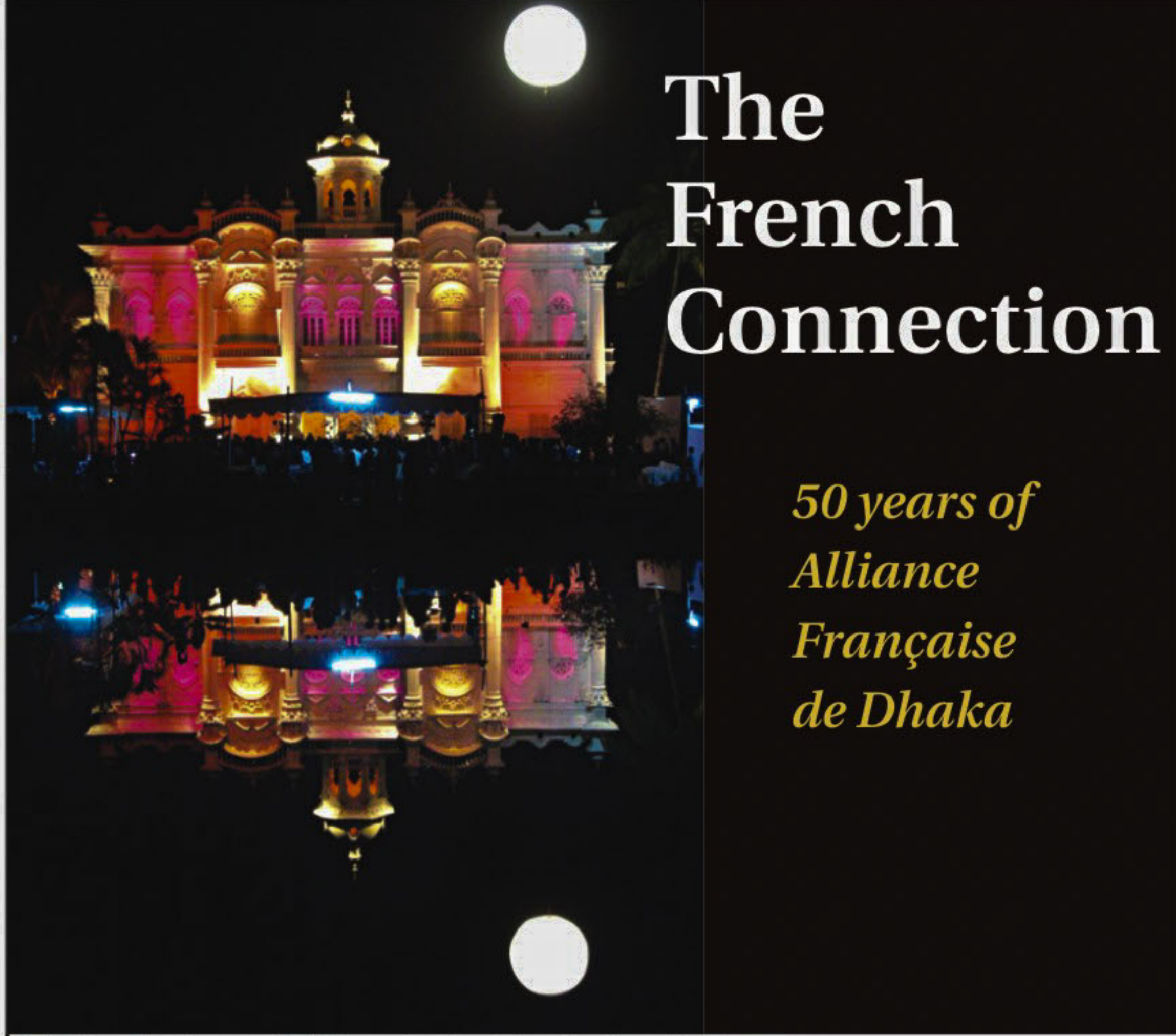


Huq said, "I always go to the book fair. Though it is difficult to see the books in an overcrowded atmosphere, many people come to the fair and the Bangla Academy premises take on a festive air. Over the years, the fair has become a part of our culture. I never write books with a view to display them at the book fair. Last year, my autobiography 'Phire Jai, Phire Ashi' was published by Ittadi publication. This year a compiled work of my three novels has been brought out from the same publishing house.

"Good arrangement, cleanliness, law and order should be increased at the book fair. We should remember that the world of books helps us to go ahead."

Huq's short stories have presented the political, cultural and social lives of the people of Bangladesh. His novels explore the psychological depths of human beings as well as depict the lives of the peasants of Bangladesh.

Huq is well known for his experimentation with language and the introduction of modern expressions in his writings. His writings are unquestionably unique and thought provoking. His use of words and thought-process has earned him critical acclaim.



The French Connection

50 years of Alliance Française de Dhaka

The Rose Garden provided the perfect backdrop for the cultural event.

A CORRESPONDENT

The year-long programmes, celebrating 50 years of Alliance Française de Dhaka, came to an end recently at the Rose Garden in Old Dhaka with a cultural programme. A group of Bangladeshi and French artists rendered songs and performed dances at the festival. The show was vibrant and was well attended by people from diverse fields of interest.

The Rose Garden was decked with an excellent light and sound system. The spectacular "Herbert's Dream" performance, staged by a four-members theatre team from France, amazed the guests.

After some music and dance performances, Saliha Lefvre, director of Alliance Française de Dhaka, called upon the chief guest, guest of honour and special guests to come to the dais.

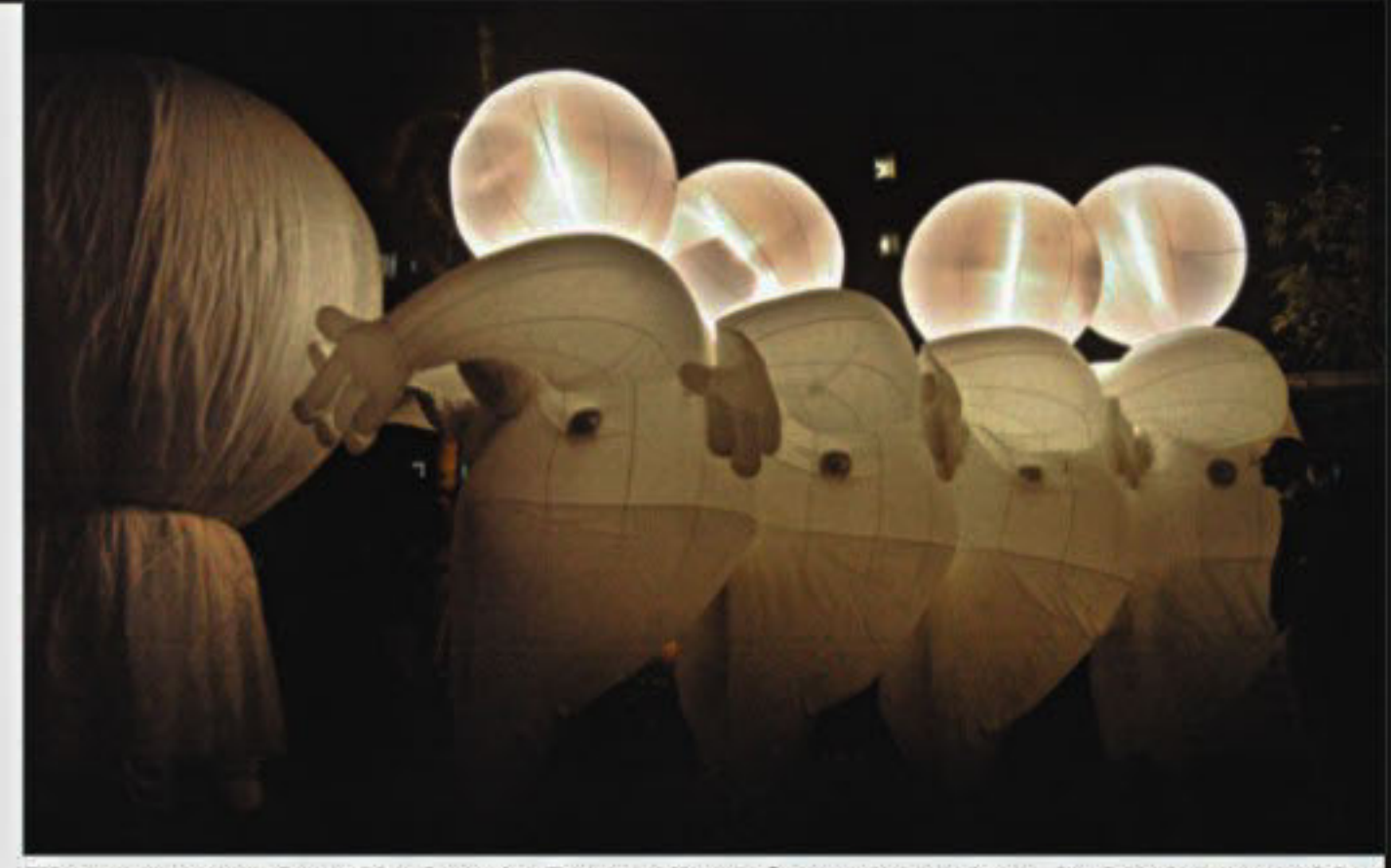
Minister for Information and Culture Abul Kalam Azad was present as chief guest. Azad said, "Bangladesh is ready to work together with France to improve cultural ties as well as strengthening trade and

economic cooperation."

Secretary General de la Fondation Alliance Française, Jean-Claude Jacq, came from Paris to Dhaka for the first time since Alliance Française opened in the city. He attended the closing ceremony as guest of honour.

Jacq said, "Bangladesh is an important country in the region in terms of her population, culture, peace and development." He also said that a nation that forgets its past, language and own cultural heritage, cannot create anything for its future.

French Ambassador Charley Causeret, special guest at the programme, said, "Alliance Française de Dhaka has changed a lot by improving its facilities and modernising itself over the last thirty years. To meet the increasing demand for French classes in Dhaka, two new branches have opened -- one in Baridhara, and the other one in Uttara. Over three thousand students were admitted last year. The cultural activities have also been booming with the launch of various artistic workshops, exhibitions at La Galerie, concerts and many more successful events."



The spectacular "Herbert's Dream" performance, (top-below) staged by theatre team from France, amazed the guests.



Saliha Lefvre, director of Alliance Française de Dhaka, speaks at the programme.



Shibli and Nipa to stage a grand spectacle

SA Games to wrap up with a bang

A CORRESPONDENT

The SA Games are approaching their closure. What better way to end the hugely popular games (February 9) than a taste of our traditional dance by our very own renowned classical dancers -- Shibli Mohammad and Shamim Ara Nipa.

Shibli promises that the duo's performance at the conclusion of the games will be entirely different from that at the inaugural ceremony. The talented dancer gave this correspondent an overview of what spectators can look forward to:

"At the opening we tried to put out a fantastic combination of colours and fantasies. At the closing, we'll have four different sessions -- Aquatic Shoot, Kathak, Angel and Folk dances."

"The aquatic shoot would be the first of its kind in Bangladesh, in fact in South Asia. With the help of a Singaporean company, which will provide us technical support, we will project a dance in water. Nipa and I will



be dancing to 'Momo Chitte' in the video of the aquatic shot. The performance will be re-enacted by our group, most of whom are Nriyanchal

students." Shibli added that at one point of the performance, Nipa and he would rush out of the video and on the stage. How would they do that?

"That's a secret," he said smilingly.

"After this there will be Kathak performance with around 50 dancers. The Mughal era will be recreated here."

"Angel will be a special performance in sky blue and white. Eighty girls will take part in this item. This section is about dreams, hope and love," said Shibli.

The duo will end with a performance to the ever-familiar folk song "Kolo Kolo Chholo Chholo". There will be 40 sails. Then it will be the turn of fireworks to light up the sky.

The dance has been choreographed by Shamim Ara Nipa and Shibli Mohammad. Talking about the participants, Shibli said, "Most of these boys and girls are young. They and their guardians were very cooperative, rehearsing relentlessly day and night. They hardly became tired, as they were equally excited about the performance. All in all it's going to be a great show."

Tunes of devotion

Six-day long Kirtan rendition in Jhenidah



Devotees through the Kaliganj Kalibari as Champa Rani Bardhaman renders Kirtan at the programme.

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

A six-day long uninterrupted chanting and Kirtan rendition was held recently in Jhenidah. These hymns in honour of Hari were rendered by six groups of Kirtaniya (musicians).

Abdul Mannan, lawmaker of Jhenidah-4 constituency, inaugurated the event on January 30.

Kanak Kanti Das, sadar upazila chairman and general secretary of Bangladesh Puja Celebration Committee; Mahbubur Rahman, Kaliganj Municipality Mayor and Mehedi Hasan, OC of Kaliganj Police Station, were present as special guests.

The six groups that performed are: Shaktimata Samproday (Khulna), Adi Nityananda Samproday (Natore), Ashto Shakti (Khulna), Bashonti (Jessore), Ujjal Smriti (Khulna) and Chaitanya (Jhenidah).

Among the singers who rendered Kirtan are Champa Rani Bardhaman (from Rajshahi), Suvash Chandra Sarkar (Naogaon), Anita Rani Devnath (Dinajpur) and Pachanan Pande (Chapainabaganj).

This event is observed at Kaliganj Kalibari every year. A committee of eight members organise this grand function every year. The committee is led by convener Dr. Bhakta Kumar Mondol of Kalibari Puja Mandap.

Why Hathaway turned down "Alice..." lead

Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway turned down the lead role in Tim Burton's upcoming "Alice In Wonderland" redux, as she was tired of her "pretty girl" image.

The 27-year-old actress was asked to star as Alice in the Burton-directed film but opted to play the White Queen instead.

According to the reports, she had previously played a pretty protagonist in The "Princess Diaries" movies which launched her career and didn't want to do similar roles.

"The studio had the script a long time ago and I was approached back then for the part of Alice. I considered it, but felt, what with "The Princess Diaries", that I had been there, done that sort of pretty-girl-in-a-fairy-dress role. I told the studio, however, that I would be interested at a later date in playing the White Queen," said Hathaway.

The role of Alice eventually went to Australian newcomer Mia Wasikowska, but Hathaway has no regrets about her decision.

"When Tim came on board he had the cast he wanted and, of course, that didn't include me. But the other actress who was marked had scheduling conflicts, so the studio piped up and put me forward.

I talked on the phone with Tim and he really liked my take. I wanted the Queen to be a cross between Debbie Harry, Greta Garbo, David Bowie, with (a) little bit of the work of Dan Flavin thrown in for good measure," said the actress.



Anne Hathaway

Art competition and cultural programme held

HOSSAIN SERAI, Magura

An art competition, a captivating cultural programme and a discussion were held at the Sayed Ator Ali Public Library premises in observance of Wat-San (water and sanitation) mela (fair) to generate awareness among the masses about the use of safe drinking water and sanitary latrines.

The mela was organised by the Jessore Regional NGO Forum with the cooperation of the district and upazila adminis-

tration.

The art competition with the theme 'Adorsha bari' (ideal house) was held on Friday morning at the Library's auditorium with the participation of 65 school children. The cultural programme, featuring songs and dances, was held on February 4 evening at the library premises.

Artists of Udichi Shilpi Goshti performed at the cultural function.

Earlier, on Thursday morning a discussion on safe water and sanitation was held at the inaugural session of the Wat-

San mela.

With fair committee's convener advocate Ali Akhter Dukhu, the discussion was addressed by the Divisional Commissioner of Khulna Mohammad Yunusur Rahman as the chief guest while the Deputy Commissioner in Magura Mohammad Dilwar Bakht, Central Awami League leader Mohammad Altaf Hossain, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Magura Sadar ASM Tarikul Islam and the chairman of the same Upazila Parishad Abu Nasir Bablu were special guests.