

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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



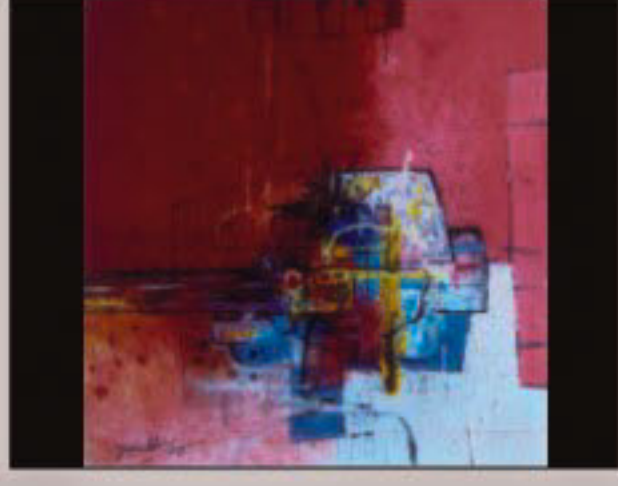
**Cultural Programme**  
To mark Amar Ekushey  
Organiser: Sharmilito Sangskritik Jote  
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises  
Date: February 8-21  
Time: 4pm onwards



**Solo Musical Soiree**  
Singer: Iffat Ara Dewan  
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi  
Date: February 9  
Time: 7:30pm



**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

## The mirthful world of Unmad

In conversation with Ahsan Habib



Unmad can be considered the pioneer in Bangladeshi humour publications. Started by two friends -- Ishtiaq Hossain and Kazi Khaled Ashraf in 1978 -- the cartoon magazine soon drew attention for its intelligent satire. The magazine became extremely popular by the mid 1980s, when cartoonist Ahsan Habib took the charge of the magazine. Brother of Humayun Ahmed and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal -- two of the leading Bangladeshi writers -- Habib has carved a niche for himself in his own right.

Relying heavily on the laughable aspects of social issues and spoof of popular TV shows/films, Habib, along with fellow cartoonists and satire writers soon made Unmad a household name. Unmad became one of the best selling magazines.

The Daily Star caught up with Habib at the Unmad stall, at Ekushey Book Fair.

"Ekushey Book fair is a great occasion. For a month, it accommodates hundreds of publication houses, turning it into a treat for book lovers," says Habib.

"All the major publication houses take special preparations targeting the fair, bringing out special editions, new publications and so on."

Unmad has also brought out a special compilation of its previous issues on the occasion.

"Every year during the fair we bring out a compilation of our back issues. This year's edition is a collection of our eight previous issues," the cartoonist says.

Apart from the special edition, Unmad is also offering hilarious posters, stickers and more, informs Habib.

At the stall, visitors will get a chance to meet their favourite Unmad cartoonists and writers, including Ahsan Habib.

About his plans involving Unmad, Habib says, "We have plans to bring out greeting cards on national festivals like 'Pahela Baishakh', 'Pahela Falgun' and more."

# Beyond boundaries

Featuring Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani artists

A CORRESPONDENT

"Transcending Borders II", an exhibition of contemporary art from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, was held from February 7 to 8 at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the city. The exhibition was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Mijarul Quayes. Guest of honour was Muhammad A. Ali, Chairman Brac Bank Limited.

The unique art exhibition came to the city courtesy Ishi Jami (Pakistani-Canadian) and Ritu Jain (from India) and showcased the works of highly renowned artists from the sub-continent. The aim was to capture the spirit, cultural complexity and charm of South Asia, while celebrating the harmony and friendship between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The two-day event featured works of high distinction and diverse styles, genres and cultural themes.

The history of contemporary art in Bangladesh began in 1947, at the time of partition. Zainul Abedin, (well-known for his sketches of the Bengal Famine of 1943) and some of his fellow artists who were educated in West Bengal, opted to settle down in East Bengal. They set up the first art school in the newly formed state. This institute trained a generation of new artists whose work reflected the changing times. Painters of the 1950s took to abstraction. The creation of Bangladesh as a separate entity further influenced the art of the nation. Artists of the '70s started using a more figurative language. Bangladeshi art received a tremendous impetus when the government of Bangladesh organised The First Asian Art Biennial in 1981.

India's art heritage is a remarkable document of the country's changing face through the ages. Art, paintings and sculpture have been significant part of its daily life since prehistoric times. The enormous variety in style, technique, media and themes is a pointer to the richness of Indian art and its evolution. Indian art has retained a unique character in spite of assimilating in its fold myriad



Paintings by G.N. Qazi (Pakistan), left, and Laxman Aelay (India).

other influences that have come its way. Over the past century it has shown a diverse range of artistic responses to reality.

Pakistani artists have a keen understanding and appreciation of their country's rich cultural heritage as well as an awareness of international trends. They use a vibrant assortment of techniques and textures to portray their emotions. Their art reflects images of an evolving nation, faced with the challenges of transition. Many of these talented artists are bringing forth the harsh realities of life that are often suppressed. The art schools have helped students realise their potential and this has led to a lot of progress in the field of contemporary Pak art in the last 20 years. The artists of Lahore are conscious of its Mughal heritage, whereas the work of Karachi artists is eclectic.

This exhibition was an effort to transcend borders and celebrate the richness in the culture of the three nations.

The 11 Bangladeshi artists whose works were on display: Late Quamrul Hasan (Master), Farida Zaman, Rafiqun Nabi,



Shahid Kabir, Nasreen Begum, Kalidas Karmakar, Jamal Ahmed, Rokeya Sultana, Kanak Champa, Mithu and Nazia Andaleeb Preema.

Featured Indian artists were: Laxman Aelay, Vijay Belgave, Deepa Vedpathak, Raosaheb Gurav, Arvind Kolapkar, Shantkumar Hattarki, Sujata Achrekar and Jyoti Hattarki.

Also on display were works by Pakistani artists: Late Egbal Mehdi (Master), Mashkoor, Abrar Ahmed, Hajra Mansur, Farrukh Shahab, M.A. Bukhari (contemporary calligraphy), S. Rind, Abid Madad, Amjad Butt (contemporary calligraphy), Nahid Raza, G.N. Qazi and Safdar Qureshi (Miniaturist).

Sponsors of the event were BRAC Bank Limited, Partex Group, GMG Airlines (Travel Partner) and Duncan Brothers.

## An evening of Adhunik songs by Fahmida Nabi



Fahmida Nabi performs at Bengal Gallery.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On February 6, the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts in Dhanmondi witnessed a full house. The audience was treated to an evening of Adhunik songs, rendered evocatively by Fahmida Nabi, one of the most recognisable voices of Bangladesh.

The event was organised by the daily Prothom Alo in honour of the late

Mahmudunnabi, renowned Adhunik and playback singer. Mahmudunnabi (Fahmida's father) had an immense contribution to the Adhunik genre and inspired both the melodies and lyrics of that era.

Talking about the musical soiree, Fahmida Nabi said, "One of the greatest gifts for an artist is an appreciative audience; this evening's programme is a great example of that. I hope to be a part of such quality programmes in the future."

## A fascinating fare

Documentary and short film festival concludes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day festival featuring documentaries and short films by local filmmakers ended yesterday at the Seminar Hall of Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Titled "Bangladesh Short and Documentary Film Festival '10", the festival was jointly organised by Bangladesh Documentary Filmmakers Association and Bangladesh Short Film Directors Association.

The festival was inaugurated on February 6. Information Secretary Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury inaugurated the festival. Professor Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of World University of Bangladesh was the chief guest. Among the others present were filmmaker Badal Rahman and Nur Hossain Talukdar, director (joint secretary) of Department of Public Libraries.

Zahir Raihan's "Stop Genocide" was the inaugural film.

The festival featured over 60 films, most of which were made by young Bangladeshi filmmakers. The festival also featured a competition. The organisers gave awards in different categories including best film and best director.

A photography exhibition

was also part of the festival, which was inaugurated the first day. Arranged by Dhaka Photographic Institute, the exhibition was inaugurated by Home Secretary ANM Bazlur Rahman. The exhibition featured 54 photographs by 31 photographers.



A scene from the documentary "Park'er Jibon", screened at the festival.

## "Raat Biraate": Getting nocturnal with Debashish Biswas

A CORRESPONDENT

Banglavisión will air its late night entertainment show "Raat Biraate" tonight. Aired at 11:25 pm the programme features a celebrity who shares his/her experiences with the host.

The programme is shot at night. The guest walks the empty streets of Dhaka with the host Maznun Mizan, visiting places with which (s)he has fond memories.

Tonight's episode of the show features popular TV show host and director Debashish Biswas. Produced by Kaunain Shourav "Raat Biraate" is aired every Tuesday.



Debashish (left) with the host of the show.



Performances by students and local artistes reflecting Bangladeshi traditions were held at a programme at Siddiqui's International School. The performances were part of a 'Pitha Utshab', says a press release.

## Baul songs at Kagmari Conference anniversary

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A three-day programme marking the 53rd anniversary of the historic Kagmari Conference began at Santosh in Tangail on February 7.

The first day's programme included Baul songs, a discussion and traditional lathi khela.

Baul Jasimuddin of Dighulia, Tangail and his team staged a stirring performance of Baul songs, including several on the Kagmari Conference and legendary politician Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani.

Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin inaugurated the programme at the Maulana Bhasani University of Science and Technology (MBUST) campus and addressed the discussion as the chief guest.

"We have acquired an independent Bangladesh, but people are not yet free from exploitation," said Matin.

The Language Movement veteran expressed the hope that politicians



Baul Jasimuddin and his troupe perform at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

would be imbued with the spirit of the Kagmari Conference and fight poverty, illiteracy and all kinds of injustice.

Coordinator of Maulana Bhasani Research Centre Syed Irfanul Bari presided over the discussion.

Among others, politician Hamidul

Haque Mohan, engineer Inamul Haque, Khandakar Nazim Uddin, Mahmudul Haque Shanu, and two students of MBUST -- Akter Jahan and Tarana Jannat -- also spoke at the discussion.

Lathi khela, a specialty of the Kagmari conference, was also held at the concluding session.

## Filmmaking workshop by noted American director

Eric J. Adams, an acclaimed US filmmaker, producer, author and former journalist arrives in Dhaka today to conduct a workshop on filmmaking, according to a press release.

During his ten-day visit, the Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media (BIJEM) will host Adams. Adams wife, Kathleen, with whom he has collaborated on numerous creative projects, is accompanying him.

Adams directed and co-wrote the independent feature film "My Suicide", which won seventeen film awards, including the Crystal Bear at the prestigious Berlin International Film Festival. Adams is the author of six books.

As a journalist, Adams has written for several national and regional newspapers, including The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times.

Adams will conduct the workshop titled "Story, Structure and Screenwriting" on February 17 at the Conference Room of BIJEM. Interested film directors, producers, story and scriptwriters, film journalists and researchers will participate at the workshop.



Eric J. Adams