

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: Shammilito Sangskritik Jote
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises
Date: February 8-21
Time: 4pm onwards



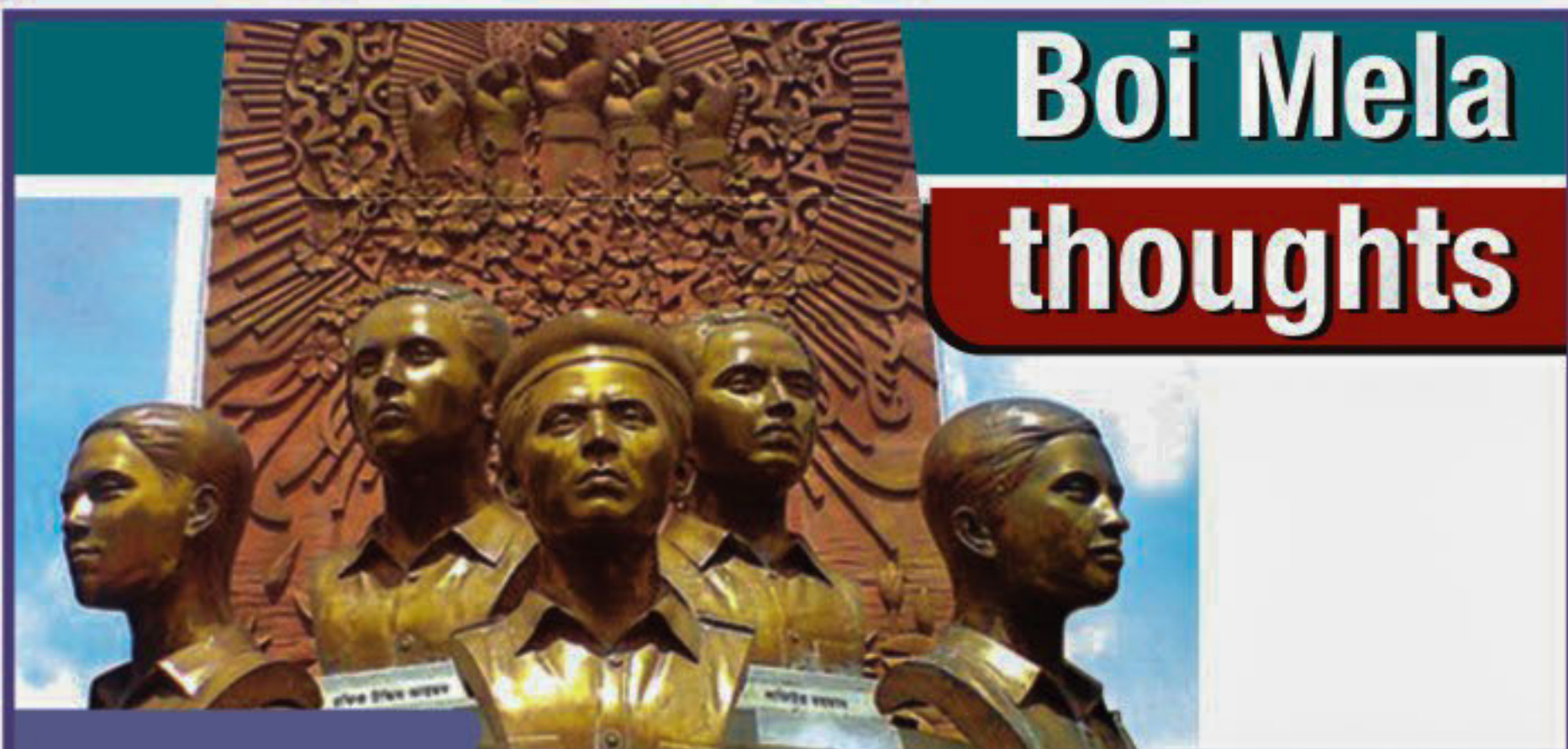
Solo Art Exhibition

Artist: Rashid Amin
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-26, R-3, Dhanmondi
Date: February 18-March 1
Time: 12pm-8pm



Solo Photography Exhibition

Photographer: Andera Kunzig
Title: Urban Changes
Venue: Goethe Institut Bangladesh
Date: February 8-25
Time: 10am-7pm



Boi Mela thoughts

"It's high time the Boi Mela open its doors to international participation"

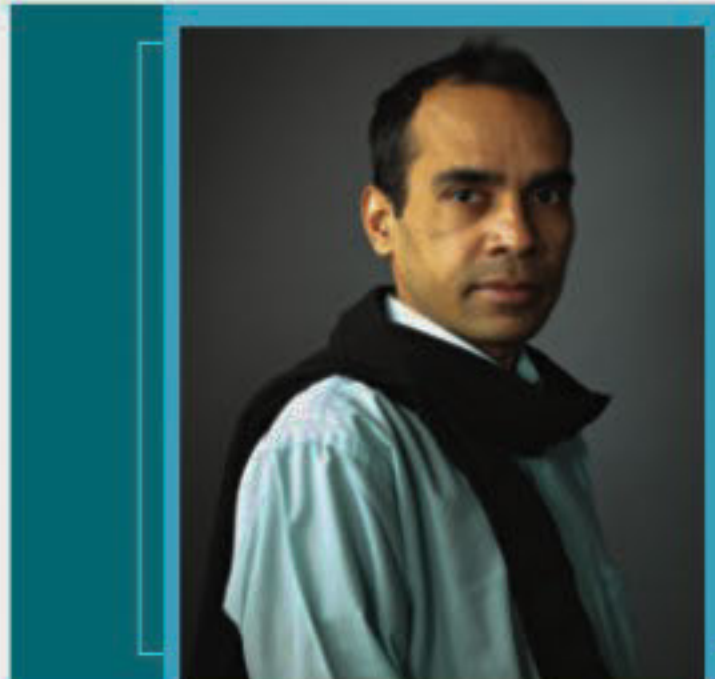
Anisur Rahman

A CORRESPONDENT

"I believe that Ekushey Book Fair has become a key and integral part of the cultural identity of Bangladesh. It's not just a fair, it has a historical and traditional value. In the West, as far I know, a book fair usually has a commercial outlook. Ekushey Book Fair has avoided pursuing commercial interests only," says poet, playwright, and essayist Anisur Rahman.

"It is high time to open its doors to international participation," Rahman says, "as Dhaka International Book Fair has been a failing event."

"I feel the Ekushey Book Fair should have some secondary stages for seminars, discussions and debates alongside the main stage. These can work as open forums. Many experts, writers and publishers are voicing their opinions through the press. If multiple stages are provided at the *mela*, everyone will have access to a platform where (s)he can discuss and debate on literary, cultural and national issues," says Rahman who is now a guest writer in Uppsala University, Sweden.



Rahman's collection of poems is being translated to Swedish. His Bengali translations of Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" and Henrik Ibsen's "The Lady from the Sea" have earned him much acclaim. His latest publication is "The Absent Poet and Other Essays" -- a collection of 40 essays on aesthetic traditions and socio-cultural aspects of Bengali poetry and plays.

Rahman's novel "Oi Andhokar Ashey" and english translation "Memoirs of a Juvenile Freedom Fighter of Mazibur Rahman Khoka" (published from Bidya Prokash) are now available at the ongoing Ekushey Book Fair.

A 'jatra' production on Jyoti Basu

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Seeking to cash in on the huge popularity of the late Marxist politician Jyoti Basu, a *jatra* (folk theatre) group here is going to mount a production on him.

Titled "Alor Sikha Amar Jyoti", the *jatra*, scheduled to go on stage by this month-end will begin with Basu's death on January 17 this year and then go back 40 years to 1972 when the leader engaged in confrontation with Congress party at Baranagar in Kolkata's northern fringe.

The manager of the *jatra* company 'Anjali Opera,' Prashanta Goswami, said he is looking to cash in on the popularity that was in evidence post the death of the leader as thousands of people attended his funeral procession.

"The facts will be presented through the voice of a 'journalist character' who having known Basu for a long time will chronicle the landmark events in the leader's life which will then be enacted," Goswami said.

After touching Basu's stint as opposition leader in the early 70s, his coming to power with a massive popular mandate in 1977, his historic public meeting following the electoral rout of Congress and his stint as chief minister of West Bengal from late 1970s till 2000 will all find place in the over three-hour-long



production.

The *jatra* will also highlight Basu's landmark political decisions like land reforms and panchayat body elections that brought about a revolutionary change in agrarian rural Bengal.

Talented actor of small screen Gouri Shankar Panda will essay the role of Basu who was a thorough gentleman and a strict disciplinarian. "We will touch upon his personal equation with leaders like diehard opponent Mamata Banerjee, Pranab Mukherjee, Sonia Gandhi and others among a galaxy of personalities that the leader had come in contact with in different stages of his life," Goswami said.

He, however, skirted a question if controversies surrounding his long rule in the state would be dealt with as well by stating that the *jatra* would be "acceptable to all sections of people," the objective being to highlight his towering personality.

The character of Basu's close friend and bitter political rival Siddhartha Shankar Roy will also be there in the play.

Weeklong book fair in Khagrachhari

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Speakers at a discussion were of the view that books play a vital role in removing ignorance, bigotry and vices from the society as well as from the country. Books enlighten the society, they added.

The discussion -- held at Shantipur High School, under Dighinala Upazila in Khagrachhari district recently -- was part of a weeklong book fair jointly organised by Literature Society and Teachers' Association.

Teacher Ananda Mohan Chakma presided over the discussion while Dighinala Upazila Vice President Supriya Chakma attended the event as chief guest.

The chief guest urged students to develop an enhanced reading habit. He also hoped that the government would initiate at least primary level education in mother languages for indigenous students.

About hundred students, their guardians and villagers attended the book fair.

Ekushey February specials on ntv

A Correspondent

On the occasion of Ekushey February, ntv will telecast special programmes throughout the day. The programmes include live telecast of 'Ekusher Prabhat Pheri' from the Central Shaheed Minar, special talk shows, feature film and TV plays.

Live telecast of the 'Prabhat Pheri' will be started from 6:20am. Feature film "Megher Onok Rang" will be aired at 11am. The film is directed by Harun-ur-Rashid. The cast includes Mathin, Omar Elahi, Rawshan Ara and Adnan.

Live musical programme featuring songs on 'Ekushey' will be aired 2:35pm. Shikriti Das Barua is the producer of the programme.

TV play "Palasher Rang" will be aired at 8:10pm. Written by Shahabuddin, the play is directed by Sumon Anwar. Farhana Mili, Dinar, Wahida Mallick Jolly and Farhana Mithu play the lead roles.

Documentary programme "Shamakaler Bhashachitra" will be aired 9:45pm. Fayeze Reza has produced the programme. The programme will feature interviews of eminent personalities and video footage on the day.

Special talk show "Amar Bhasha Amar Ashtitwa" will be aired at 11:40pm. The programme will be aired live. Hosted by Dr. Afsar Ahmed, featured guests on the programme are Dr. Alauddin Ahmed, Sanjeeb Drong and Subhashish Sinha.

In conversation

with RJ Pampa

Heard not seen

A CORRESPONDENT

Along with other programmes, RJ Pampa regularly hosts "Jiboner Jai-gaan" on ABC Radio FM 89.2 every Saturday at 12:30pm. The programme is based on The Daily Star-Standard Chartered "Celebrating Life" contest.

In a free wheeling interview, this correspondent had a chance to speak to the RJ on a range of issues.

How would you describe yourself?

Pampa: I am one of the voices people hear when they tune into ABC Radio. On top of being an RJ, I also work as a reporter for the radio station. I completed my Masters in Physics from Dhaka University recently.

What drove you to become an RJ?

Pampa: I have associated myself with oratory skills from an early age. I used to be a debater, recite poetry and anchor events. When ABC Radio first started under the leadership of Matiur Rahman, they were looking for RJs at Dhaka University. I signed up with the recommendation of my teacher, Rupa Chakraborty. This was back in 2005 and, along with a few other students of DU, I had my orientation on radio presentation for about six/seven months. The FM scene had not yet picked up. The station was launched properly again in 2008 under Transcom's ownership.

I've been working as an RJ at ABC Radio since the re-launch. ABC Radio allowed me the space I needed to grow and form my own style since the style of existing RJs at the time did not appeal to me.

People say that the biggest drawback to being an RJ is that no one sees you and you miss out the opportunity of becoming a celebrated face. What are your views on this?

Pampa: I think that's the best part! I enjoy being able to speak without being seen, it gives me a sense of freedom. I don't think I would enjoy being a television host.



Furthermore, being an RJ is sort of like a craze in Dhaka right now. Even students in Class VIII seem to be overexcited about it. I suppose they develop a sense of curiosity, since they only hear the voice but cannot see the person. And sometimes I myself get surprised when people look at me with awe after finding out that I am 'the' RJ Pampa.

Who has inspired you? Name an RJ you like.

Pampa: I don't have any specific person as an inspiration. I am rather inspired by all that is good around me, and draw from my surrounding's positivity. About RJs, I used to enjoy RJ Kibria's style, who was formerly on Radio Today and then moved to ABC Radio.

What are your future plans? Want to stick to the radio?

Pampa: For the foreseeable future, yes, I want to remain an RJ. But I wish to continue my education and perhaps become an academic. I am planning to apply for admission [for MPhil degree] in the Physics Department of Dhaka University soon.

Special show on ntv

A moment with Shahrukh

A CORRESPONDENT

As the latest Shahrukh starrer "My Name is Khan" takes the global media by storm, ntv aired a special show "An Exclusive moment with Shahrukh Khan" at 11:40 pm last Tuesday.

The programme gave Bangladeshi viewers an in-depth look on the movie.

"Even though the highlight of the show was supposed to be an exclusive interview with the star, we couldn't air the whole discourse. Khan chose to talk only about the movie," said Raahat Alam who compiled the programme.

In the very brief interview, Shahrukh Khan shared his views on "My Name is Khan".

"The interview was shot at the ntv studio in London," said Raahat.

The programme also included an interview of Karan Johar (director of "My Name is Khan"), a promo of the movie and excerpts from a press conference on the movie in London attended by Shahrukh Khan, Kajol and others.



Shahrukh Khan speaks to ntv.

Oscars promise big changes for this year's show

No live performance by Best Song nominees

The Academy Awards have been around for 82 years. During that time, the show has given the world hundreds of thank-you speeches, musical numbers and uncomfortable on-camera loser reactions. This year, however, things are shaping up to be quite different.

Boasting the tagline "You've never seen Oscar like this," producers Adam Shankman ("Hairspray" director, choreographer) and Bill Mechanic (former Fox honcho, "Coraline" producer) are hard at work tweaking tradition. Everyone already knows the biggest change: 10 Best Picture nominees instead of five. Now, with only 19 days until the year's biggest awards show takes centre stage, here are a few more key tweaks hoping to shake the cobwebs off a Hollywood institution:

No ThankYou

If you're an Oscar winner's spouse, mother, dog or lawyer, the awards show can mean a special night of sitting on the edge of your seat, wondering if a famous person will mention you in their moment of triumph; if you're not, however, all those name-checking thank-yous are about as interesting as Ben Stein reading the



phonebook. This week, Shankman and Mechanic greeted the stars at the annual Oscar nominees luncheon with an unusual request to address the conflict: write two speeches. They are now encouraged to "share your passion on what the Oscar means to you" while onstage and save the thank-yous (Mechanic called them "the single most-hated thing on the show") for a backstage webcam.

So You Think You Can Change Best Song?

In a true jaw-dropper, Shankman and Mechanic have told the artistes nominated for Best Original Song that they won't be performing their music in the typical elaborate production-number format; the music will instead play over footage from the films during montage tributes. To make things even more interesting, Deadline Hollywood is

reporting that Shankman -- a judge on "So You Think You Can Dance" -- is contemplating using some of the reality show's stars for dance numbers during the awards show.

The Hosts With the Most?

For the first time since the 1950s, Oscar will employ two hosts this year: Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin. What makes things even more peculiar is that the latter has proven himself to be a fine host in 2001 and 2003, but this year will share duties with first-timer Baldwin. At best, viewers can expect some added gravitas from Baldwin, who would be much more suited to intro the "In Memoriam" video; Martin, meanwhile, could provide some fun back-and-forth banter and maybe a banjo number.

At worst, it could be a replay of the 2008 Emmys where Ryan Seacrest, Howie Mandell, Tom Bergeron and others all co-hosted while employing radically different approaches that collided like bumper cars and proved to be equally nauseating. Will Martin and Baldwin be a better match? Tune in March 7 to find out.