

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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



Musical Soiree
 Artists: Rinku
 Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy
 Date: February 23
 Time: 6pm



Cultural Programme
 Organiser: Amra Surjomukhi
 Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy
 Date: February 25
 Time: 5pm



Film Screening
 Organiser: High Commission of India Cultural Centre
 Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, H-35, R-24, Gulshan-1
 Film: Sagarika
 Date: February 26
 Time: 6pm



The Art of Words

In conversation with Mohammad Rafiquzzaman

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

The romantic young lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman was in for a surprise when his very first song was chosen for the prestigious "E-masher Gaan" on Radio. The programme centring on leading artistes, was aired four times a week on Radio Bangladesh. Four eminent singers Ferdousi Rahman, Anjuman Ara Begum, Abdul Hadi and Monu De rendered that particular song, and Rafiquzzaman received a rousing response from his peers. Noted music director Azad Rahman had composed the song.

Back in 1965 this was undoubtedly a turning point for the budding lyricist Rafiquzzaman, hardly in his early 20's at that time. "Recognition of such magnitude for the song 'Mugdho amar ey chokh jokhon, mukhdho amar e mon', among the music connoisseurs was a catalyst to draw me closer to the world of lyrics and it soon became an inseparable part of me," says a soft-spoken Rafiquzzaman.

Among the 1,000 plus songs that have created ripples such as, "Amar Mon Pakhita Jai re Urey", "Amake ekti doyel bolechhey" by Runa Laila; "Paharer kanna dekhe" by Subir Nandi and countless hits by Sabina Yasmeen such as "Jodi moroner porey keo proshno korey", "Tumi eshechho bohudin por", "Shobai boley joto shorbonasher muul" by Nargis Perveen; "Amar baul moner ektara ta" a duet by Rafiqul Alam and Shammi Akhter and more ---it would not be an overstatement to say that Rafiquzzaman is the most accomplished among the contemporary lyricists.

A student of literature, Rafiquzzaman was irresistibly drawn to music. Like most amateur writers, Rafiquzzaman had penned his first lyric, a parody, for a college function in 1961. He was then studying at his hometown in Jessore. Soon he joined Bangladesh Betar and set sail on his journey to the world of timeless songs.

A nostalgic Rafiquzzaman recalls the golden days of music. "The talented Abu Zafar was my contemporary. My elder brother Dr. Mohammad Muniruzzaman; Professor Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal; Abul Hayat Mohammad



Mohammad Rafiquzzaman

Kamal and Fazle Khuda were already noted personalities in the music circuit as lyricists when I started," he continues.

Famous composers Abdul Ahad, Sattya Shaha, Dhir Ali, Khondokar Nurul Alam, Azad Rahman and others created timeless gems that remain unmatched.

"Film songs are situational," adds the accomplished lyricist. "It is a combined effort of the lyricists, music composers, artistes, musicians and the recordists. We would spend hours together with the music composers and the artistes would sit for regular rehearsals before a song was created.

"Many of my songs, going by their popularity, such as "Dukkhho amar bashor rater palonko", by Sabina Yasmeen; "Bondhu hotey cheye tomar shotru boley gonno holaam" by Subir Nandi, "Eto shukh shoibo kemon korey" by Nilufar Yasmeen were included as playbacks.

Rafiquzzaman was awarded the BACHSAS

and National Award for lyrics for "Tumi emoni jaal petechho shongshar-e" (film *Shubhoda*) sung by Subir Nandi; "Jonom Jonom dhore prem piyashi" sung by Sabina Yasmeen (film *Debdas*); and "Phuler bashor bhango jokhon" sung by Probal Chowdhury (film *Chandranath*).

Apart from scriptwriting in movies and directing quite a few films, Rafiquzzaman has penned a book on the technique of lyric writing, titled "Adhunik Bangla Gaan Rochonar Kolakoushal". The book was published in 2008 at the Ekushey Boi Mela.

Rafiquzzaman conducts a special evening programme on Bangladesh Betar, albeit infrequently. The show is broadcast twice a week on Thursdays and Saturdays, and has been broadcast for the last 20 years. In the 30-minute programme, he concentrates on the queries of the upcoming talents, about the technique of writing songs. He discusses at length the choice of words, the importance of meter in songs and more.

And that is not all---now listeners might tune in to the three-hour show currently aired live from radio ABC on Saturdays from 12 pm (noon) in which he communicates with the new generation lyricists.

Rafiquzzaman is not totally disheartened about the contemporary writers but stresses that the onus falls on both sides. "We have distanced ourselves from them, and so have they. This has inevitably created a gap in the field. If only we nurture the latent talents we would be able to create a new generation of songwriters."

"In our country the lyricists become a forgotten chapter when a song becomes a classic," notes Rafiquzzaman. "I detest the word 'geetikaar'; 'kaar' in Bangla refers to the word 'whom'? To me it distances the poet from his creativity I prefer the word 'geetikobi', which is musical on its own," he adds with a smile, "and ties in the lyricist with his work in a close bond".

"Once we appreciate the meaning of the word geeti-kobi, and get the right inspiration, lyricists will once again be proud to have their name associated with at least one timeless piece of work in their lifetime, rather than a thousand one-day hits," he says.



PHOTO: MUMIT M.W

Theatre troupe Aranyak Natyadal staged its production "Ebong Bidyashagor" at the Ekushey Book Fair premises on February 20. Highlighting the life and time of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Bidyashagor, the play is written by Mannan Hira and directed by Mamunur Rashid. The play is set in the mid-nineteenth century Calcutta, which particularly focuses on the challenges the reformer faced when trying to introduce the practice of widow remarriage in the mainstream Hindu society. The cast includes Mamunur Rashid, Aminul Haque, Mannan Hira, Momena Chowdhury, Tamalika and others.

Tribute to language movement martyrs

Play of colours

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A painting competition for children was held on Sunday morning to observe the International Mother Language Day at Thakurgaon Eco Pathshala Shaheed Minar premises.

About 200 children from different educational institutions participated in three groups at the competition:

The judges selected nine children for awards.

Thakurgaon Eco Pathshala also organised a hand writing competition at the same event for school children in three groups. Judges selected nine children from three groups for awards.

After the competition a prize giving ceremony and cultural programme were held at the school Shaheed Minar premises.

Thakurgaon District Udichi Shilpi Goshthi also organised a *Gana Sangeet* and painting competition on Sunday morning at the Thakurgaon Government College Shaheed Minar premises.

Local cultural organisations held several programmes to mark the day. Likewise, several schools in the districts arranged discussions and cultural programmes at their school premises with a view to generate awareness about the history of the Language Movement among the



PHOTO: STAR

Children seen engrossed in painting at the competition.

students. Discusants focused on the history of Language Movement and recapitulated the events in Dhaka and other parts of the country including their districts during the movement in 1952.

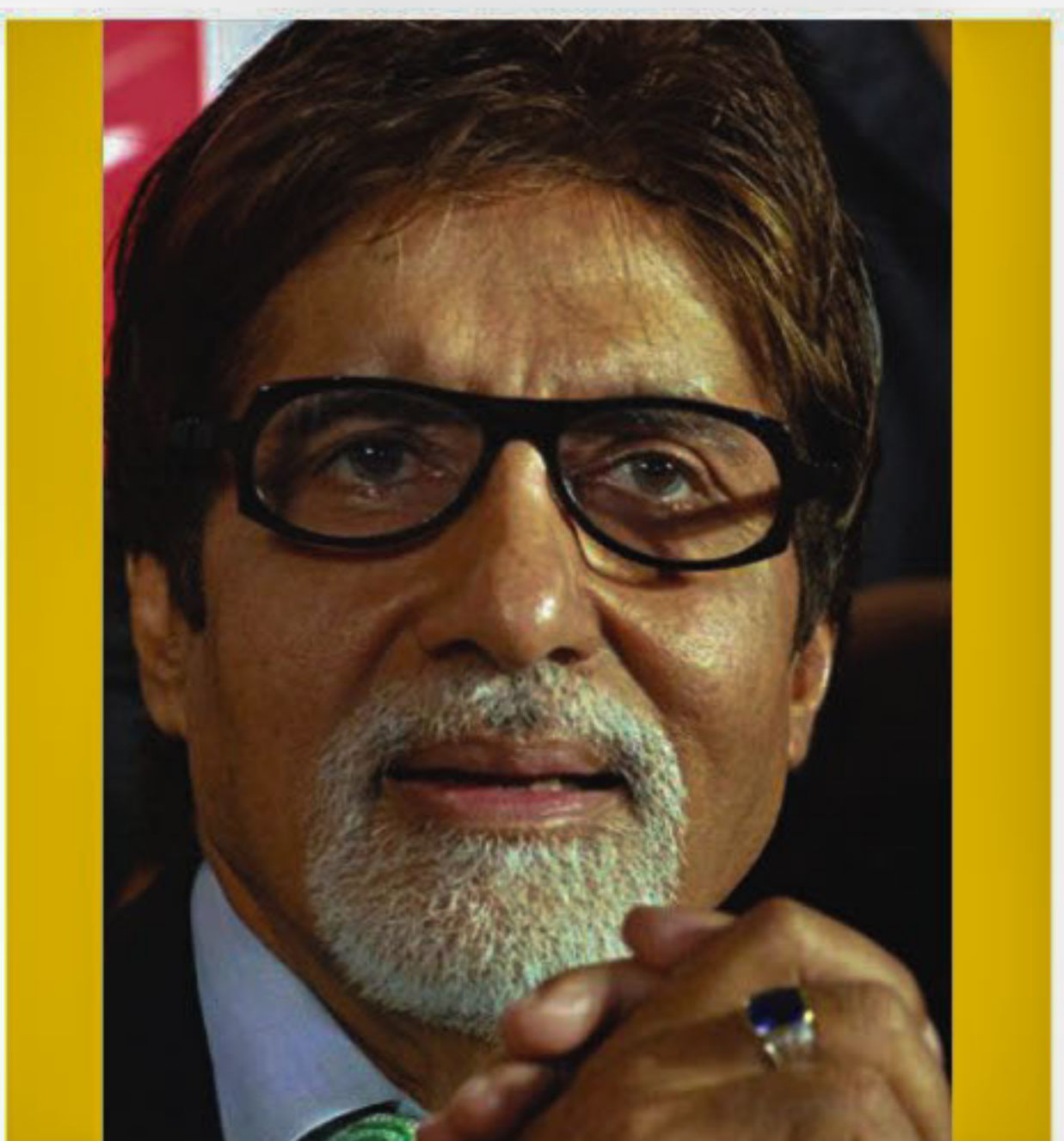
Speakers urged the public to uphold the spirit of the Language Movement to build a secular and democratic country. A painting competition was also held at

Panchagarh Shaheed Minar premises.

Panchagarh Shishu Academy organised an event to observe International Mother Language Day.

Different socio-cultural organisations in Panchagarh also chalked out programmes, including a recitation competition and cultural programmes at several venues to mark the International Mother Language Day.

Big B adopts 90-year-old freedom fighter



Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan was so moved by the strength and conviction of a 90-year-old freedom fighter fighting for her pension that he decided to take care of her for the next five years.

The actor, who made the declaration at the IBN18 Network's Citizen Journalist Awards, says all Gayatri Devi wants is her due.

"I am moved by their plight. Particularly that of the 90-year-old lady and have announced that I shall take care of her pension for the next five years. She blesses me," the 67-year-old posted on his blog bigb.bigadda.com.

"She has only that element of humanity left in her. She can barely walk. And she is old. And all she wants is her due - her pension - R.3,500 per month from the government."

Gayatri Devi had been on dharna on the streets of the capital for the past four years, fighting to get her freedom fighter's pension restored. She was getting money from the Bihar government under the "Samman" pension scheme for freedom fighters since 1997 and has relevant documents to support her claim. But in 2002 her pension was suddenly stopped.

She was told that her name appeared in a list of fake freedom fighters. She approached many prominent leaders and got them to write applications on her behalf, but nothing happened.

CNN-IBN filed a Right to Information (RTI) on her behalf. Soon after, the Delhi government intervened. They moved Gayatri Devi into an old age home and granted her a destitute pension. But her battle will continue till the Bihar government restores her freedom fighter's pension.

Source: Internet

Udhichi Shilpi Goshthi stages "Mandhar"

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The artistes of Udhichi Shilpi Goshthi staged a play marking the 7th biennial district conference of the Trade Union Centre (TUC) at Malgodam area in the district town on February 19.

The actors of the drama, titled "Mandhar" were--- Khokon, Chinmoy, Monir Hossain, Rashed Ahmed, Sayem, Shuvo, Sumon, Tithi and Joyati.

Sarwar Kamal Robin accompanied the artistes on the dotara while Konkon Nagh, Razib

Banik and Kanchan Bhushan Nagh played on the tabla and harmonium respectively.

The play, written by Rahul Ananda and directed by Moni Bhushan, Bhattacharya enthralled the huge audience that had thronged the venue.

The play featured the lives of the common people of this country where deception, oppression and repression are rampant.

Earlier, a discussion was held in the afternoon with Fayzur Rahman Fayeze, president of TUC Mymensingh unit in the chair. Mohammad Shahidullah Chowdhury, the central president of TUC was the chief guest.

Weeklong film screening at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

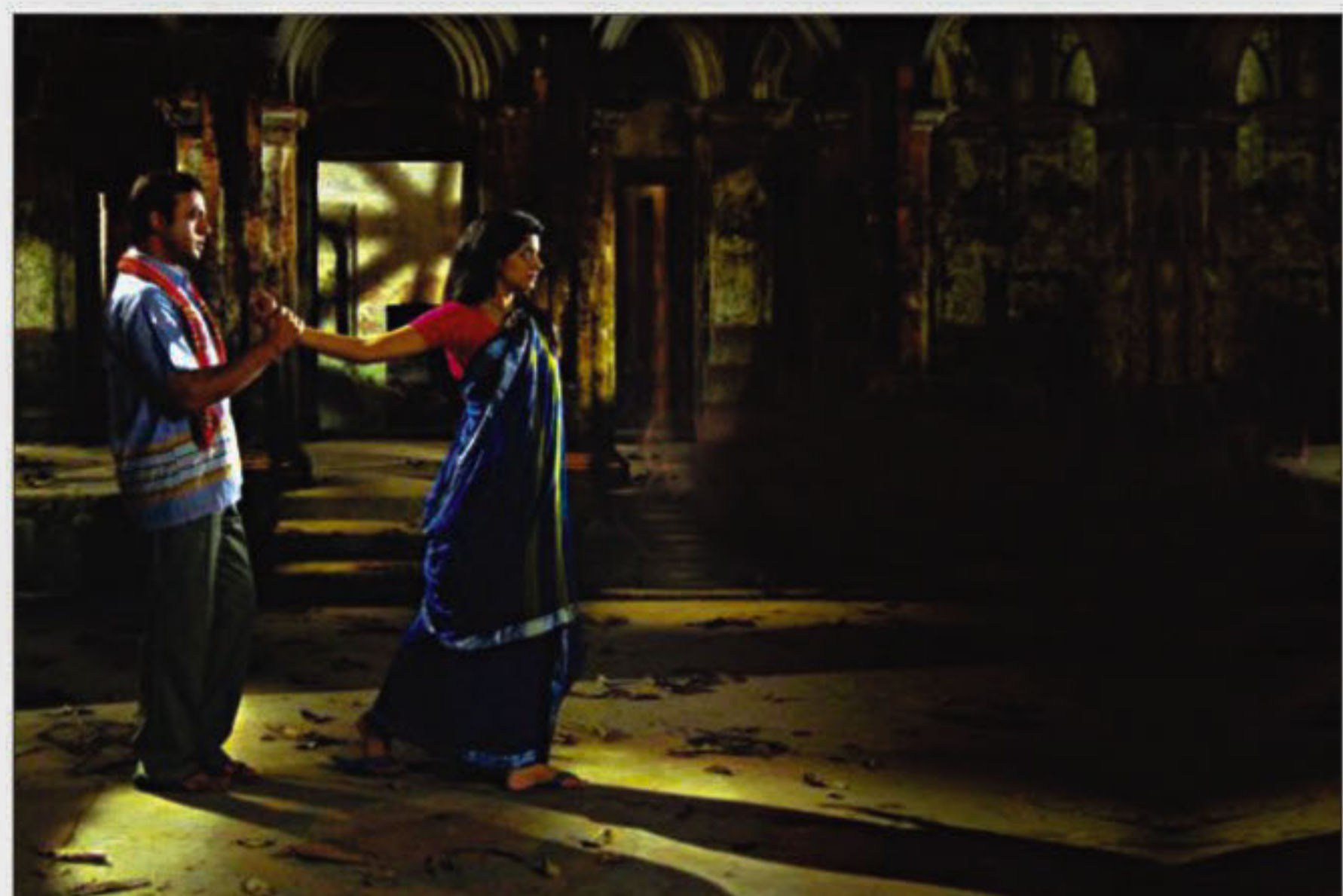
To mark International Mother Language Day, a weeklong film screening, titled "Amar Bhashar Chalachchitra 1416", begins today at the TSC Auditorium of Dhaka University. Dhaka University Film Society (DUFS) has organised the screening, which will feature 28 acclaimed films made in Bangla, both from Bangladesh and India.

Among the films, 16 are from Bangladesh

including "Neel Akasher Nichey", "Aguner Parashmoni", "Chitra Nodir Parey", "Shutarang", "Pitch Dhala Poth", "Alor Michhil", "Monpura" and "Chandragrahan".

Films from India include "Paroma", "Damu", "Abar Aronye", "Mando Meyer Upakhyan", "Antohin", "Shaptopadi" and "Subarnorekha".

Everyday four films will be screened starting from 10am. Vice Chancellor of DU AAMS Arefin Siddique will inaugurate the festival.



A scene from the film "Chandragrahan".

TV Watch

Chandana Majumdar on "Raat Biraatey"

A CORRESPONDENT

Folk singer Chandana Majumdar is the guest of tonight's episode late-night street show "Raat Biraatey". The programme will be aired on Banglavisian at 11:15pm.

Majumdar is a popular contemporary folk singer. She attained popularity through her debut album from Bengal Foundation "Bhober Ghatey", which featured Lalon songs. Her skilful singing of Bijoy Sarkar numbers is also noticeable. She gained popularity as a playback singer through the film "Monpura".

On tonight's show, Majumdar will share some of

her fond memories with the host. Throughout the programme, both the artiste and the host will visit popular

places of the city. Produced by Kownine Shourav, "Raat Biraatey" is hosted by Majnun Mizan.

