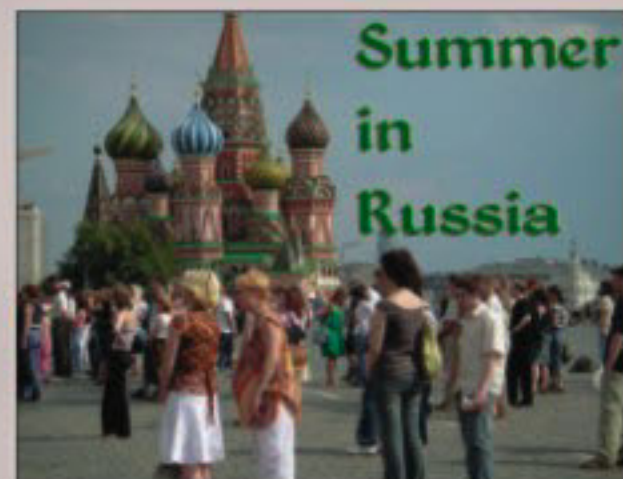


## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

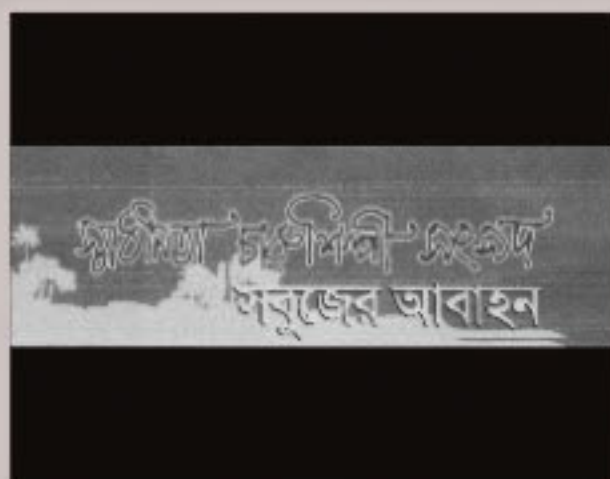
### Photography Exhibition

**Title:** Summer in Russia  
**Venue:** Russian Centre of Science and Culture, 42, Bhabha Shoinik M.A. Matin Road, Dhanmondi  
**Date:** June 16-30  
**Time:** 10am-7pm



### Group Art Exhibition

**Organiser:** Shadinota Charu Shipi Sangsad  
**Venue:** Bangladesh Asiatic Society, Nimtoli, Dhaka University  
**Date:** June-26-July 1  
**Time:** 10am-8pm



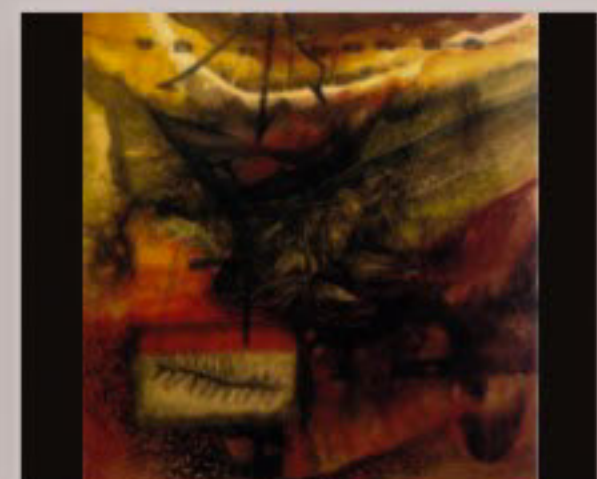
### Musical Soiree

**Title:** Praner Khela  
**Singers:** Shamri Akhtar and Shahid Kabir  
**Venue:** Bengal Shilpalaya, R-27, H-275/F, Dhanmondi  
**Date:** June 30  
**Time:** 7pm



### Solo Art Exhibition

**Artist:** Nagarbasi Barman  
**Title:** Spiral  
**Venue:** Gallery Kaya, H-20, R-16, Sector-4, Uttara  
**Date:** June 18-29  
**Time:** 11am-8pm



## Srijonshil Natyatarun Tanushri Podok 2010 conferred

Natyadhara stages "Kando Nodi Kando"



Samina Lutfa Nitra receives a bouquet from Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed.

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Theatre troupe Natyadhara conferred Srijonshil Natyatarun Tanushri Podok 2010 on promising theatre activist Samina Lutfa Nitra at a programme held at Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on June 27.

Renowned educationist Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed was the chief guest at the programme. Writer and one of the trustees of Liberation War Museum, Mofidul Haque, delivered the Tanushri memorial speech. Theatre director Shamsul Alam Bakul also spoke at the event. Chief secretary of Natyadhara Masud Parvez Mizu presided over the session. Alok Basu, convenor of



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Actors of Natyadhara in the play "Kando Nodi Kando."

Srijonshil Natyatarun Tanushri Podok 2010, was also present.

A number of references and quotes were aesthetically incorporated in Mofidul Haque's memorial speech, entitled 'Theatre and Poli-

tics.' Elaborating western theatrical perspectives and linking those with the complex socio-economic and political reality, Haque talked about the emergence of theatre movement in the subcontinent, especially

Bengal.

Cultural and theatre activist Tanushri Gain was an emerging talent. Fellow members of Natyadhara have kept alive Tanushri's ideals through conferring the award. Saidur Rahman Lipon, Nasirul Haq Khokon, Ashish Khandaker, Traupa Majumdar, Aminur Rahman Mukul, Kamal Uddin Kabir, Dilip Chakraborti, Jaglul Alam and Rahul Anand have so far received this award.

Samina Lutfa Nitra is an Assistant Professor of the Sociology Department of Dhaka University and is working on her PhD from University of Oxford. She started her career in theatre through Shubachon Natya Shangshad. Later, she became one of the founding members of theatre troupe Bottola. "Rashtra Bonam," "Khandani Kissa," "Tirthankor," "Rupoboti," "Khudhito Pashan," "Khona" and "Dhamail" are some of the plays that she has performed in.

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed handed an *uttario* and a crest to Nitra.

Later, artistes of Natyadhara staged their 16th production "Kando Nodi Kando." Manjurul Hasan Dulal adapted the play from a Syed Waliullah novel. Masud Parvez Mizu directed the play.

## MICHAEL MADHUSUDAN DUTTA

### A poet of epic proportions



Michael Madhusudan Dutta is referred to as the father of Bengali sonnet and a pioneer of Bengali literature.

Today marks the 137th death anniversary of Dutta.

Dutta was born on January 25, 1824 in the village of Sagardari, under Jessore district (now in Bangladesh). His father, Rajnarayan Dutta, was a law practitioner in Kolkata. Madhusudan in his early years, was taught at home by his mother, Jahnabi Devi, and later he joined Sagardari Primary School.

While studying at Hindu College in Kolkata, Madhusudan began writing. He won several scholarships in college exams as well as a gold medal for an essay on women's education. Madhusudan's poems in Bengali and English were published in Bengal Spectator, Calcutta Library Gazette, Literary Blossom and Comet. Lord Byron was Madhusudan's inspiration. In 1843, Madhusudan ran away from

home and converted to Christianity, to escape a marriage his father had arranged and also to satiate his fascination with everything English and Western. He took the name 'Michael' upon his conversion.

Madhusudan's conversion to Christianity estranged him from his family. In 1848, Michael left for Madras where he started teaching. After his father's death, Madhusudan returned to Kolkata in February 1856. He started contributing to different journals.

Madhusudan realised the paucity of good writing in Bengali as well as his own ability to fill this vacuum. While translating Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's play "Ratnabali" into English, he felt the absence of good plays in Bengali. In 1858 he wrote the western-style play "Sharmistha." This was the first original play in Bengali, making Madhusudan the first Bengali playwright.

By dint of his genius, he removed the stagnation in Bengali literature both in style and content. He was the first to use blank verse in 1860 in the play "Padmabati," based on a Greek myth. This use of blank verse freed Bengali poetry from the limitations of rhymed verse. This success prompted Madhusudan to write his first Bengali poem, "Tilottama-Sambhab" in blank verse in that same year. This poem was written entirely in blank verse, and so were the two later poems "Meghnad-Badh Kabya" in 1861 and "Birangana."

Madhusudan's epic poem "Meghnad-Badh Kabya" is considered his all-time masterpiece to date. This epic was based on the "Ramayan" but inspired by Milton's "Paradise Lost." This grand heroic-tragic epic was written in nine cantos, which is quite unique in the history of Bengali Poetry.

Madhusudan went to England in 1862 to study Law. In 1863 he went to Versailles in France, staying there for about two years. It was in France that Madhusudan overcame the longing for England that had inspired his early works and realised the importance of his motherland and mother tongue Bengali.

Madhusudan returned to England from Versailles in 1865. In 1866 he became a Barrister. He returned to Kolkata in 1867 and started practicing Law. But his practice did not pick up and in June 1870, he was obliged to give up his legal career.

However, his habit of reckless spending ran up debts. Despite all ups and downs, Madhusudan kept on writing. His last composition was "Mayakanan" (1873).

On June 29, 1873, one of the greatest poets of the Bengal renaissance died in Calcutta General Hospital in a miserable condition at the age of only 49.

The all-inviting epitaph on his grave came from the poet himself:

*Stop a while, traveller!  
Should Mother Bengal claim thee for her son.  
As a child takes repose on his mother's  
elysian lap,  
Even so here in the Long Home,  
On the bosom of the earth,  
Enjoys the sweet eternal sleep  
Poet Madhusudan of the Duttas.*

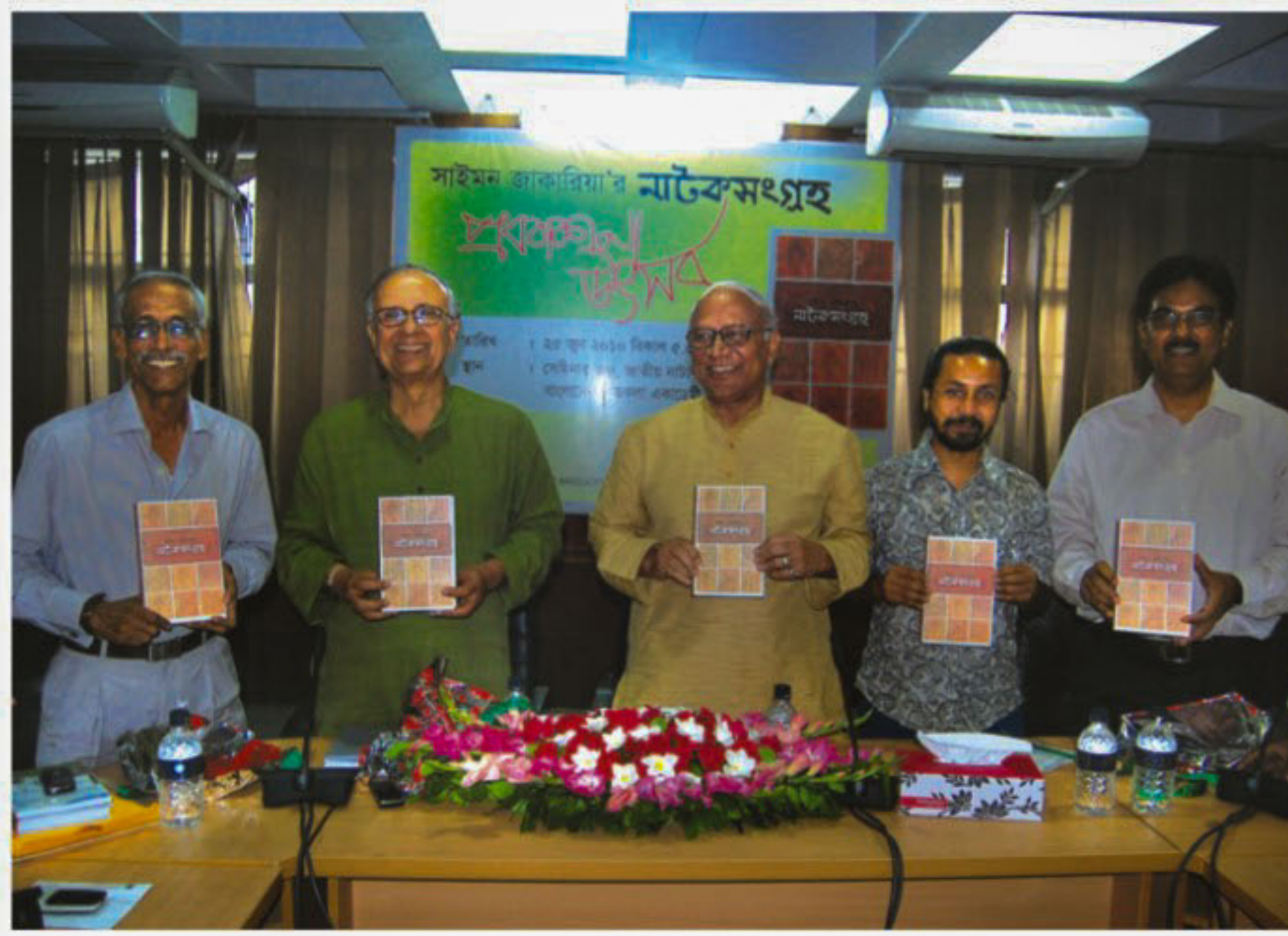
Compiled by Correspondent.

## "Natok Shangraha," Saymon Zakaria's latest book on theatre, launched

International Theatre Institute (ITI) Bangladesh, in association with Adorn Publications, arranged a book launch ceremony and a discussion programme at the Seminar Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, on June 25, according to a press release. At the programme, "Natok Shangraha," a book on theatre, by folk researcher and playwright Saymon Zakaria was launched.

The programme also featured presentation of an essay by Professor Abdus Selim on Zakaria's plays. ITI Worldwide President Ramendu Majumder was the chief guest, while ITI Bangladesh President and veteran theatre personality Ataur Rahman presided over the programme. Among others, Zakaria and publisher of "Natok Shangraha" Syed Zakir Hossain spoke at the discussion.

In his essay, Professor Selim praised Zakaria's efforts to explore our cultural heritage. He termed Zakaria's research-based works as "an anthropologi-



Zakaria (second from right) with dignitaries at the book launch.

cal approach."

"In Saymon Zakaria's plays, one can find the links among society, culture and history," said Professor Selim.

Ramendu Majumder said, "A notable aspect of Zakaria's writing is that he not only writes mythology-inspired plays but also tries to explain them from a

contemporary aspect. He deftly combines his research with creative storytelling. His writings will enrich our culture."

Zakaria himself termed his writings as "a mingling of nationalism and internationalism." He said, "Through my writings, I want to present Bangladeshi theatre to the world."

Ataur Rahman said that the most important thing about Zakaria's writing is "epic reality."

At the programme, theatre activists Traupa Majumder and Shamim Sagor read out excerpts from Zakaria's plays "A New Testament of Romeo and Juliet" and "Shuru Kori Bhumir Namey."

## "Okaron": Music album to aid street children



Artistes (left) with Agniveena and Novartis officials at the album launch.

A CORRESPONDENT

The launch of "Okaron," a new audio album featuring Bappa Majumder, Arnob, Partho Barua, Elita Karim and two upcoming artistes Moshfiq and Shaulee, was held recently at a Dhaka

hotel. The album has been sponsored by Sandoz, a sister concern of Novartis.

"Part of the proceeds from album sales will go to Jaago Foundation, an organisation working for the welfare of street children," said Ashfaqur Rahman,

managing director, Novartis Bangladesh Ltd.

Among others, Nazmul Haque Bhuiyan, proprietor of Agniveena, was present at the event. The album has been produced under the banner of Agniveena.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed

working on the album. This album is for a noble cause and I'm optimistic that music enthusiasts will enjoy the music," said singer Bappa Majumder at the launch.

Bappa composed seven of the ten songs featured in the album. Songs set to tune by Bappa are: "Okaron" (the title track), "Bhul Korey," "Mon Ghuri," "Phirey Paowa," "Ma," "Tomar Jonoy" and "Tara Mela".

Other three songs on the album -- "Bedonar Rong," "Minoti" and "Natai" -- have been composed by Arnob.

Bappa Majumder, Arnob and Elita have recorded two songs each. Partho Barua recorded the song "Bhul Korey" and jointly sang "Tara Mela" with Bappa and Elita.

Tanbir Shajib has written the songs.

## Celebrities on World Cup 2010

### Football fever



Nobel

"I am a supporter of Brazil."

"It's really hard to recount when or exactly how I became a fan of Brazil; maybe it's the way they play the game that attracted me the most. They are truly amazing football players and also Brazil is the country of Pele," said model Nobel, as he shared his passion for the tournament with The Daily Star.

Who do you think will win this year?

Nobel: "I think it will be Brazil."

"Brazil has won so many times in the past, I wouldn't be surprised if they win again. They are the magicians of football. My best wishes are with Brazil."

