

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

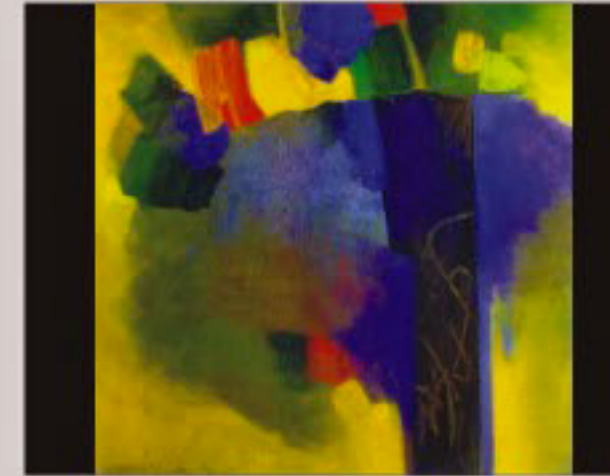
Photography Exhibition
 Title: Nature
 Photographer: Shamsunnahar Lovely
 Venue: Zainul Gallery, Faculty of Fine Arts, Shahbagh
 Date: December 17-23
 Time: 10am-8pm



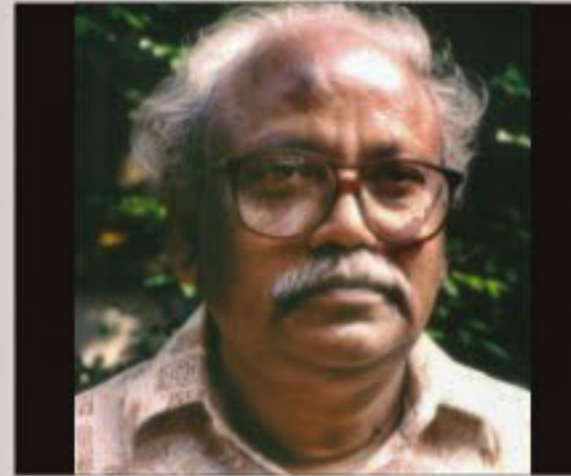
Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Swapan Chowdhury
 Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, R-7 A, H-60, Dhanmondi
 Date: December 15-31
 Time: 11am-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Hashem Khan
 Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattoshali Gallery, National Museum
 Date: December 18-January 2
 Time: 12pm-8pm



Drawing Exhibition
 Artist: Rafiqun Nabi
 Venue: Gallery Chittrak, H-21, R-4, Dhanmondi
 Date: December 3-20
 Time: 10am-8pm



Return to Eden



SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

Winter festivals always seem to evoke our childhood memories. Pitha over the fire, heavy mist heavy mist lifting off the tree tops, the list of mental images are endless. So when we were invited to the commemoration of RKB Mallick School at our ancestral home, we started packing almost immediately. It was an opportunity to pay homage to the school that had transformed the village from a farmland to a modern hub. Taking part in the age-old festivities rural Bangladesh is famous for was a cherry on top.

A few kilometres past the National Martyrs' Monument in Savar, we made a right turn at a gas station shortly afterwards, and were soon in the hub that is Dhamrai Bazar, adjacent to our village in Rajapur.

Modernisation had certainly left its fingerprints on this village, concrete houses replacing the thatched huts and large electrical poles standing silently next to the banana groves. But what caught our eye were the farmlands that had been left largely untouched. In the early morning glow, dew glistened on the grass and foliage like tiny diamonds, the branches swaying to the silent beat of the winter winds.

The street teemed with fruit and vegetable vendors as we inched our way through the melee towards our destination. Throughout the day there was a flurry of activity with large tents being pitched, workmen setting up the stage and an army of people bent over the steaming cauldrons to cook for the mass of organisers preparing for next day's events.

As dusk fell, an announcer went around the village with a loudspeaker on a rickshaw -- there was to be an open air jatra organised by the local Adarsha Samity. Braving the chills, villagers huddled in hundreds at the arena. Though large parts of the village had no electricity, the eager audience made its way under the glow of the moon, hurricanes and torches. The whole locality was united in its celebrations, it seemed. No "rival" stages set up by competing groups, no heavily guarded entrance -- so different from scenes city dwellers have become accustomed to. To the large group of people who had

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travelled from the cities, it felt as if much of the "ills" of modern society had failed to leave a dent on the mass psyche, festival was still a festival, a pure celebration of a common heritage.

As we approached the venue we saw bright lights hung in every corner. Actors dressed in flashy velvet jackets and shiny armours, and women attired as queens and princesses soon transported the audience to a world of fantasy with their nightlong performances. Streams of people arrived at the spot to watch the jatra and cheered the amateur actors, most of whom were from the working class. They performed with passion as veteran director Jalil prompted out loud. With the beginning of the orchestra and cymbals the act began to roll one by one. It was past midnight when people finally left for home.

The following day the grand celebration of the RKB Mallick High School Old Boys' Association (batches 1986-1990) began with a rally. The school was set up by educationist Dr. A.R Mallick in 1983, and in over 28 years had produced scores of professionals, teachers and entrepreneurs from all walks of life. Students gathered at the school premises and enjoyed the entire day mingling with old friends. All this celebration made sense, since the light of edu-

cation had formed an integral part of life in the village over the preceding one hundred years. RKB was only adding to the pride of the village, where the number of those educated happens to be higher than at some other spots across the country.

After the discussion session with MP Benazir Ahmed as special guest led by Dr. Md Zafar Iqbal Khan of BUET, convenor, and Md Abdur Razzak Khan (member secretary), the cultural programme began in the evening. Under a massive canopy an eager crowd began to gather to listen to the noted artistes such as Bari Siddiqui, Nokul Chandra Biswas, Ankhil Alamgir, Pothik Nabi and more. The crowd cheered every song and encored for more. A.B Siddique Khan sponsored the event.

Once we concluded the school programme, lawmaker Benazir Ahmed, led us to the adjoining venue where a three-day programme was just getting underway. We were taken aback by the sheer size of the amassed audience. After a formal launch the programme began with Shahnaz Beli rendering soulful songs of Shah Abdul Karim and Lalon, much to the jubilation of the crowd. "Khude Gaanraj" star Imran performed next.

It was getting late and it was time to return. There was an equally massive crowd participation the following day as noted folk singer Momtaz performed at the same venue.

It was with a heavy heart that we started our journey back to the city the following day. The experience of the previous few days had only reinforced our belief in traditions and the power they yield in bonding the localities together. On the one hand was the school re-union: a simple, yet elaborate programme to pay homage to one of the foundation pillars of our society -- education. On the other was the festival, an unrestrained medley of music and drama, bonding people across miles.

The tremendous might of education and heritage to transform and nourish the population was clear to everyone. As the village skyline melted from our sights we implicitly knew the pulsating energy that it radiated would only grow stronger.

Our father and his musical legacy

FAHMIDA NABI And SAMINA CHOWDHURY

When we take the stage, performing to hundreds or thousands of music enthusiasts, we feel that the audience -- representing all generations -- see and hear our father's reflection in us.

Our intense passion and commitment towards music were instilled in us by our father, Mahmudun Nabi. In every possible sense, he lives through our music.

During the Liberation War, we watched as children how our father inspired freedom fighters and a nation eagerly waiting for independence, with humble, encouraging words and his remarkable melodies.

Our father was a simple man with a generous heart. Today, on his 20th death anniversary, we earnestly hope that the love and prayers -- for his soul -- of the audiences are with us. We wholeheartedly intend to keep his music alive.



District conference of Udichi in Thakurgaon

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

The first district unit conference of Udichi Shilpi Goshthi was held on Saturday in Panchagarh district town.

As a follow up to the programme, a colourful procession was brought out from Shaheed Minar premises.

After winding its way through several streets in the town, the procession ended at District Shilpakala Academy

Auditorium premises.

Later a discussion was held here where principal of Panchagarh Mokbulur Rahman Government College Professor Mohammad Giasuddin was chief guest, while convener of district unit Udichi Shilpi Goshthi Shafiqul Islam was in the chair.

Among others, educationist Hashim Akhter Mohammad Karim Daad, Rezaur Rahman, Advocate Ershad Hossain Sarcar and Rezaul Karim, addressed the

gathering.

The discussants said Udichi has a long and glorious chapter in all the country's democratic movements. The organisation's activities, they added, have always been in the interests of the common people and against all forms of repression.

The discussion was followed by a cultural programme where the local artistes performed Gono Sangeet, patriotic and folk songs.



A rally was brought out on the occasion.

PHOTO: STAR

WHAT TO WATCH

OCHENA MANUSH on ATN Bangla

A Correspondent

Drama serial "Ochena Manush" is being aired on ATN Bangla every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 10:55pm. Directed by Ripon Nabi, the serial is jointly produced by Pathik and Global Media.

The play zooms in on crises within and beyond the confines of a family. Makbul Rahman, the sole heir of a wealthy woman, marries a Hindu girl named Aparna, despite the fact that he is already married. Aparna and Makbul have two children. Unable to cope with her mother-in-law's constant mistreatment, Aparna leaves her husband and takes her children with her.

Mokbul and his first wife have five children, two of whom live abroad. The oldest son is married, but is seemingly uninterested in the family business. Two of his brothers, who are also married, are involved in the business. Complications arise and the plot thickens. The cast includes Afroza Banu, Gazi Rakayet, Tomalika Karmakar, Apurba, Shams Suman, Farah Ruma and others.



A scene from the TV serial.



Students of the school during a vibrant drill.

PHOTO: STAR

Bharateswari Homes celebrates Victory Day

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A vibrant cultural function and a discussion were held at Bharateswari Homes, founded by philanthropist Ranada Prosad Saha, at Mirzapur in Tangail on December 16 to mark the 39th Victory Day.

The cultural function, including a musical titled, 'Hridoy-e Bangladesh' was held at PPM Hall, Kumudini Complex where the students of Bharateswari Homes presented renditions of patriotic songs.

The discussion was held on the same stage where director of Kumudini Welfare Trust (KWT) Protiva

Mutsuddi addressed the gathering as chief guest.

Mutsuddi, in her speech, said national and social security must be ensured in the country to make for meaningful independence. She also urged the students to prepare to be competent citizens of a Digital Bangladesh.

With Principal of Bharateswari Homes, Monika Devi Barua, in the chair, the discussion was also addressed by vice-principal of Bharateswari Homes Golam Kibria, and Dr. Prodip Kumar Roy, deputy superintendent of Kumudini Hospital.

Earlier, the students of Bharateswari Homes performed a beautiful drill at the premises of the institute.