

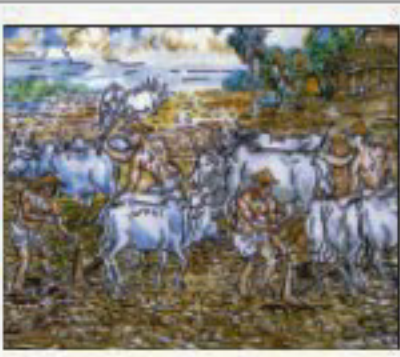
WHAT'S ON

Shora Painting Exhibition
Painter: Sukumar Pal
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, H-60, R-7/A, Dhanmondi
Date: April 11-16
Time: 3pm-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Symphony of Colours
Artist: Syed Abdullah Khalid
Venue: Gallery Kaya, H-20, R-16, S-4, Uttara
Date: April 12-29
Time: 11am-7:30pm

Grand Group Art Exhibition
Venue: Saju Art Gallery, DCC Market, Gulshan-2
Date: April 1-30
Time: 10am-8pm



Solo Photo Exhibition
Title: A Dream of Venice
Photographer: Stephan Rabold
Venue: Goethe-Institut, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: April 15-May 10
Time: 10am-8pm



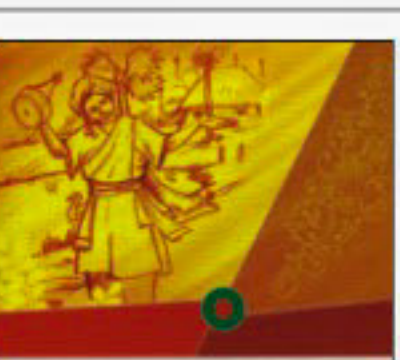
Solo Musical Soiree
Artist: Rebecka Sultan
Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: April 18
Time: 6pm



Baishakhi Mela
Organiser: BSOC
Venue: Bangla Academy premises
Date: April 14-24
Time: 10am-8pm



Baul Festival
Venue: Rabindra Sharobar, Dhanmondi
Date: April 16
Time: 5pm



Solo Photo Exhibition
Photographer: Bisnu Nandi
Venue: Creative Destination, H 20, Rd 1, Sec 3, Uttara
Date: April 16-20
Time: 3-8pm



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

ZAHANGIR ALAM

The nation welcomed 'Pahela Baishakh', the first day of the Bangla year 1418, on Thursday amidst vibrant pageantry, leaving behind the gloom of the past and pledging to uphold the nation's opulent cultural heritage.

Tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, in traditional clothes, poured into the streets, parks and open spaces across the capital and elsewhere in the country from early morning to welcome the Bangla New Year.

The tradition of celebrating the Bangla New Year -- in relation to closing of the annual tax collection -- started in the Mughal era. Traders and shopkeepers open 'haal khata' (new account books) on this day and offer sweets to clients.

In the course of time, it evolved into a day of celebration and an integral part of the Bengali culture, now considered the biggest secular festival as people irrespective of religion and class commemorate the day.

Chhayanaut, one of the leading cultural organisations of the country, has been holding their 'barsho boron' (New Year celebration) since 1967. On April 14, the New Year celebration at Ramna Botomul began with an instrumental recital on violin by Sheuli Bhattacharya. Sheuli played Raga Ramkeli. The melody stirred the senses as the sun slowly

emerged and gleamed behind soft clouds.

Teachers, alumni and students of Chhayanaut presented solo, duet and group renditions and recitations at the event. Aside from renditions of morning raga-based songs of 'Pancho-kobi' (Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, DL Roy, Atul Prasad and Rajanikant), the artistes also rendered several folk numbers on the occasion.

Secretary General of Chhayanaut, Khairul Anam Shakil, performed "Aaji Gao Mohageet". Noted singers Mita Haque, Chandana Majumdar and Bizon Chandra Mistry rendered "Ondhojon-e Deho Aalo" and "Ke Banailo Emon Rong Mohol Khana" and "Oi Moha Sindhur Opar Thekey" respectively. A duet number, "Aaji Nutan-o Raton-e Bhushon-o Joton-e", by Rezaul Karim and Nabanita Chakrabarti followed. "Probhat-o Beena Tabo Bajey", "Trishit-o Akash Kanpey Re", "Bhoror Hawaye" and more were the choruses performed by artistes.

Veteran singer Sushoma Das performed a Radharaman number while Elora Ahmed Shukla, Laisha Ahmed Lisa, Nasima Shaheen, Azizur Rahman Tuhin, Sejuti Barua and others also sang at the programme.

In her speech, President of Chhayanaut, Dr. Sanjida Khatun emphasised on fortifying our identity through ceaseless cultural practice and passion.



Chhayanaut artistes perform at Ramna Park (top). The highlight of this year's 'Mongol Shobhajatra' was a giant replica of a crocodile.

BTV, BTV World and Bangladesh Betar aired Chhayanaut's 'barsho boron' programme live. This year Chhayanaut also celebrated its golden jubilee.

A festive spirit took over the capital and other parts of the country. Women in white saris with red borders and men in panjabi --

decorated with Baishakhi motifs -- ushered in the New Year.

Many had 'panta bhat' with fried hilsa, daal, green chilli and onion at home, restaurants and fairs. Youngsters had their cheeks painted with folk-themed emblems that added further colours to the celebration.

They thronged the main venue in Ramna. The festivities stretched over to Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka University and Dhanmondi Lake areas, bringing the city traffic system to a standstill. Many foreigners clad in traditional Bengali clothes were also seen in and around the venues of celebration.

The crowd turned into a human sea in the afternoon when the temperature came down slightly.

Another major attraction was the decorated procession called 'Mongol Shobhajatra', brought out by the students and teachers of Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University. Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique with DU teachers and cultural personalities led the procession.

The 'Shobhajatra', featuring the giant replica of a crocodile (40 feet long) with three human figures riding on it, trying to kill it, symbolised wiping out the war criminals forever from Bangladesh. Replicas of two tigers also signified the embolden spirit of the nation. Thousands of people joined the procession, dancing along to the beats of dhol and other musical instruments.

There were scores of cultural shows arranged by different organisations, keeping the university area alive with heavy rush of people. It was a day of pure, unadulterated fun and merriment.



Behind the Scene GUERRILLA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff, "Guerrilla", the much awaited feature film based on the Liberation War, was released at 13 movie theatres across the country on Pahela Baishakh (April 14).

Actor Ferdous, who plays the role of a journalist, Hasan Ahmed, says, "We'd not be living in an independent country if there had not been the Liberation War. So when Bachchu Bhui (Nasiruddin Yousuff) offered me a role in his film, I gladly accepted. I hope that young people would go to the theatres to watch the film."

On a similar note, seasoned actor ATM Shamsuzzaman said: "In my decades-spanning acting career, I've never asked anyone for a role in his/her film, except this one. I asked Nasiruddin Yousuff to cast me in the film." When asked why he made that exception, the veteran artiste said, "The fact that the film is about the Liberation War was reason enough to ignite my interest." He added that he thoroughly enjoyed "playing the role of Matlub Sardar who helps the protagonist Bilkis (played by Joya Ahsan)."

Ahmed Rubel plays the role of Shaheed Altaf Mahmud, the composer of the song "Amar Bhai-er Roktey Rangano Ekushey February". Rubel said that

playing the role of Altaf Mahmud was a real challenge. "It's extremely difficult to play a character based on a real person, more so when the person is a legend."

Fijush Bandyopadhyaya, a freedom fighter who had closely observed the war, shares Ferdous' optimism. "This film depicts what really happened during the war. This provides the youngsters of our country an opportunity to familiarise themselves with our history," he says. Bandyopadhyaya plays a Professor of Dhaka University in the film.

Shatabdi Wadud, who plays the role of a Pakistani Major, says that he had to lose weight to get into the character. He adds, "Colonel Sajjad trained me for the role for a whole month."

Joya Ahsan's role in the film has been much discussed. According to her, the role of Bilkis has been very demanding and physical, and that she loved the challenge. "Some days I couldn't change my clothes to maintain continuity in the film. But a real actor loves a challenging job," she says.

The director, Nasiruddin Yousuff, said, "We had to shoot at Panam Nagar, which was made to resemble old Dhaka in the film. It wasn't an easy task but needed to be done."

Yousuff based the film on Syed Shamsul Haq's novel "Nishiddho Loban" and his personal war-time experiences as a freedom fighter.



Director Nasiruddin Yousuff behind the camera (top). Joya Ahsan and Ferdous in a scene from the film.

Literary Endeavour Lingers
Sahitya Sammelon ends

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

At the recent Sahitya Sammelon (literary convention) here, three little magazine editors were awarded the Hasan Hafizur Rahman Little Magazine Award while the Abul Mansur Ahmad Literature Award went to three individuals for their contribution to the field of literature.

Mymensingh Sahitya Sangsad arranged the convention at its premises to mark its 30th anniversary. Aminur Rahman Sultan, Abdul Mannan Swapon and Shaheen Latif received the Hasan Hafizur Rahman Little Magazine award for their literary publications, "Amirtrakkhar", "Dhamoni" and "Megh" respectively.

The Abul Mansur Ahmad Literature Award recipients are Kamal Chowdhury (poet), Dr. Shamsuzzaman Khan (folklore research) and Dr. Mohammad Zafar Iqbal (children's literature). The Vice-chancellor of Jatiya Kobi Nazrul Islam University was the chief guest. At the second session of the

concluding day's programme, a seminar was held on Kedarnath Majumder's 'Sourav' literary magazine. Professor Mohammad Haider presented an essay at the seminar. Alam Talukder, ASM Hayatullah and poet Farid Ahmed Dulal were the other discussants. Poet Mosharraf Karim was in the chair.

The speakers at the seminar asserted that to encourage and create more talents in the field of literature, such conferences should be organised regularly outside Dhaka. Termining 'Sourav' a historical literary magazine of the Mymensingh region, they added that we feel the loss of Kedarnath who despite enduring hardship contributed to the field. Chandraboti, Mymensingh Geetika and many other valuable writings on folklore were published in 'Sourav', the speakers added.

They also urged the writers to work silently for literature in the best interests of the community and society.

On the inaugural day, seminars on 'Culture: Source of Harmony'

and 'Folk Traditions of Mymensingh' were held.

Among others, Minister for Textiles and Jute Abdul Latif Siddiquee, Professor Prodip Kumar Biswas, Professor Nazrul Hayat, Bipradas Barua, Shantanu Kaiser, Dr. Ataur Rahman, Professor Azhar Sarker, Mymensingh Municipality Mayor Ekramul Haque Titu, Fayzur Rahman Fair and poet Shamsul Fayez spoke at the seminar.

Principal Motiur Rahman, MP inaugurated the programme as chief guest.

The programme also included a musical soiree and poetry recitation sessions. Artistes of different cultural organisations took part. Poets from Kolkata (West Bengal), Subodh Sarker, Bivash Roy Chowdhury and Manda Kanta Sen recited poetry at the programme.

The moderators at the seminars at the two day programme were advocate Abdul Motalab Lal, Amjad Dulan, Ashraf Mir, Aftreen Jahan Lamyaa, Anisur Rahman and Mustafizur Basar Bhasani.

Boishabi observed in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Ethnic communities celebrated 'Baishu', 'Sangrain' and 'Biju' -- which coincided with Pahela Baishakh -- at the eight upazilas in Khagrachhari district.

To celebrate the New Year, people woke up early, cleaned their houses and decorated them with flower. The revellers bathed in the river -- a symbolic gesture to get rid of all the sins from the year gone by.

The Tripura community held a celebration programme in Milonpur on the occasion. Tripura artistes performed the 'Garaiya' dance to ring in the New Year, known to them as 'Baishu'. Tripuras have chalked out a three-day long programme to celebrate the New Year.

Marmas thronged at Pankhaiyapara and

performed their traditional sports 'Dha', 'Alari', performed songs and dances last Wednesday, ushering in the New Year, 'Sangrain'.

The Chakma community observed 'Biju'. Young girls and boys offered flowers in the river -- with hopes for a prosperous new year.

"Singke Chakma youths pray to the Almighty on this day, seeking the perfect life partner," said Konika Chakma on early Tuesday, by the bank of the Chengi river.

Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Kujendra Lal Tripura said that everyone in Khagrachhari is welcoming the New Year, expecting peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile, Ethnic Cultural Institute (ECI) organised a four-day long 'Boishabi' fair to welcome the Bangla New Year (1418). The fair saw participation of both Bengali and ethnic communities.

Contemporary Bangladeshi Art Goes to Seoul

TAKIR HOSSAIN

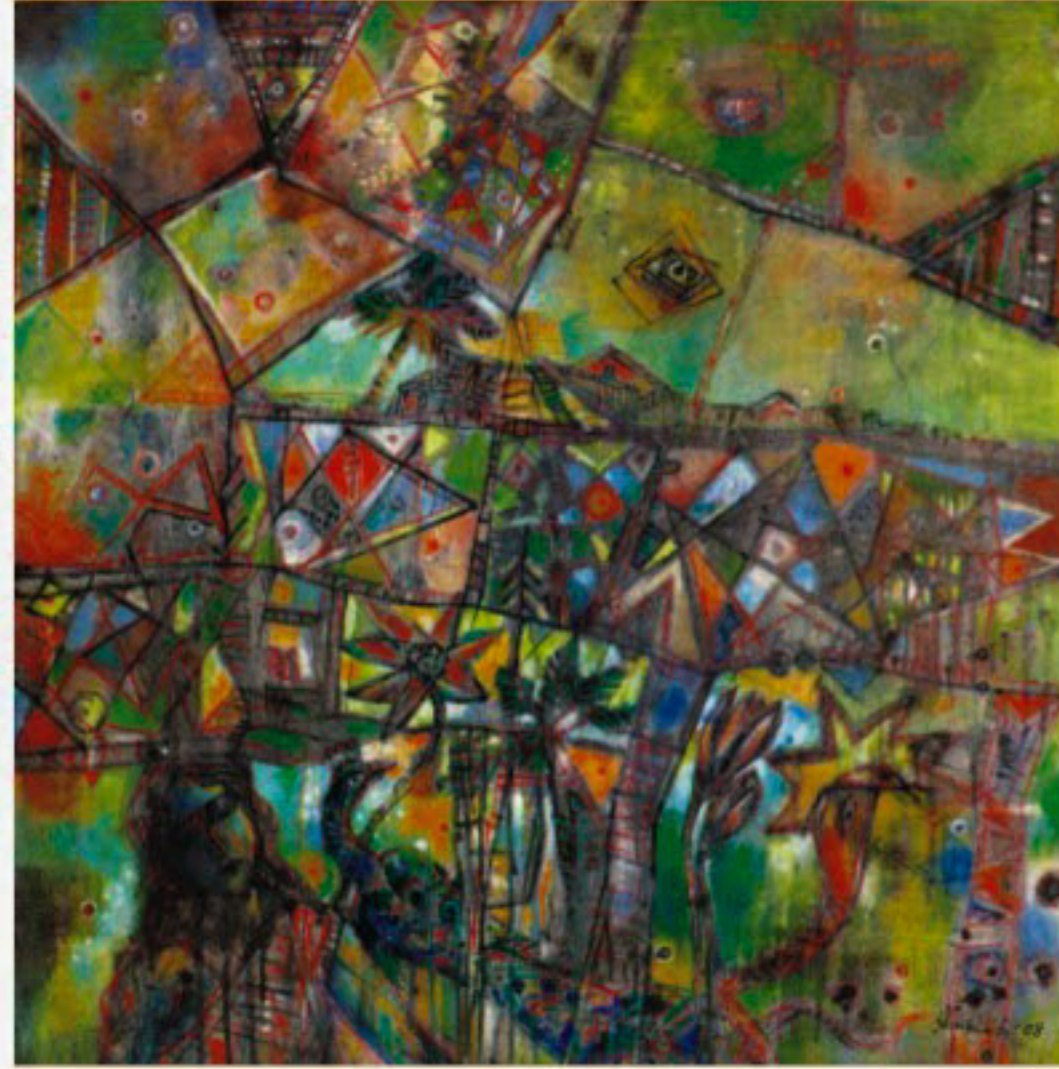
Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts and Bangladesh Embassy in Seoul (South Korea) have jointly organised a group art exhibition, titled 'Contemporary Paintings of Bangladesh', featuring works of Quayyum Chowdhury, Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, Hashem Khan, Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam, Mahmudul Haque, Shahid Kabir, Farida Zaman, Rokeya Sultan, Dilara Begum Jolly, Kanak Champa Chakma and Mohammad Iqbal. The exhibition is now on at Korea Cultural Centre in Seoul.

Prior to leaving for Seoul, the paintings were shown at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts in Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Samarjit Roy Chowdhury's geometric compositions and management of space on canvas denote dreams, reality and nostalgia. Blue, red, white and black have been used mostly. The paintings featured at the Seoul exhibition highlight Chowdhury's use of colour and form. Blending of traditional elements and modern geometric/abstract forms is a characteristic of his paintings.

Rafiqun Nabi's paintings project rural people and their lifestyle. Fishermen, peasants, cowherds and their everyday joys, sorrows get the focus in his works. The artist likes to use azure, yellow, ochre, red, black and emerald. As part of his experiment, different kinds of boats and livestock are also seen in his paintings. Nabi has been eagerly studying movements of figures and arrangements of compositions. He is very meticulous about his compositions.

Monirul Islam controls his mediums and techniques with a certain



(Clock-wise from top-left) Artworks by Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam and Mohammad Iqbal.

mastery. His featured work at the exhibition witnesses a dominance of black and gray. The artist has worked with sharp lines, doodles, geometric and architectural forms, and a lot of symbols -- transforming expressions. The exhibition includes his "Death of a River", an acrylic piece with powerful lines and subdued colours. Tranquility

and lucidity are major characteristics of his paintings and printmaking (particularly etching and aquatint).

Mahmudul Haque has a fondness

THE WEEKLY STRUM

Song: Jotodurey
Album: Alo (2000)
Band: Warface

G Em C D
Chupchap Charidiki Matal Hawa
G Em C D
Pakhider Kolahole Mon Je Haray
G Em C D
Hothat Dhekhi Tomake Ochenha Chhayay
G Em C D
Amari Shopney Aka Eje Tumi

Am C7 D
Nissobdey Ele Tumi Amari Bhuboney
Am C7 D
Godhuli Hoye Robey Tumi Amari Chirokal
G Em C D
Jotodurey Thako Robe Amari
G Em C D
Hariye Jeona Kokhono Tumi

Source: www.chordie.com