

WHAT'S ON

**Group Art Exhibition**  
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, Dhanmondi  
Date: May 12-20  
Time: 12pm-8pm

**Film Festival**  
Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society  
Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Rd  
Date: May 12-21

**Solo Exhibition**  
Sculptor: Samiran Dutt  
Venue: Shilpakanya Gallery, Dhanmondi  
Date: May 13-22  
Time: 10pm-8pm

**Solo Musical Soiree**  
Artist: Dr. Nashid Kamal  
Venue: ICC, H-35, Rd-24, Gulshan-1  
Date: May 20  
Time: 6:30pm

**Dhaka Int'l Theatre Fest**  
Organiser: ITI Bangladesh Centre  
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 21-30

**Tagore Birth Anniversary Celebration**  
Organiser: Bengal Foundation  
Venue: Bengal Shilpalya, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi  
Date: May 19-21

**Theatre**  
Play: Lal Jamin  
Troupe: Shunnon  
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 20

**Group Art Exhibition**  
Organiser: FFA and BGFA  
Venue: Bengali Gallery, Dhanmondi  
Date: April 16-21  
Time: 12pm-8pm

Secular Festivals and Collective Art: Tagore, Shantiniketan and Ramna Batomul

SHUMON SENGUPTA

Progressive societies are invariably built on a fine combination of essential freedoms, intellectual knowledge and shared artistic experience. Individual and collective arts are therefore integral parts of human life and nature. It is well known that Erich Fromm, the highly influential social psychologist of the 20th century, theorised about the need for reviving collective art and ritual on a secular and non-sectarian basis.

Approximately 70 years before Erich Fromm articulated his theory, Rabindranath Tagore was already putting this into practice in Shantiniketan, exploring the possibility of creating secular festivals and celebration of collective art in an otherwise socially and culturally fractured society.

Common Hindu festivals have often been collective endeavours in which a large number of people came together spontaneously in celebrations of piety and joy. However, Tagore was quick and astute enough to observe that not only did these collective festivals exclude people from other religions but also these effectively kept at bay other Hindus who had been systematically kept at the "bottom" of the caste hierarchy. This systematic exclusion greatly offended Tagore's innate humanism. He therefore conceived festivals that would transcend narrow denominational boundaries of cast, creed and class, and hence introduced the celebration of seasons in Shantiniketan.

**Tagore and Shantiniketan**  
Tagore conceived the *utshab* (festival) as a celebration of diversity that excluded none. For him it was to be an event or cluster of events in which individuals and groups from all sections of the society would come together. *Utshab* therefore represented a holistic celebration of the whole of human society, which presented the opportunity for shared aesthetic experience and creativity. According to Tagore scholar Kathleen M. O'Connell, while acknowledging the need for special types of individual and group space, Tagore committed himself to the creation of an overall public space, where the extended human family could gather and be made welcome.

About Religion, Tagore rightly observed that its doors were open to a restricted group of people who subscribed to it. Nature, on the other hand, cradled all -- nature was above all considerations of religion, cult, caste or class. As for festivals on nature, if there was a "presiding deity", that deity was anyone and everyone who welcomed others and participated under the canopy of the trees, the blue expanse of the sky, in the soft sunlight and in an air redolent with fragrance of blossoms.

Tagore therefore organised festivals in Shantiniketan heralding different seasons. The celebration of the seasons through songs, dance and fares became a regular event in the Shantiniketan calendar. The *Borsha-mongol* would be observed to celebrate the advent of the rains, *Sharad Utshab* to celebrate Autumn, *Poush Mela* to celebrate winter, *Bashonto Utshab* to celebrate



Tagore approaching the festival grounds in Amrakunja, Shantiniketan (Pahela Boishakh in 1940).

spring and finally *Pahela Boishakh* celebrating the Bengali New Year.

In addition to these, Tagore would also introduce with great beauty and splendour, special commemorative events like the *Brikkho-ropon* (tree planting) as a part of an annual environmental awareness campaign. Many ethnic groups who lived in and around Shantiniketan were invited to be part of these celebrations.

While the *Bashonto Utshab*, observed on the full moon night of the spring season (coinciding with "Holi" -- the festival of colours), would be the most spectacular and aesthetic of all festivals, the most important event from all accounts would be the Bengali New Year celebration which would be celebrated on the first day of *Boishakh* along with the poet's birthday. According to scholar, Dr. Karunamaya Goswami, all these festivals gave a very strong feeling that with all our diversities, we were one. Not only did these festivals bring people together, it also encouraged the arts, particularly rural artisans, who would sell their wares in the adjunct fairs. There would also be a lot of feasting

and around these events. Tagore composed a large number of songs, plays and wrote poems specifically for these occasions and more often than not sang and performed in plays during these festivals.

**Tagore, Chhayanaut, Ramna Batomul and Borsho Boron**  
The secular and collective festivals celebrating the seasons still continue in Shantiniketan. However, nowhere else does one find a truer, finer and grander expression of Tagore's original idea of an inclusive and artistic festival than in Bangladesh where on April 14 every year (the first of *Boishakh*), the entire country comes alive and erupts into a spontaneous celebration of the Bengali New Year, in an event that clearly reveals the essentially inclusive, humane and secular fundamentals of this country.

*Borsho Boron*, literally meaning, "ushering in the New Year", is a wonderful festival organised by Chhayanaut (an institution of national importance and a centre for research, teaching and promotion



Seasonal celebration in Shantiniketan.

of Rabindra Sangeet and Bengali performing art forms).

Sawar Ali, one of the founding members of Chhayanaut, has recounted the history of the institution very lucidly for us. The institution was founded in 1961, the year that marked the birth centennial of Tagore. The organisation sought to counter the fundamentalist ideologies that were forcefully imposed upon the Bengalis during Pakistani rule. It was the late Waheedul Haque and Dr. Sanjida Khatun who conceived and orchestrated Chhayanaut's first *Borsho Boron* programme in 1961.

Artists and cultural activists had to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Tagore in 1961, by organising programmes in secret since it could not be done publicly. This experience brought many activists together and led to the founding of Chhayanaut.

Taking the clue from Tagore, Chhayanaut started holding cultural programmes to celebrate the change of Bengali seasons, as the seasons are deeply connected with the lives of the masses.

Beside *Ritu Utshab*, (programmes celebrating the seasons), there were programmes on Nazrul, Tagore and other eminent Bengali poets. The special *Borsho Boron* was arranged in the Ramna Park -- a large green expanse in central Dhaka, and a well-planned and impressive musical soiree took place at the foot of an old expanding banyan tree. It is reported that Dr. Noajesh Ahmed, known for his expertise in biological science and photography, spotted out the site to the organisers in 1967, the place where it has been held since then with the exception of two years. In the initial years, for the *Borsho Boron*, there would be a few artists performing and a few like minded people as an audience.

The event which had a very modest beginning was destined to create history and trigger off a national cultural movement. It soon caught the imagination of the people of Bangladesh and has spread like wild fire into a national celebration, becoming an integral part of Bangladesh's cultural heritage. It has now taken the shape of a movement, with every locality now organising its own *Borsho Boron*.



'Borsho Boron' in Dhaka. PHOTO: STAR

The main *Borsho Boron* programme organised by Chhayanaut generally starts at 6:15 in the morning and lasts for approximately two hours. The event now principally includes songs of the leading five Bengali poets (Tagore, Nazrul, Atulprasad, D.L. Roy and Rajanikant), folk melodies and other traditional music, as well as recitation. Teachers, alumni and students of Chhayanaut present solo, duet and choruses and recitations at the event and it also includes presentation of classical South Asian instrumental music. With large number of artists singing in once voice, the choruses of Chhayanaut are of the highest possible quality.

The programme ends with a three-minute (never a minute more) message by Dr. Sanjida Khatun who, apart from wishing the spectators, makes it a point to remind them, in her own inimitable and gentle way, of the message of Tagore: the importance of being one with nature and of the need to cultivate art and culture, not only for human and social development but also for promoting harmony, cooperation and constructive nation-building.

International Museum Day 2011 Observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking International Museum Day 2011, Bangladesh National Museum (BNM), Ministry of Cultural Affairs arranged a day-long programme, titled "Museum and Memory: Objects tell your story" at the main auditorium of BNM on May 18.

On the occasion, a rally was brought out in the morning. The Nalini Kanta Bhattacharya memorial speech followed at poet Sufia Kamal auditorium of the museum. Professor Emeritus ABM Hossein, of Rajshahi University, delivered the speech.

A discussion and cultural programme were held at the main auditorium of the museum in the evening. Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad was the chief guest at the event. Kazi Keramat Ali, chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee of the Cultural Ministry, was a special guest. Suraiya Begum *ndc*, secretary in charge, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, was a guest of honour at the programme. President of Restoration Board of BNM, M. Azizur



Fahim Hossain Chowdhury and Mita Haque sing at the programme (top). Tamanna Rahman enacts the role of Devayani in "Bidaye Abhishap".

Rahman, presided over the discussion. Director General of BNM, Prokash Chandra Das, was also present at the programme.

Noted Tagore singer Mita Haque and Fahim Hossain Chowdhury kicked off the cultural programme through rendering a duet, "Ajai Jato Tara Tabo Akashey", Mita Haque's solo performance included "Akash Bhora Shurjo Tara", "Majhey Majhey Tabo Dekha Pai", "Oi Ashon Toley" and more. Solo renditions of Tagore numbers by Fahim Hossain Chowdhury followed.

The highlight of the event was the staging of a dance-drama "Bidaye Abhishap", an adaptation of a lyrical drama that Tagore wrote during his stay at Patishor -- overseeing his family estate. "Bidaye Abhishap", depicts the conflict between divine duty and earthly love. The dance-drama was choreographed and directed by noted dancer Tamanna Rahman.

Synopsis: Guru Shukracharya (donned by Dipu Das) is seen praying and teaching his disciples (including his daughter Devayani) at his ashram (hermitage). Under the orders of Indra, Kacha (a Brahmin youth and the son of Brihaspati) descends to earth to

learn Maha Sanjeevani (the technique of bringing a dead person back to life) from Shukracharya. Through divine intervention, Devayani and Kacha meet and get acquainted. Devayani takes Kacha to her father and requests him to accept the young man as his disciple. The guru gives his consent. Devayani and Kacha grow fond of each other and love blooms. Through several acid tests, Kacha proves his worthiness. The guru gives the young man permission to return to heaven, as his learning is complete. When Devayani comes to know of Kacha's impending departure, her grief knows no bound.

When her pleas fall upon deaf ears, she curses Kacha: "A bearer of burdens you will become hereafter, and futile will be your efforts to use the art you have learnt."

Subrata Das and Tamanna Rahman enacted the roles of Kacha and Devayani while Haider Ali and Monomi Tanzana Orthi donned the respective roles in flashback. Mahidul Islam and Shyamoli Sultana lent their voices to the roles Kacha and Devayani. Thandu Raihan designed the lights.

BANGLA TULI  
Bangladeshi artists interpret Tagore at Delhi exhibition

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Lalit Kala Akademi in Mandi House locality of the Indian capital is the site of a rare treat: Rabindranath Tagore portrayed on the canvas by eight senior painters from Bangladesh.

Using Tagore as their muse, the Bangladeshi artists have created their own distinctive interpretation of the Nobel laureate as a nature lover or a poet-musician or as a poet-intellectual during a weeklong art residency programme here, titled "Bangla Tuli", as part of celebrations to mark Tagore's 150th birth anniversary.

The six-day exhibition by Bangladeshi artists Hamiduzzaman Khan, Abdul Mannan, Nasreen Begum, Mohammad Eusuf, Ahmed Shamusiddoha, Sheikh Afzal Hussain, Golam Farooq Bebul and Mohammad Iqbal, and was inaugurated at

the Lalit Kala Akademi by Indian Cultural Secretary Jawhar Sircar and Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in India Mahbub Hassan Saleh on May 18.

Sircar said Tagore spent some of the best years of his life (1891-1901) in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and is undoubtedly a shared heritage between India and Bangladesh.

According to Sircar, with a view to breaking free the bondage of alphabet, Tagore took up paintings at a later stage.

He said his ministry would organise more such camps of artists with India's neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, to bring the people closer to each other.

Saleh hoped more such camps would be held in future to bring the artists of Bangladesh and India closer.

Describing Tagore as one of the greatest cultural icons in the world, Saleh said the legendary artist belonged to the universe

and was at the heart of the cultural bond between the two countries.

He thanked the Lalit Kala Akademi for holding such camp and hoped more such projects would be undertaken in future to bring the artists of Bangladesh and India closer.

While the Bangladeshi artists portrayed Tagore as a nature lover and writer of romantic poetry and songs, the Indians portrayed the visionary in the poet.

Mohammed Iqbal's "Amar Sonar Bangla" is made of two semi-abstract compositions featuring Tagore's ideal Bengali village inhabited by colourful animals, people and the poet.

"I innovate on the traditional Japanese calligraphy on my canvas with a special brush that produces the finest and the densest of strokes. The poet's beard is an example of that," according to Iqbal.

One is reminded of Tagore's famous

poem "Barshasesh" by looking at the works of Nasreen Begum, the only woman in the group of eight artists, drawing inspiration from the poet's description of "Jhora Pata".

"My pata, drawn from Tagore's poems, depict the transient leaf -- at its birth, youth, maturity and old age -- a symbol of life," said Nasreen Begum, Professor, Oriental Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka.

In Eunus' work, Tagore looks out of the window from an abstract background.

"My journey has been one from abstraction to realism. On my canvas, I have locked Tagore in a frame within a frame," he said.

Hamiduzzaman Khan's Tagore is a wizened figure on the canvas with a wreath around his neck. While the poet is framed against a landscape of brown, yellow and red on one canvas, on the other, he is drawn as a sculpted figure.



Indian Cultural Secretary Jawhar Sircar speaks at the opening of the exhibition.

"My drawings have been inspired by the landscape Tagore saw in Bangladesh," said the artist, an alumnus of the M.S. University of Baroda.

For Abdul Mannan, Tagore's personality looms large over the green vistas and cloudy firmament of Bangladesh -- an imagery that comes alive in his lyrical compositions that play with forms and clouds.

According to Sheikh Afzal, trained at the Tsukuba University in Tokyo, "the hand-

some face of Tagore in his middle-age has so much character that a few strokes bring it to life on canvas."

"You cannot confine Tagore within geography. He is a global icon," artist Golam Farooq Bebul of Rajshahi University said. Bebul used paint on a semi-abstract interpretation of the ruins of an old guesthouse the poet was fond of as a young man in Rajshahi.

CANNES 2011



A scene from "La Piel que Habito"

Pedro Almodóvar makes his fifth appearance in Cannes. His fourth In Competition offering, "La Piel que Habito" (The Skin I Live in), is a disturbing film noir which reunited him with Antonio Banderas 20 years after "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!"

Inspired by the novel "Mygale" by French author Thierry Jonquet, the Spanish director explores new territory in adding a quasi-horror story to his filmography, navigating a new style characterised by violence, vengeance and twisted motives. While this is his first foray into directing a thriller-horror, he has previously produced thrillers by Alex de la Iglesia

("Acción Mutante", 1992) and Guillermo Del Toro ("The Devil's Backbone", 2001).

Eager to work with Antonio Banderas again for a number of years now, Almodóvar seized the opportunity to direct the actor in his role as Robert Ledgard, a psychopathic surgeon who holds a young woman hostage to serve as guinea pig. He wants her to model a skin of his own creation, the invention that could have saved the life of his wife a dozen years earlier after a car accident left her disfigured.

This is the fifth time Antonio Banderas and Pedro Almodóvar have worked together, ending the long

hiatus that followed their previous collaborations, "Matador" (1986), "Law of Desire" (1987), "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (1988) and "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (1990).

Pedro Almodóvar told newspaper El País that this was one of the toughest projects of his career. He described the film as: "Close to a horror like never before, pushing the boundaries of the genre, with no screaming or terror."

Source: festival-cannes.fr

ATN BANGLA		06:15	Bishay-er Bangla
10:30	Ranna Ghar	08:45	Drama
02:50	Bangla Feature Film	11:30	Boishakhi Binodon O Sanskriti Sangbad
06:15	Amra Korbo Joy	ETV	
08:00	Meghe Dhaka Tara	10:02	Sonamuni Shukhe
10:45	Bihango Kotha	01:30	Oshukhe
11:00	Smile Show	05:30	Mukto Khobor
CHANNEL i		08:20	Paddokuri
11:05	Tele-film	09:40	Drama: Pagli Tomar
01:30	Hindoyee Gaan		Shonge
02:40	Bangla Feature Film: Moner Manush	12:05	Phone O Live Studio Concert
07:50	Khude Gaanraj		
11:30	Fun Club Tournament	Diganta TV	
12:00	Ajker Shangbadpatro	09:05	Shasta Diganta
ntv		11:30	Meley Dhoiri
10:05	Gaan-er Shomoy	10:00	Ichchheyguli
10:30	Aponar Jiggasha	03:05	Music Hour
02:30	Tele-film	05:30	School Angina
05:30	Tilin-er Fake	08:05	Chena Chena
		11:05	Shorali Poth

abc radio FM 90.2	12:00	Boier Pola
06:00	02:00	Fourti Unlimited
09:00	06:00	Bumper to Bumper
12:00	10:00	Club Forti
03:00	01:00	Back to Back music
05:00	08:00	RADIO TODAY FM 89.6
07:00	08:00	Good Morning Dhaka
09:00	11:00	Flash Back
11:00	12:30	Islamic Program
RADIO FOOTBI	02:15	Rugbi Gaan

**Moner Manush**  
On CHANNEL i at 02:40 pm  
Bangla Feature Film  
Cast: Chanchal Chowdhury, Prosenjit

**Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**  
On HBO at 11:00pm  
Genre: Adventure/  
Family  
Cast: Daniel Radcliffe, Emma

**Ghure Darao Bangladesh**  
On Rtv at 11:30pm  
Musical Programme  
Singer: Imen, Porshi

06:45	Rupmadhuri	10:45	Meet the Fockers
11:30	Hip Hip Hurray (Live)	01:30	Walking Tall: The Payback
Rtv		04:00	Duplex
10:10	Career Today	07:00	Shanghaei Knights
03:10	Cinema R Gaan	09:05	Pary Vittor
05:00	Music R Music	11:45	Mission Impossible II
06:00	Star and Sports		
07:40	Drama: Mumukhi Jamal	HBO	
11:30	Ghure Darao Bangladesh	10:30	Paradox
		02:15	Rush Hour 2
CHANNEL 10		04:00	Trapped
10:10	Bhalo Thakun	07:45	Anacarda 3: Offspring
11:05	Care Vision for Success	09:30	The Ugly Truth
02:30	Drama	11:00	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
04:05	Music Together		
06:05	Gaan O Fun	Star Movies	
11:25	Ami Ekhon Ki Korbo	11:25	A Few Good Men
Desh TV		03:25	Bad Boys
11:00	Desi Amar	07:00	Knowing
03:00	Bangla Feature Film	09:05	Possession
04:00	Desi Janpad	10:35	Game
07:45	Jai Kichhu Prothom	12:40	Once Upon a Crime
09:45	Drama: Flyover	StarWorld	
11:45	Call-er Gaan	10:30	Community
Boishakhi TV		02:30	Las Vegas
03:30	Tele-film	08:30	Two And A Half Men
04:15	Shorashori Doctor	10:30	Dexter
05:15	Boishakhi-CNN	11:30	How I Met Your Mother
	Sharabishwa		

D R A M A   S E R I A L			
ATN BANGLA		09:05pm	Oloshpur
09:20pm	Haat-er Reikha Kotha	09:30pm	Chhatrai Nibash
	Boley	BANGLAVISION	
CHANNEL i		0815pm	Dyrectaar
09:35pm	Phanush	09:05pm	Close Chapter
ntv		0945pm	Gulshan Avenue
08:15pm	Rumali	Desh TV	
09:45pm	Ojana Gantabho	08:15pm	Shopno-bhuk
Rtv		Boishakhi TV	

NEWS BULLETIN	
RTV	
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm, News (English) at 10:00am, 4:00 pm, 10:00 pm.	BANGLAVISION
News (Bangla) at 7:30am, 1:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:15pm, News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00am, 12:00am, 4:00pm, News (English) at 6:00pm	rtv
News (Bangla): 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am	rtv
News (Bangla): 7:30am, 12:02pm, 2:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am	ETV
News (Bangla): 9:00am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 6:00 pm.	

TALK SHOW			
ATN BANGLA	10:40am	Tarakalap	
08:30am	Islam Ki Bole Amra	Boishakhi TV	
	Ki Kori	10:50pm	Sat kahon
12:30am	Lead News	12:00am	Zero Hour
01:00am	Vision 2020	BANGLAVISION	
CHANNEL i		12:05pm	Moha Shasta
09:45am	Tristio Matra		Al-Quran
12:05pm	Kara Alaap	Diganta TV	
Rtv		12:05am	News of the

