

WHAT'S ON



Amar Ekushe Book Fair '12
Venue: Bangla Academy Premises
Date: February 1-29
Time: 9am onwards



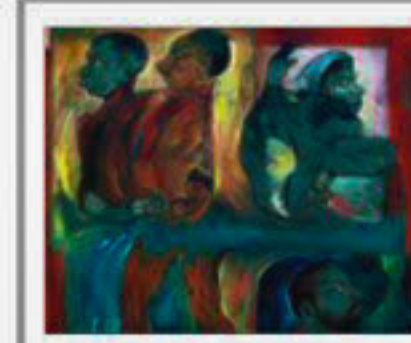
Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Texture and Colour in Mindscape
Artist: Maksuda Iqbal Nipa
Venue: Bengla Art Lounge, Gulshan-1
Date: Feb 19-Mar 1



Solo Photography Exhibition
Title: Ecats De Bangladesh
Photographer: Dr. Pierre Clapain
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
Date: Feb 17-Mar 1



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Renewal in Serenity
Venue: Galleri Kaya, H-20, B-16, Sector-4, Uttara
Date: Feb 18-28
Time: 11am-7:30pm



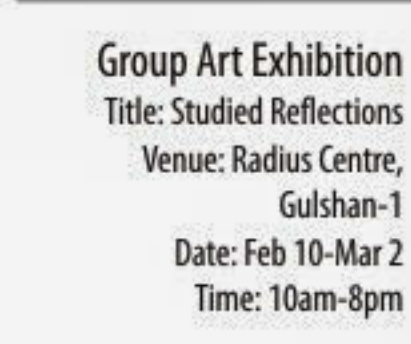
Solo Exhibition
Title: Philosophy of Life
Artist: Ruhul Amin Kajari
Venue: Bengla Gallery of Fine Arts, Dharmadip
Date: Feb 19-21
Time: 12pm-8pm



Cultural Programme on Ekush
Title: Ekush Maan-e-Mahla Neta Neta
Organiser: Padatik-Bangladesh
Venue: Ramnarayan Bazar
Date: Feb 21
Time: 10am



Group Art Exhibition
Title: A tribute to Panam Nagar
Organiser: The Arts Council Dhaka
Venue: Khazana Restaurant, R-55, H-9, Gulshan-2
Date: Feb 19-Mar 3
Time: 12pm-10pm



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Studied Reflections
Venue: Radius Centre, Gulshan-1
Date: Feb 10-Mar 2
Time: 10am-8pm



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Anisul Hoque is a versatile author -- with his repertoire covering novels, poetry, plays and even screenplay. Hoque, who is an assistant editor at the daily Prothom Alo, has also amassed a large fan following through his 'Godyo-Cartoon' articles.

This year, the writer has been honoured with the prestigious Bangla Academy Award, conferred on him for his contributions to literature. He received several other awards throughout his illustrious writing career, including the City Bank Anondo Alo Award, Khalekdar Chowdhury Award, Khulna Writers Club Award, Poet Mozammel Hoque Foundation Award, Sukanto Award and the Euro Children's Literature Award. He also received the Bachsas Award and Tenashinas Award as a playwright. The Daily Star caught up with the author.

How many books by you have been published at this year's Ekushey Book Fair?

Hoque: Three novels and a compilation of small stories have been published. Among the novels, Prothoma Prokash published "Jara Bhor Enechhilo"; Somoy Prokash published "Na Manushi Jomin" and "Bhalobasha Dot Com" was published by Pearl Publications. Kakoli Prokashoni meanwhile published the short stories, titled "Oshomapto Chumboner 19 Bochhor Por". Besides, a selection of my regular newspaper articles under the columns 'Godyo-Cartoon' and 'Oronye Rodon' have been made into books. The titles are "Priyo Pathok Ektu Hashun" and "Ei Bhalobashar Kono Maney Hoy Na".

What is your reaction to winning the Bangla Academy Award?

Hoque: I'd say the award should've come earlier. But I can take consolation by looking at the other 9 recipients of the award who are all much senior to me, especially Abdullah Abu Sayeed Sir; Khalikuzzaman Ilias and my teacher from BUET, Ali Azgar Sir. I consider Abdullah Abu Sayeed to be my mentor. When I first

“Our publishers need to have editors”

-- Anisul Hoque

started writing, I asked Sayeed Sir why he doesn't get awards. When my books started coming out, I thought to myself "who am I to get an award, when Sayeed Sir hasn't received one yet!". Then he received the Magsaysay Award for literature -- which we consider to be the Nobel Prize of Asia. But still Bangla Academy did not award him. So I started hoping that maybe Sayeed Sir and I would get the award the same year. It is a dream fulfilled. Having the chance to share the same stage with him while receiving the award is consolation enough.

What do you think of this year's book fair?

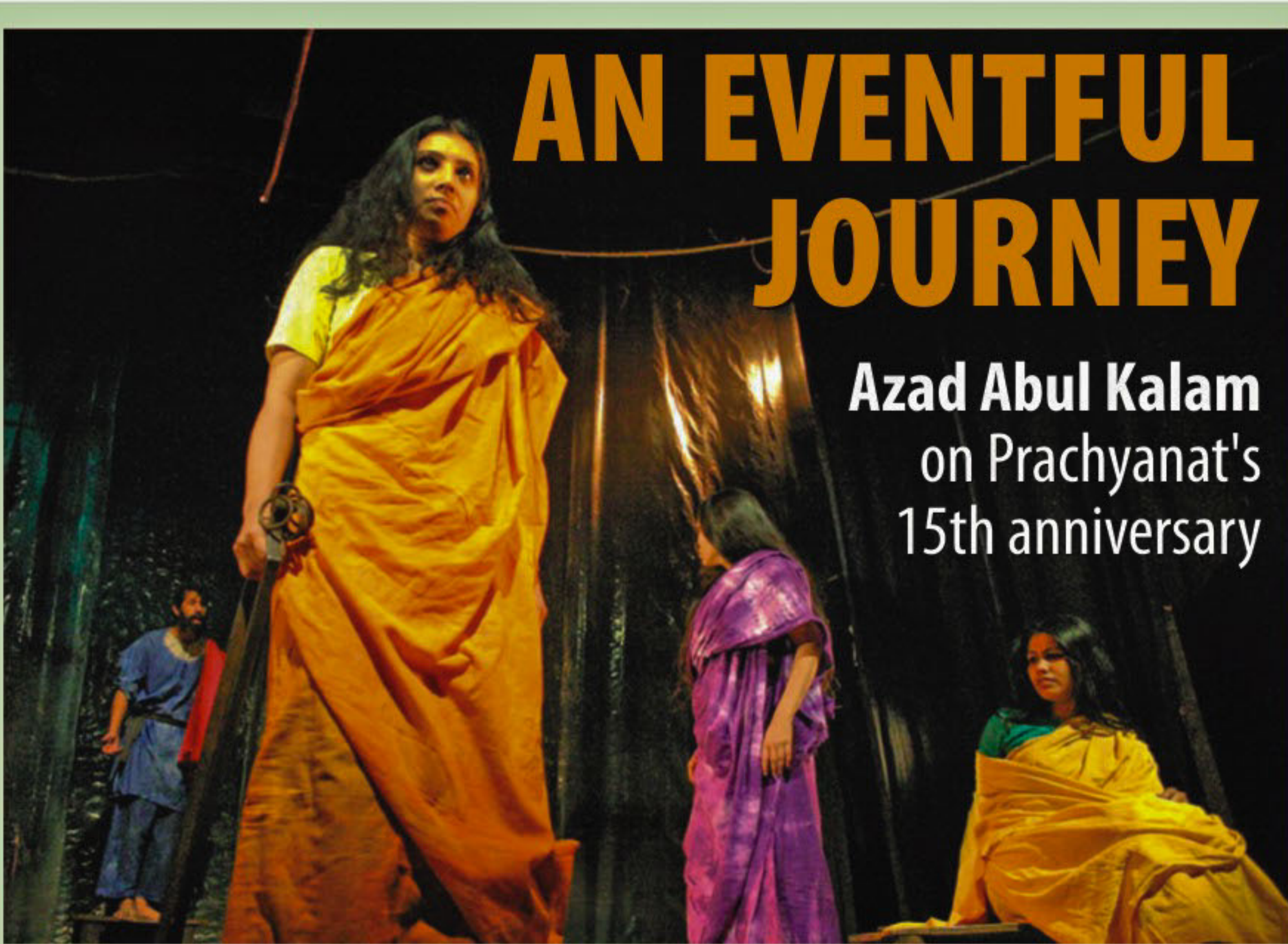
Hoque: I've been coming to the fair since 1984-85. Compared to those times, Dhaka city and its population both have grown, but the space inside the Bangla Academy has shrunk. The fair used to stretch near the pond inside; but buildings have been erected at the spot. It is amazing how the authorities are being able to maintain the overwhelming pressure of the ever-growing literate crowd in the capital. I believe a good stall arrangement has given the fair a better vibe.

Do you feel that the fair space should be extended?

Hoque: I feel that such a small venue cannot accommodate a book fair in a city of 20 million. However, Somoy Prokashoni proprietor Farid Ahmed disagrees. I think the fair should be moved to a larger venue -- with better access and car parking facilities. It should be a book fair of international standards. The Bangla Academy premises lack these necessities. We should rise above our sentiments. An alternative can be holding the fair at separate venues simultaneously throughout the month of February. At least two venues -- for North and South Dhaka -- should host the fair.

What is your opinion on the abundance of publishers?

Hoque: I don't know why there are so many publishers in the country. The focus should be on the quality of books. Our publishers also need to have editors, which all international publishing houses have. The publishers in Bangladesh have achieved solvency, now they need to be professional.



"Koinna" is one of Prachyanat's acclaimed productions.

JAMIL MAHMUD

Theatre troupe Prachyanat has produced some acclaimed plays over the last one and a half decade. The troupe is celebrating its 15th anniversary today through a two-day show, titled "Andorjatra" (literary, "journey within") at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Before introducing the audience to the world of Prachyanat, the troupe's leader Azad Abul Kalam talked about its early days, ideology and achievements.

An "uncompromising attitude" was instrumental behind the initiation of Prachyanat. Do you think such attitude is imperative for the progress of arts?

Azad: The important thing is how an individual sees or feels about art. For example, if any member of Prachyanat feels that the way s/he sees art is different from the rest of the troupe then s/he must not waste precious time here. I personally feel if one wants to create something new then s/he must take a new path. After a certain time, any kind of group activity turns into institutional work. Individuals may become confined within structural activities. Prachyanat is not an anomaly in this sense.

When you look back, what do you recall?

Azad: Before forming the troupe, we, the founder members, had tug-of-war regarding what we were really going to do or what we wanted to do. Each session was full of arguments. When I look back, I realise that it was this kind of brainstorming that helped us find our way. Most of us had no source of income; we went through struggles, yet we were determined to do something new.

What was the audiences' impression after the first show?

Azad: Our first play, "Circus Circus", was staged at Mahila Shamiti. We were tensed. We were rehearsing at a school. At a technical show, we invited some parents, one of whom appreciated the play a lot. That appreciation actually boosted our confidence. To be honest, before that we were unsure about our abilities. After the premiere, the play received a mixed response. Our first street play was "Kandte Mana". It was staged at TSC, Dhaka University premises.

"Circus Circus", "A Man for All Seasons" and "Koinna" -- the early plays had rather larger canvases. The recent plays, such as "Punorjonmo" and "Mayer Mukh", seem significant smaller, production-wise. What is the reason behind this?

Azad: Theatre is a journey. We are growing older and our thoughts regarding arts have been

changing. Now, I would love to regard myself as someone who comes up with concepts, instead of a director. I started feeling this way while directing

"Raja...ebong Onnano". I feel that we need a new kind of theatre. A kind of theatre that might not be artistically arresting, but conceptually more engaging. If we don't come up with something new, our work will fail to stir the audiences' interest.

Was "Raja...ebong Onnano" a challenge for you?

Azad: The play was an experiment; a test to judge our abilities to absorb the concept I've talked about earlier. There is use of metaphors in the play, and I wanted to see Tagore's "Raja" from a more realistic angle.

Many consider Prachyanat to be an ideal troupe. Your thoughts?

Azad: If you say so, then I must say that this happened because of the sacrifices made by some people. These members refrained from lures, loved the troupe and seldom thought about their own interests -- knowing well that they won't earn anything from it.

How much do you think Bangladeshi theatre has progressed over the last 15 years?

Azad: A change in quality, precisely in the sense of application, is apparent in recent plays.

Theatre is more engaging nowadays. However, we are still in need of able playwrights.

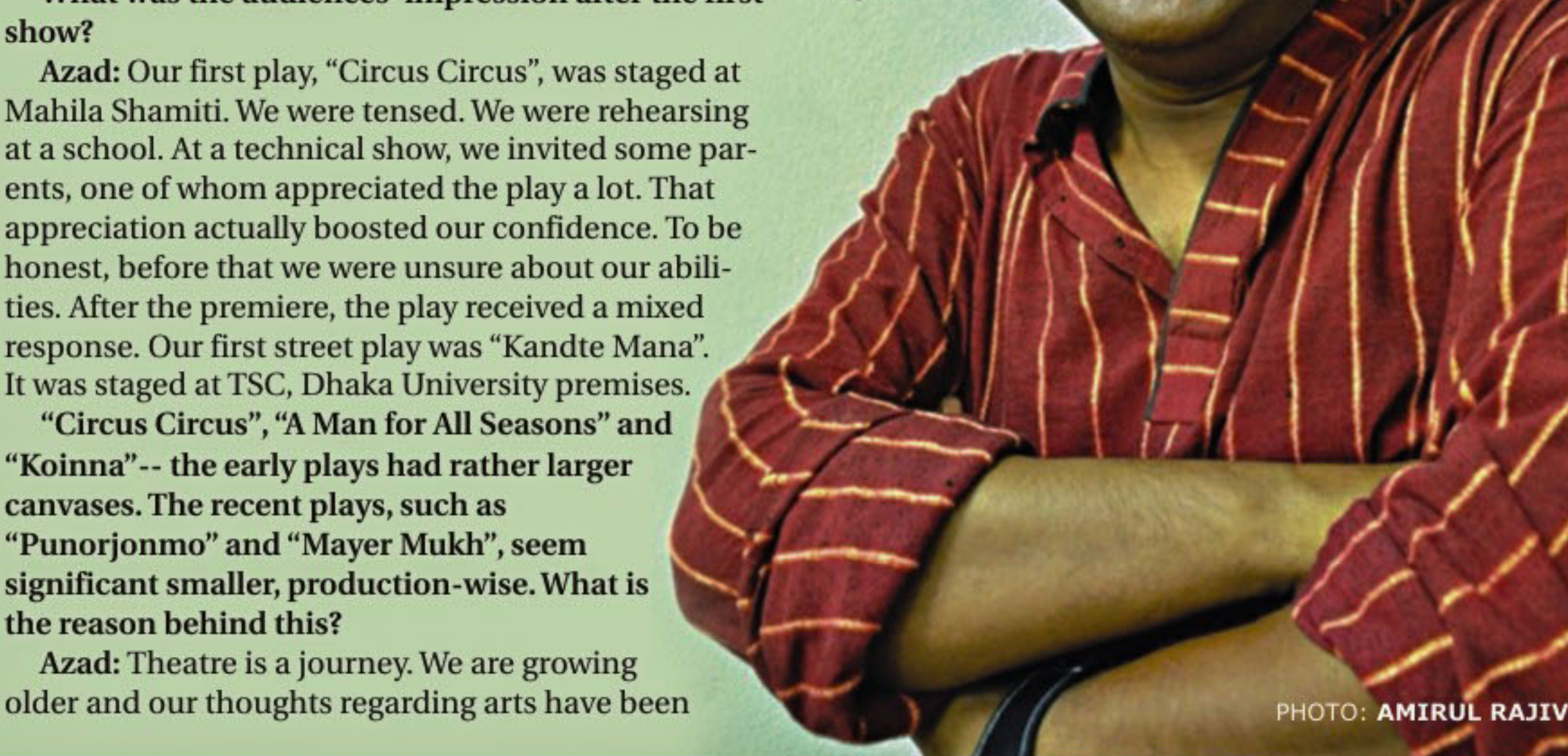


PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV



The exhibition was an effort to build awareness on our heritage.

MAHEEN KHAN

On February 18, an exhibition was held as a tribute to Panam Nagar, the magnificent old township. Painters were inspired to draw upon the distinct extraordinary remnant of this architectural gem in Bangladesh. This 19th century relic of British renaissance is a unique historical site that connects us to the colonial past. A large audience viewed the beautiful paintings -- at Khazana Restaurant in Dhaka -- that rekindled memories of a bygone era.

Organised by the Arts Council Dhaka, it was an effort to build awareness on our heritage.

Panam Nagar is a unique example of an early urban settlement of Bengal. The residences are close to each other with the central road being the major access and the canals serving as the secondary or service access. The architectural style of the buildings is 'English Renaissance' or the 'British Raj', used throughout the cities of British India during the 19th century. It is a coherent neighbourhood of richly detailed buildings, which tell us about the life, and culture of our past. Its

fortunate location in the tourist city of Sonargaon -- surrounded by the ruins of the old capital, Mughal and pre-Mughal monuments, tombs and palaces -- gives it a good chance of being a successful educational and recreational centre. Since the township is owned by the Government of Bangladesh and is mostly unoccupied, renovating the structures to accommodate new uses should not be difficult.

Panam village became prominent during the British period, when a cloth-trading centre grew up under the influential zamindars (landlords). The cloth merchants came from various places such as Calcutta, Patna or Bombay.

These wealthy Hindu merchants, the Shahas and Poddars, built their exquisite residences in a beautiful setting in Panam village.

At present about 250 people live in Panam Nagar. Some of them are the staff of the Folk Arts Museum and of the local school. The rest are unauthorised occupants consisting of shopkeepers and spice-vendors.

The writer is a renowned designer.

Roopkotha: The estranged and ignored kin

KARIM WAHEED

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, mothers used to tell children bedtime stories: of clashes and palace politics between Shuorani and Duorani, blood-curdling accounts of Rakshas picking up the smell of humans before devouring them, seven child-less queens giving birth simultaneously after eating a magic root/herb given by a sadhu, talking birds -- Bangoma and Bangomi -- leading princes to treasures guarded by vicious demons, a cursed Konkaboti awaiting her saviour and so on.

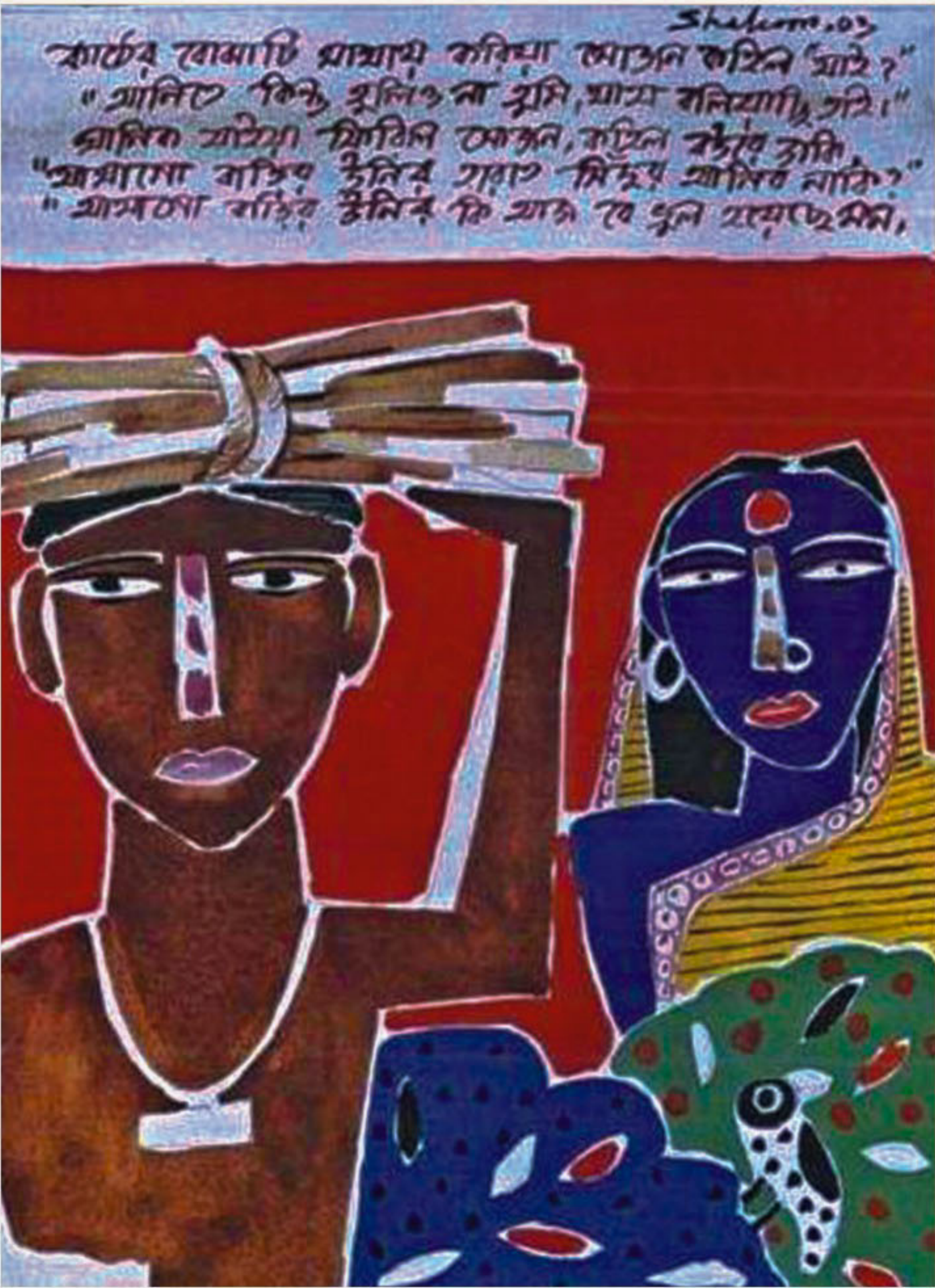
But gone are those days. Blonde, blue-eyed Cinderellas and Harry Potters have invaded that special place in the hearts of urban Bengali children. Kajolrekhas, Konkabotis and Dalimkumars are now just fond, fading memories of a generation that never bothered to introduce these tales to their successors.

Trapped in some badly printed books, adorned with unimpressive illustration -- these stories now collect dust in someone's forsaken collection.

Talking about the dying tradition of Bangla fairy tales or 'roopkotha', educationist and founder of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, says, "Fairy tales and folklore are the most creative and powerful aspect of a culture. Their USP is the capability to inspire the masses. Take the reference of a kingdom going into a state of coma in several roopkotha for instance: 'Hatishaley hati ghumaye, ghorashaley ghora. Raja ghumaye, Rani ghumaye, ghumaye bon-er pakhira...'. Clearly a metaphor for death of conscience. Then comes a prince and saves the day. This theme of good overcoming evil is universal.

"These tales are true to our roots, our heritage. Like the story of 'Monimala': Deep below the surface of water is the palace of a sea god and everything in that enchanted domain is made of snakes. This reference to snakes conveys that this species meant to the people living in this land; Monosha, the snake goddess, reigned supreme in medieval Bengal.

This was more or less an oral tradition and between the late 19th and mid 20th century, this tradition reached its zenith. This period



A folk-themed painting by Abdus Shakoor Shah.

was more like a Bengali renaissance, and roopkotha was made hugely popular by Upendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury and Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder. Specifically, Majumder's 'Thakurmar Jhuli' became an

inseparable part of growing up."

Why are these fables losing ground then?

Professor Sayeed's response: "For a number of reasons. First of all, I believe it is the responsibility of schools to get children acquainted

with their heritage, their culture. More and more middle and upper middle class families are sending their kids to English medium schools that don't see the necessity of familiarising their students with our traditions, literature, and these roopkotha. For the last two centuries, Bengalis have been known for their English heyday in the subcontinent. Back in the cultural hells of Bengal, there were no English medium schools. The educated urban Bengali knew the way of the world and yet maintained strong ties with his/her roots. Now it has become more like 'take everything western and discard your identity'.

"Then there's globalisation. In an open market, everything depends on capital, marketing and availability. The global media is controlled by the west. European fairy tales are being marketed in innumerable ingenious ways. These stories are maintaining their appeal in cartoons, TV shows and movies -- mediums that easily engage children. Amazing illustrations are used in the books. Why would a child want to rummage old, decaying termite shelters of books with a few badly drawn or no images?

"The most important factor: mothers. Mothers have become alienated from these stories. Hence, children don't get to hear these bedtime stories."

Can these treasures of Bangla literature be saved? An optimistic Sayeed says, "Yes. But these stories will have to compete with their counterparts from all over the world, and to be able to do that they need a facelift.

"The language which today's children might find archaic has to be decoded. Fascinating illustrations should be included to draw young readers. Filmmakers and animators should get involved.

"Most importantly, schools and parents should introduce children to these stories. If your grandparents had narrated these stories when you were a kid, you should pass them on to your next generation."

Makes sense. If we can do that, Konkabotis and Kajolrekhas won't be elbowed by Cinderellas and Little Mermaids. Shuorani, Duorani would take a break from their eternal bickering and smile at their newly gained and much deserved readership.

Sylhet Geetabitan holds musical programme

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

To coincide with the distribution of certificates among its students, the Sylhet chapter of Geetabitan Bangladesh recently organised a melodious session of Tagore songs at a Sylhet auditorium.

Tagore researcher Agnibha Bandopadhyay, also Associate Professor of Rabindra Bharati, kept the audience enthralled with the rendition of songs such as, "Aguner Poroshmoni Chhoo Praney", "Darier Achho Tumi Amar Gaan-er Oparey" and "Jogoter

Anandojogge".

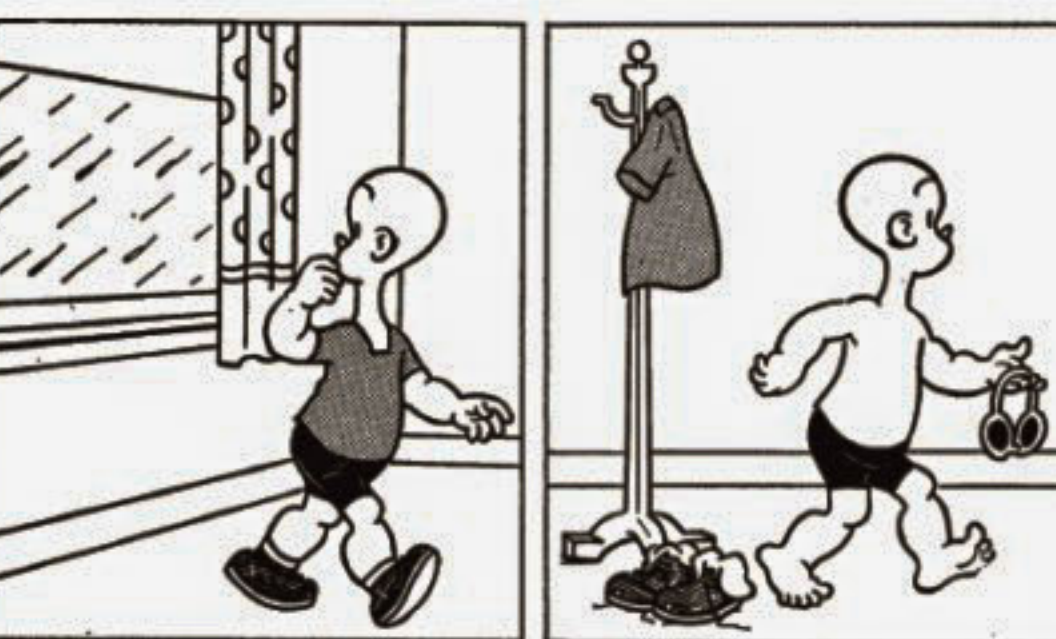
Agnibha also addressed the gathering as chief guest at the brief discussion. Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, Khan Mohammad Bilal, and others spoke, with the director of the Sylhet chapter of Geetabitan, Animesh Bijoy Chowdhury, in the chair. Renowned cultural activist Aminul Islam Chowdhury conducted the function while young artists of the organisation presented renditions.

The guests later handed over certificates to the students of Geetabitan.

Beetle Baily



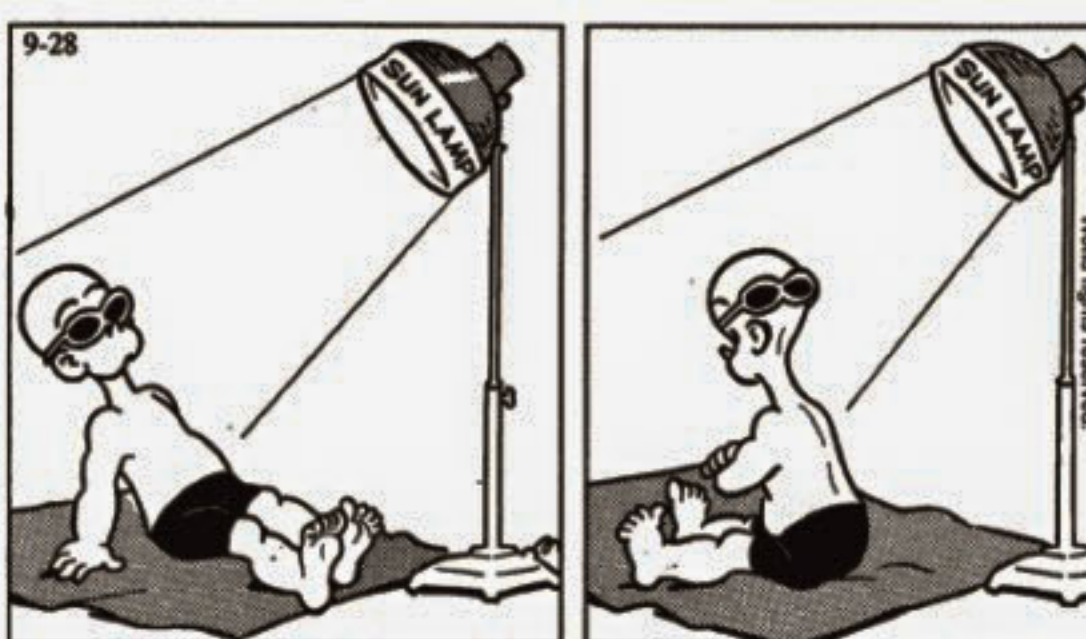
Henry



by Mort Walker



by Don Trachte



All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

BTV	12:35 Special Programme	01:30 Hothat Ekdin
03:30	Ekush Amar Ohongkar	03:30 Ekusher Gaan
04:30	Amar Mayer Bhasha	04:30 Durgam
07:30	Juddho Oporadi	09:45 Drama: Pathshala
08:35	Drama: Apun Mukher Chhobi	11:45 Ami Banglay Gaan Gai
ATN BANGLA	11:45 Moder Gorob Moder	Maasranga Television
01:15	Bhashar Gaan	10:02 Bangla Feature Film
03:10	Tele-film	05:02 Bangla Bhashar Chalachitto
06:15	Pich Dhaka Poth	06:30 Ekusher Dip Jeley
08:45	Drama: Copyright	08:00 Drama: Phuler Rong Lal
01:05	Bangla Feature Film	09:02 Bhulini Amra
05:30	Bio Mela	11:00 Na Bola Bangla
07:50	Drama: Khroma	Z Studio
12:00	Ajker Shongbadpoto	10:40 Unbreakable
ntv	10:05 Ekusher Golpo	01:30 Scary Movie 2
11:30	Music Jam	03:15 Mission Impossible II
		06:00 There Will Be Blood
		09:30 Meet the Parents
		11:50 Meet the Fockers

abcr radio FM 89.2	10:00 Morning Express
06:00 Bhorer Janjaly	12:00 No Tension
09:00 Mukhonto Jhoney	04:00 Dhaka Calling
12:00 Duran Durany	06:30 Kaptal Riders
03:00 Duronto Sholey	RADIO TODAY FM 89.5
05:00 Shondha Tara	06:00 Green FM
07:00 Shaj-et Maya	08:00 Good Morning Dhaka
09:00 Raat-er Akashy	12:00 Today's A Day
1:00 Gajper Shach Nei	04:00 U Turn
Radio Foorti	07:00 Tobey Tai Hok
07:30 Hello Dhaka	

Copyright
On ATN BANGLA at 08:45pm
Single Episode TV
Play
Cast: Anisur Rahman Milon, Shoshi

Ekusher Gaan
On ETN 9:30pm
Musical Programme
Singer: Rafiqul Alam and Abida Sultana

Pathshala
On Dosh TV at 09:45pm
Single Episode TV
Play
Cast: Shojal, Archita

12:10 Drama: Na	HBO
05:30 Bornomalar Shathye	11:30 Get Him to the Greek
06:45 Ekusher Gaan	01:30 Inception
09:00 Drama: Ochin Pakhi	04:35 Bangkok Dangerous
ETV	06:40 Inictus
11:30 Shomali Shadkalo	09:30 The King of Fighters
01:30 Bangla Feature Film	11:30 Transporter 3
06:30 Bhasha Andoley Nari	Star World
08:20 Chetonal Ekush	11:30 Desperate Housewives
09:30 Ekusher Gaan	02:30 Supernatural
10:10 Drama: Urtorio	03:30 Panam
Boishakhi TV	04:30 The Big Bang Theory
10:30 Joyita	10:30 The Shield
01:30 Theatre: Kabor	12:00 Two And A Half Men
04:15 Shorashori Doctor	National Geographic Channel
08:10 Tele-film: Bhasha O	11:30 Animals Game Crazy
Bhalobasha	03:30 Big, Bigger, Biggest
11:00 Reporters Dairy	07:30 Cat Wars
11:30 Praner Mela	09:30 Animal Mega Moves
BANGLAVISION	10:00 Mega Structures
01:05 Bangla Feature Film	12:00 Mad Scientists
05:20 Krishnachur Rangey Ronkey	Discovery Channel
06:30 Ekusher Minar	03:30 Prehistoric
08:15 Drama Serial: No Problem	05:30 My Naked Secret
11:25 Raat Biraley	08:30 Deception with Keith Barry
Rtv	09:30 Man Woman Wild
12:35 Bangla Feature Film	10:30 One Man Army
05:00 Cinema R Gaan	11:30 Survivors
08:15 Drama Serial: College Road	BBC World
09:05 Drama Serial: Boyra Porbar	11:00 BBC World News
12:05 Business Talk	03:30 HARD talk
Desh TV	07:00 Impact Asia with Mihal Husain
09:00 Bornomela	08:45 Sport Today
	10:00 The Hub with Nik

ETV	News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm, 1:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:30pm.
News (English) at 10:00am, 4:00 pm, 10:00 pm.	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	ntv
News (Bangla): 7:30am, 12:30pm, 2:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am	News (Bangla): 7:30am, 12:30pm, 2:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am
News (Bangla): 9:00am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 6:00 pm.	News (English): 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 6:00 pm.

ATN BANGLA	12:00am Zero Hour
08:00pm Bornomalar Eritkotha	12:30am Ekusher Pongkimala
12:30am Lead News	BANGLAVISION
09:40am Tritio Matra	09:05pm Omoroter Shromoni
ntv	10:40am Tarokalp
12:40am Ei Shomoy	07:40pm Our Democracy
ETV	Maasranga Television
12:15am Ekusher Raat	07:30am Prime News
Boishakhi TV	12:00am Shamporik