

Omor Ekushey Book Fair
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Surawardy Udyan and
Bangla Academy
Date: Feb 1-28
Time: 3pm-9pm



Theatre
Raja Himadri
Troupe: Dristipat
Venue: National Theatre Hall, BSA
Date: Feb 01
Time: 7pm



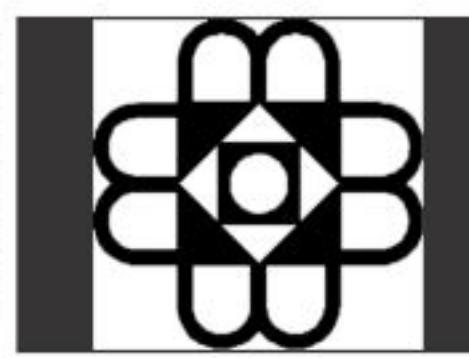
Jatiya Kabita Utshab
Organiser: Jatiya Kabita Parishad
Venue: Premises of Central
Library, Dhaka University
Date: Feb 1-2
Time: 5pm-8pm



Private Collector's
Collector: Durjoy Rahman Joy
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge,
Gulshan
Date: Jan 24-Feb 3



National Street
Theatre Fest
Organiser: BGTF
Venue: Shaheed Minar
Date: Feb 1-7
Time: 4pm onwards



Spotlight on Internationalising Bangla Language

In conversation with IMLI Director General Dr Jinnat Imtiaz Ali

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) on March 15, 2001 while the premier inaugurated it on 21 February, 2010. IMLI is the institutional outcome of the International Mother Language Day, which is being celebrated on 21st February since November, 1999. The main purpose of the IMLI is to preserve and protect endangered languages of the world as well as to develop languages that have remained on the fringe of modern civilisation. Dr Jinnat Imtiaz Ali, Professor of linguistics, University of Dhaka, Director General of the IMLI spoke to The Daily Star about ongoing activities of the institute and languages that are gradually becoming extinct and obsolete.

Excerpts:

"According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Linguistic Rights and Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Language is called the tangible and intangible phenomenon of culture. Our National Education Policy aims to provide primary education to children of indigenous and ethnic minority groups in their mother languages, which is a fundamental right."

"We are going to launch a big task called "Ethno-linguistic survey of Bangladesh" this February, for the first time in Bangladesh. Sir George Abraham Grierson was an Irish linguistic scholar and civil servant who conducted the Linguistic Survey of India, obtaining information on 364 languages and dialects. Over the years, immense changes have happened with the development of science and information technology. Unearthing of the inner minutes or the subtle contents of language can now be traced."

"A checklist for Ethno-linguistic survey will be done by three specialists



(Clockwise) The institute; Dr Jinnat Imtiaz Ali in conversation, and part of the language museum.

including myself. The Department of Anthropology of Dhaka University will oversee the work-plan with assistance from other departments -- Linguistics, Sociology, Bengali, English and Geography and Environmental Science -- of all the public universities.

"After carrying out the survey, we will have a real picture of different ethnic groups' languages. We will also get the corpuses of languages. The way I love my mother tongue, others do the same. To protect and preserve a language from getting extinct, our first responsibility is to formulate a writing system for illiterate and endangered languages' and orthography."

"The process of software development and dictionary compilation will come next. The primer of several indigenous languages is being made so that children of the respective ethnic groups can receive education in their mother tongues. The declaration of

International Mother Language Day on November 17, 1999 has created a conscience and motivation among the international community to document their mother tongues. Language-centric consciousness and the dignity of mother tongue have been augmented through this declaration. Especially various endangered lingual groups of Africa and Latin America got enthusiastic on documenting their mother tongues. We have another vision of internationalising our mother tongue, Bangla. Like Alliance Française, Goethe Institut, we can diffuse our language, literature and culture all over the world. Honourable Prime Minister inaugurated Unicode in last February. Bangla keyboard has been developed for mobile. But we need to invent something like English keyboard so that Bangla speaking people all over the world can use that keyboard."

"If we go to the internet domain, we find Bangla blogs; Bangla is used on Facebook and other social networking sites, but is used on several softwares like Microsoft excel, Photoshop, Illustrator. We do not have OCR, voice to text software and vice versa. I believe the present government is very sincere to accomplish all these tasks to smoothly tread on the information highway of 21st century. The work on speller is also on."

"The divergence and convergence of any language is a natural process. IMLI has so far documented primer four languages of indigenous communities -Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Achik. The process is on for the language of Santal community. Meanwhile, about 3500-5000 words have been documented for each language under corpus planning. With the process on, we can offer higher education to the ethnic groups in their respective mother tongues. We

are relentlessly working for enlivening the endangered languages of Bangladesh."

"At present the institute has a complete infrastructural and administrative set up. It has also opened its language museum for the public, which displays the languages spoken in different countries in Asia and the Pacific, the number of speakers, language family and sample of text of the major languages of the country. The museum also provides a visual chronological account of the language movement of Bangladesh. Photographs of old Bengali scripts and its derivation are also displayed in the museum. For a quick visit to the roots of the words that we use in our daily lives, a peek at the International Mother Language Institute is a must. There is an ongoing process of including more languages of the world especially from African, American and Latin American countries."



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

Exterior view of the International Mother Language Institute building, featuring a large circular structure with a grid of letters and symbols on its facade.

IT'S TRUE!

The main office of Bangla Academy is located at the Burdwan House, once part of the University of Dhaka. It was the official residence of the Prime Minister of the then East Pakistan, Nurul Amin, in 1952, when the Language Movement was at its peak. The very building that had seen the hatching of conspiracies against the Language Movement and unleashed the bloodbath of February 21, 1952, is now the symbol of Bangladeshi literary tradition and intellectualism. After the February 21 killings, the demand of transforming



the house into a centre for 'Bangla Bhashar Gobeshonagar' (research centre for Bangla language) emerged. At present the 'Bhasha Andolan Jadughar' (Language Movement Museum) is located on the first floor of the house.

National Street Theatre Festival opens today

A CORRESPONDENT

With the theme "Culture against Violence", Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGTF) is organising a seven-day street theatre festival from today, at the Central Shaheed Minar. The event, to mark the International Mother Language Day, is in continuation of BGTF's four month-long programme on the same theme. A total of 35 troupes from across the country will present their plays on the theme from 4pm everyday.

The inauguration will have thespian Nasiruddin Yousuff, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Vice Chairman Golam Kuddus and General Secretary Hasan Arif, Bangladesh Poth-Natok Parishad Chairman Mannan Hira, among others. BGTF Secretary General Jhuna Chowdhury will deliver the welcome address, while it will be chaired by Director General of BGTF and Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy, Liaquat Ali Lucky. A number of cultural groups will present songs, dance, recitation and a street play titled "Koibollo".

Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad turns 16 Discussion and musical evening at Shilpkala



A CORRESPONDENT

Marking its 16th founding anniversary, Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad (BLSP) organised a discussion and folk musical evening at National Music and Dance auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy on January 30. Poet Asad Chowdhury graced the occasion as chief guest while senior vice president of press club and editor of monthly Sargam, Kazi Rawnak Hossain was a special guest. Eminent folk singer, lyricist, composer, folk researcher and founding president of BLSP, Professor Indra Mohan Rajbongshi presided over the programme.

A musical programme was followed where artistes of BLSP including Indra Mohan Rajbongshi, Deepa Rajbongshi, Sheikh Hemayet, Dr. Abul Kalam Azad, Nasreen Ferdous Chaman, Abdul Aziz, Kohinur Aktar Neela, Mafizur Rahman Birohi, Selina Alam and Nasreen Hayat performed solo songs.

A transcending walk down memory lane

The Daily Star hosts "Gaane Mo'r Kon Indrodonu"



FAHMIM FERDOUS

"Nylon Saree, Parker Pen, Uttam Kumar'er Bukey Suchitra Sen" was one little rhyme that became very popular in the 60's, after Suchitra Sen wore a Nylon saree on screen and made it immensely popular among Bangalee girls. Pages can be written about Suchitra's impact on the fabric of Bangla cinema, and there will still be much left unsaid. To pay homage to the 'Mohanayak', The Daily Star organised a musical programme titled "Gaane Mo'r Kon Indrodonu", featuring 20 of the biggest hit songs of the legendary duo, sung by noted artistes. The programme was held at the National Art Gallery Auditorium of the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy on Thursday.

Soon after Sadya A Mallick, Editor, Star Arts & Entertainment -- who compered



the programme -- introduced the artistes following a richly-versed introduction to the legacy of Suchitra, both tiers of the auditorium filled up to the brim, with many standing at the back, not finding seats.

The music on offer was splendid, with the likes of Fahim Hossain Chowdhury, Ferdous Ara, Iffat Ara, Nargis, Nasima Shaheen, Parveen Sultana, Munir Chowdhury and Aniruddha Sengupta rendering the evergreen numbers, but it was the ambience that really made the evening special. With the posters of the films and the video clippings of each song projected in the background, it took the audience -- many of them in their 60s and above -- to the golden era when Suchitra transfixed filmgoers with her magical expression and on-screen chemistry. Syed Badrul Ahsan, one of the most ardent followers of Bangla music

and film, shared anecdotes from Suchitra's career, much to the amusement of the audience, while Mahfuz Anam, Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star, himself recalled the impact of Suchitra's films on him. He said it was Uttam-Suchitra who broke the 'taboo' that surrounded the concept of love and affair, and presented it in a clean, beautiful manner. He also termed Suchitra a feminist artiste, who broke many stereotypes of the Bangalee woman and presented herself as an empowered woman, inspiring many. Pijush Bandopadhyay, Managing Director of FDC, also reminisced about days of his youth and memories of watching Suchitra Sen on screen. A member of the audience, a 78-year old man, also volunteered to speak, saying him and his wife always argued -- about who was Suchitra's bigger fan. His wife even wrote a letter to Suchitra, to which

she replied personally with some valuable advice, he recalled.

An ensemble of Rupantu on keyboard, Pallab Sanyal on tabla, Almas Ali on violin, Dipon on guitar and Sadek Ali on octopad superbly accompanied on marvellous melodies such as "Ei Poth Jodi Na Shesh Hoy", "Amar Swapne Dekha Rajkonna Thakey", "Tumi Je Amar", "Ei Sundor Swarnali Sondhaye", "E Shudhu Gaan-er Din", "Ei Raat Tomar Amar", "Neer Choto, Khoti Nei", "Aj Dujona'r Duti Poth", and "Ei Modhu Raat Shudhu Papiya".

As the evening came to a close with "Jani Na Phurabe Kobe" from the 1955 film "Soba'r Upore", a faint mist of nostalgia -- infused in the lingering melodies hummed by the audience -- hung over the auditorium, almost in an assurance that the magnetic appeal that is Suchitra Sen, is timeless.



Mahfuz Anam, Sadya A Mallick and Pijush Bandopadhyay speak at the programme; artistes immersed in performance, and the audience in rapt attention.



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON