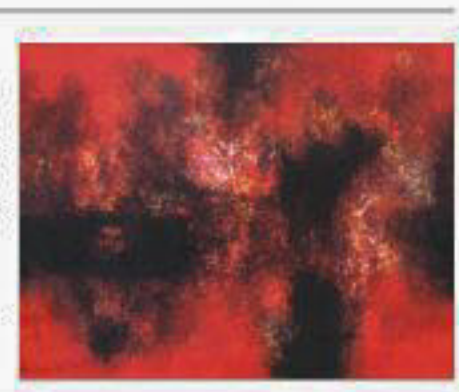


**WHAT'S ON**

**Art Exhibition**  
Reality Versus Imagination and Illusion  
Artist: Samiran Chowdhury  
Venue: Gallery Cosmos  
Date: August 30-Sep 11  
Time: 11am-7pm



**Solo Classical Music Recital**  
Artist: Pandit Tushar Dutta  
Organisers: Bengal Foundation & The Daily Star  
Venue: Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct

**Solo Art Exhibition**  
Artist: Murtaja Baseer  
Venue: Galleri Kaya, H-20, Rd-16, Sec-4, Uttara  
Date: Sep 13-25  
Time: 11am-8pm

**MURTAJA BASEER**  
A collection of Drawings, Collages & Oil Paints 1954 - 2014

**Solo Art Exhibition**  
Title: Montage  
Artist: Samarjit Roy Choudhury  
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi  
Date: Sep 6-22  
Time: 12-8pm

**Theatre Festival**  
Organiser: BorTala  
Venue: Natmandal, Dhaka University  
Date: Sep 10-13  
Time: 7:15pm

# NEWS bytes

## Tom Hanks, Sting to receive Kennedy honours



Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks and musician Sting are among the cultural figures to be awarded this year's Kennedy Center honours. Singer Al Green, actress Lily Tomlin and ballet dancer Patricia McBride will also receive the decorations at a White House reception on December 7. The movie star said the honour added to being "a fortunate man, in that I love the work I do".

Figures who have influenced US culture through the arts are awarded annually in the ceremony. It is relatively rare for a British artist, such as Sting, to be recognised. He likened it to receiving an artistic knighthood in the UK.

Green, one of the defining voices of Memphis soul, said that his career had been "a funny voyage", while Tomlin, whose screen credits include "9 to 5" and "The West Wing", said she was "astounded" to find out that she will be honoured.

The five award-winners will be received by Barack and Michelle Obama before a star-studded gala, which will be subsequently broadcast on US television.

Source: BBC

## IT'S TRUE!



Accordions are a family of box-shaped musical instruments of the bellows-driven free-reed aerophone type, sometimes colloquially referred to as a squeezebox. A person who plays the accordion is called an accordionist. The concertina and bandoneon are closely related; the harmonium and American reed organ are also in the same family. It's most prolific use is in European and North and South American traditional music, but also used in popular and folk music. It is known in many different names across the world, including Harmonika, Dragspel, Trekkspill, Oinu Handia and Eskusoinua.

# ABUL HAYAT: THE THESPIAN TURNS 71

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Actor, director and playwright, Abul Hayat has towered over the media world for over four decades, in theatre, radio, TV play and films. The founding member of Nagorik Natto Shomproday, Hayat is also a National Film Award winner.

Recently Hayat turned 71. To celebrate the thespian's big day, a gala event was organised, centering his big day at Chhayanaut. The Daily Star interviewed the thespian. Excerpts from the interview:

**How did you celebrate your birthday?**

**Abul Hayat:** I stayed at home almost all day. Family, friends, colleagues and fans showered me with birthday greetings. I also joined several live TV programmes. To celebrate my birthday, artistes of a TV play arranged a colourful programme which was really wonderful.

**Who was the first to wish you on your birthday?**

**Abul Hayat:** My wife Shirin Hayat. Tell us about Shirin's contribution to your acting career?

**Abul Hayat:** It's about 90 percent. I couldn't have reached my present position without her support. At one time I had a full time job; while I was engaged in theatre

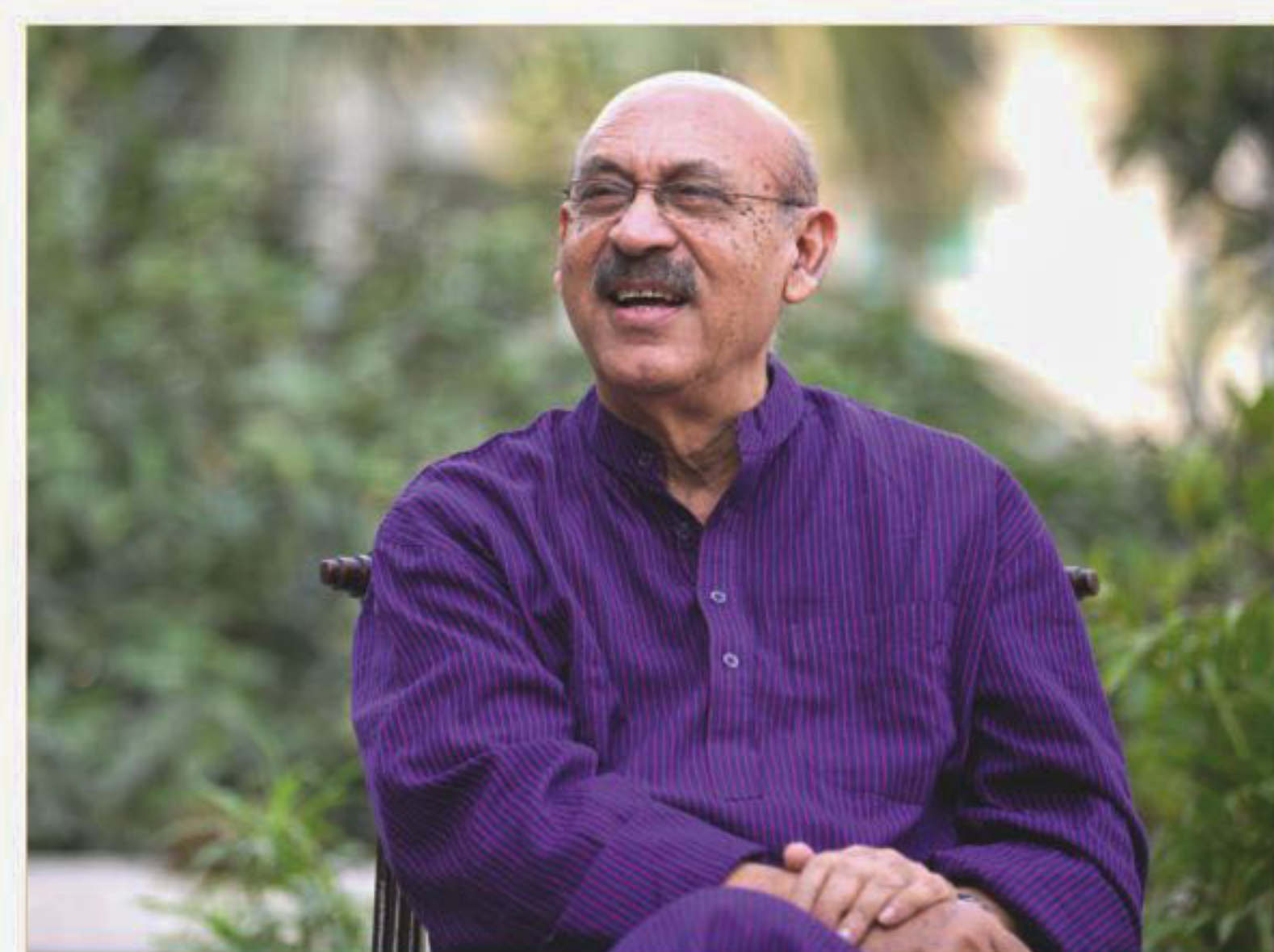


PHOTO: RIDWAN ADIT RUPON

performances my wife took care of the family. My daughters too have made a great contribution to my successful career as actor.

**Why the media?**

**Abul Hayat:** I get immense pleasure from my profession. I've a large number of friends, which would be difficult in other professions.

**Any painful incidents in your 70 years?**

**Abul Hayat:** The untimely demise of my parents who could not see my success.

**Any regrets as actor?**

**Abu Hayat:** No, since I've played a large spectrum of roles in TV plays

and the silver screen. I'm still playing diverse characters like fathers, older men and honest human beings.

**Do share memories of your past...**

**Abul Hayat:** There are many sweet memories; One is when I made my first appearance in a play at the age of 10 years. The play was "Tipu Sultan"; we used to live in Chittagong at that time.

**What was your first play in Dhaka?**

**Abul Hayat:** In 1962, when I was a student of BUET I appeared in "Ek Mutho Akash". That appearance still

lingers in my memory.

**Do you miss your theatre days?**

**Abul Hayat:** I still miss those days hugely. I have plans to return to the stage. Currently Stage One is doing a "Suchona", a play scripted by me. My theatre days were great and I felt good to introduce myself as a theatre artiste. My daughters also grew into adulthood through stage life.

**Theatre, TV play and cinema, which medium do you prefer?**

**Abul Hayat:** I feel comfortable in all of them.

**What's your expectation from life?**

**Abul Hayat:** Nothing especial. I just want to spend the rest of my days happily, which is easy as my needs have been very few since my youth.

**Are you writing too?**

**Abul Hayat:** Early on I wrote stories, novels and newspaper columns. As many as 22 books of mine have been published and I have plans to publish a book for the next book fair. I love writing. I'm now writing a regular column in Prothom Alo. It came about when Matiur Rahman, editor of the Bangla daily, invited me to write for the paper.

**Do you enjoy TV direction?**

**Abul Hayat:** I really love it though I began TV direction only recently. But one thing is for sure, I'm very serious about directing plays that win acclaim.



## TV WATCH

### Spelling Bee play-offs start today

TAHRIMA AHMED TRISHNA

With 32 episodes of The Daily Star Spelling Bee already aired, four out of six finalists of this season are Haseen Hasnain, Hurdco International School; Saif Rahman, Regent College; Naiyareen Mayeen, Sunbeams and Argho Roy, Anandaniketan, are the contestants to have crossed the hurdles so far. Argho from Anandaniketan is the only finalist from outside of Dhaka this season.

The Daily Star Spelling Bee play-off starts tonight in Channel i at 7:50pm.

Russell T. Ahmed, CEO, Champs21.com said, "This year we have introduced two play-off rounds. From our experiences of the last two seasons, we realised that the quality of semi-finalists is exceptional and anyone could have been a finalist. So this year, we are introducing the play-off round where the second and third highest scorer of every semi-final episode will get another chance to play at the finals."

This a second chance for the participants to get back in the game. Two more spots are open in the finalists' line-up, and the next two episodes will reveal the last two finalists for this season.

The competition is getting tougher with the contestants now allowed just 20 seconds to spell a word correctly.

This year, Champs21.com has developed and released an Android smartphone app, Spell Champs, which some 10,000 viewers downloaded and got into the thick of the Spelling Bee competition. Through the app, the audience had the opportunity to win 15 tablet computers over 15 weeks of competition.

## ALL FOR A CAUSE

### Eight-day book fair at SUST

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Kin, a voluntary student organisation of the Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST), has organised an eight-day book fair on the Arjuntola of the campus. Vice-chancellor Professor Md. Aminul Haque Bhuyan formally inaugurated the event on Sunday afternoon.

The fair has been organised to help raise funds for the medical treatment of 16-year old lung cancer patient Fuad Hasan Poran, now being treated at a hospital in India. The funds are much needed as his family is unable to raise Taka 15 lakh that is needed for his treatment. Fuad is the brother of a student in the department of Computer Science & Engineering at SUST.

The sale proceeds of souvenir T-shirts will also go to the fund.

Some 14 publishing houses have set up stalls at the book fair, among them Anyaprokash, Prothoma, Agami, Pearl, Srabon, Rodela, Ananya, Sondesh, Tamrolipi, Ityadi, Kakoli, Anupom, Samoy, and Annesha. A good number of visitors are seen at the fair every day.

Inaugurating the event, the VC praised the humanitarian efforts of the students' group.

# Samarjit Roy Choudhury: Recreating childhood

FAYZA HAQ

Samarjit Roy Choudhury is a name in the country's art scene that needs no introduction. His unique approach to developing a visual dialogue between simplified, nearly abstract language and motifs from the country's rural and traditional roots is one of the most notable features of his work.

At the opening of his solo exhibition, "Montage", at the Bengal Gallery on September 6, Professor Nazrul Islam spoke of how Qayyum Chowdhury and Samarjit Roy Choudhury taught at the Arts College together. "He developed his own romantic style later on — replete with kites, birds and buntings," Islam said. The colours were buoyant as he was young at heart. When teaching at Santa Mariam he created an ideal atmosphere for painter, Islam said.

The main speaker of the evening, Qayyum Chowdhury noted that Samarjit wore bright russet coloured bush shirts even in his late 70s. "He was a student of graphic design and contributed greatly with his beautiful floral work. He taught with dedication," Qayyum said. "He looked after the details of the department so that someone like himself was free to get on with own work. He depicted life in Old Dhaka with a unique combination of thick and thin lines. His images are mostly in acrylic. His present exhibition is more powerful than previous ones," Qayyum added.

Samarjit Roy also spoke to The Daily Star on the occasion, about various facets of his work.

**Tell us about the forms and style you've worked on in this exhibition.**

**Samarjit Roy Choudhury:** I experience boredom with monotonous work. I have a style of my own. I use circles, rectangles,



squares and so on. I consider these as part of the environment. The rectangles and triangles are not part of Cubism of Picasso and Braque. They are part of the figures I present. My colour dimensions go outside Cubism. Squares and rectangles are scattered throughout my work. In my latest work vertical lines play an important role.

**How do you picture your childhood, and how do you reflect them in your work?**

**Samarjit Roy Choudhury:** There are buntings. Of course I've learnt drawing but there is the naïveté of childlike drawings at times. I bring in the use of loud, gay colours for instance. Children catch fish and fly kites. Portraying games is important for delineating them in my depictions. These factors are found in an abstract way. When you see squares in my paintings

they often stand for kites. Without circles, squares and triangles, one cannot proceed with anything in drawings. A viewer may interpret the square as a form of beautification. This could be a cloud. In this way, my work stands for my contented and blissful childhood. I also keep boats in my work, which represent the water vessels used by Freedom Fighters during the Liberation War. Thus my youth mingles with the days of the War.

Behind the drawing in the woodcut are my childhood days. The lines are put in a messy manner, as if some blind person was at work. I have added to this carefully; I rectified this and made a form. I was fond of birds in my childhood. I found these flying creatures all around me in the wilderness of the forest where I wandered and played at will. I used

to keep them as pets in cages. I fed them and bathed them. I cared for them, in short. At times I brought down birds with my catapult. I did not quite realise, as a child, what I was doing. I avoided these with time. I like birds even now. They are a part of the natural environment that soothes us and lends harmony.

Fishing with poles was another element that was dear to me in my carefree days of youth. I had no responsibility and my days then were full of harmony and peace. They were my golden days. There are bamboo trees in my work. I cannot remove them, try as I might. They are an inseparable part of my memory.

**Why do you use so much of red and green?**

**Samarjit Roy Choudhury:**

Bangladesh is green to me, as far as I can see of this flat river-washed land. This is 'Ruposhi' (beautiful) Bangla — it has so much of 'roop' (beauty) in it — with its six seasons. There are so many colours and forms in the seasons. If you analyse it, you will find all the seasons — spring, summer, autumn and winter. The wet rainy season, dry and cold blasts are there. If the sun is hiding due to the mist, it feels like snow. My paintings are not realistic like photography, and I don't expect them to be. I am a person who loves his idyllic childhood days, and tries to capture them in his work.

I want my work to be different. To develop a style of your own is not easy. I have worked on paper and on canvas. There are 71 pieces in this present exhibit in the Bengal Gallery. On paper there are 17 watercolours. There are woodcuts which I have done in Cosmos and Shilpakala Academy. The rest are in acrylic.

"Montage" continues till September 22, and is open from 12 noon to 8pm every day.

# Roy Andersson's mastery of the absurd

Roy Andersson's films are more distinctive than those of any other writer-director working today. If you've seen his bleakly absurdist comedies "Songs From the Second Floor" (2000) and "You, the Living" (2007), then you'll know what I mean — and you'll know within the opening five seconds of his new one that it couldn't possibly have been made by anyone else. The title confirms it: not many filmmakers would pick "A Pigeon Sat On a Branch Reflecting On Existence", that won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival recently.

Andersson, a 71-year-old Swede, specialises in surreal vignettes set in drab, undecorated rooms. His characters are dishevelled, unsmiling and unnaturally pallid, like zombies who have had a particularly depressing day. The lighting is sickly, the camera doesn't move and the people in front of the camera don't move much, either. But these gloomy tableaux always feature an element of deadpan silliness which is surprising, thought-provoking and often hilarious. Each scene is somewhere between a Far Side cartoon and a contemporary art installation.

"A Pigeon" is subtitled "the final part of a trilogy [after 'Songs From the Second Floor' and 'You, the Living'] about being a human being", and it begins with a caption promising "three meetings with death". In one of these, a man quietly expires under the strain of pulling a cork from a wine bottle. In the second, two brothers try to wrestle their dying mother's handbag out of her grasp, because they're afraid she'll take her valuables to heaven. And in the third, the captain of a passenger ferry ponders what to do when someone drops dead, having just paid for his meal in the canteen.

From then on, a series of mournfully funny scenes unfold across a city that is either Gothenberg (Sweden) or purgatory. And while they don't make up a single overarching story, they're linked by their eerie mood, as well as by various recurring phrases and characters. At several points, a pair of travelling salesmen are seen who carry a pathetic range of novelty items in their valise: a set of vampire teeth 'with extra-long fangs', a bag that emits a manic cackle and the grotesque mask of 'Uncle One-Tooth'. "We want



to help people have fun," they murmur together, while looking as if they've never had fun in their lives. "A Pigeon" concludes that being a human being is bound up with being confused, frustrated, lonely and cruel, although Andersson does include some glim-

mers of happiness. A few brief episodes show people who are actually content with each other — friends playing, lovers caressing — and, unusually, none of these episodes is undermined by a sour punch-line. Given that these few faintly joyful snippets

are about as cheery as "A Pigeon" ever gets, it's fair to say that the film isn't a must-see if you're looking for adrenalinised entertainment. And even as an Andersson fan, I felt it wasn't quite as profound or as startling as the previous two of the trilogy. It runs short of ideas before the end, and some of the more underwhelming sequences are a little too effective at passing the characters' ennui onto the viewer.

All the same, "A Pigeon" confirms that Andersson is an artist to treasure. It's possible to compare him with Beckett, Bergman, Jacques Tati and Monty Python, but no one else is doing what he does, and a couple of segments in his new film are truly astounding in their originality and technical achievement. The most audacious sequence is set in a bar, where the travelling salesmen's latest desultory pitch is interrupted by the army of King Charles XII of Sweden, as it marches past to invade Russia. Typically, neither the 18th Century cavalry nor the 21st Century bar patrons seem too interested in each other, but open-minded audiences will be elated.

Source: BBC