

The year that was...

A walk down the major cultural events of 2014

STAR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The entire year of 2014 remained rather bolstered for the cultural scene, with major events across all forms of arts spread throughout the calendar. As we await a brand new year promising to bring richer experiences for lovers of arts and entertainment, here's the second half of a recap of the major events that were held in the year, from July to December.

Photo exhibition on Tajuddin Ahmad
Gallery Twenty One held a photo exhibition marking the 89th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmad, the country's first Prime Minister. The exhibition featured photographs on the leader's life and works. The exhibition opened on July 18 and ran till September 8.

A grand celebration of music
BAMBA (Bangladesh Musical Bands' Association), in association with Jamuna Group, organised a three-day Mega Concert at the Jamuna Future Park from July 31-August 2. The concert, sponsored by telecom operator Robi and participated by 24 member bands of BAMBA, was the biggest of its kind. Performing bands on stage included Renaissance, LRB, Maqsood O Dhaka, Warfaze, Mechanix, Dreek and many more.

Udichi celebrates
Rabindranath-Nazrul-Sukanta
Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshti paid homage to Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Sukanta Bhattacharya at a programme on Saturday afternoon. Dhaka Mohanagar Unit of Udichi arranged the programme at the National Music and Dance Centre auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. The event featured discussion, poetry recitations and choral renditions of the three poets' songs.

Lalon festival in Manikganj
Manikganj Achin Pakhi Lalon Sangathan (APLS) organised a Lalon Sangeet festival at Manikganj Government High School play ground. Renowned Lalon Sangeet singers--Tuntun Baul, Abdur Rob Fakir, Tokkelf Rajshahi, Selina Parvin and Ankhi Dewan of Rajbari rendered 40 popular Lalon songs at the function.

Literature-based theatre festival at Shilpakala
A mega-scale theatre festival was held at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), as part of the Academy's initiative to form a repertory theatre troupe in 64 districts, and produce new plays by them this year based on literary work. The festival featured eight plays each day.

Star Melodies celebrates first recorded songs of Nazrul
Star Melodies celebrated first recorded songs of Nazrul through its musical programme "Nazrul er Gaan er Prothom Record er Shilpi ra" at The Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct on August 25. Despite being the first weekday of the month, the auditorium filled up before the performances began, with a discerning audience anticipating some fabulous music from some of the most accomplished of Nazrul Sangeet artists of current times.

ISM Sultan Utshab in Narail
ISM Sultan Utshab-2014, a three-day festival on the legendary artist, was held in Narail. ISM Sultan Shishu Charu O Karukola Foundation, in association with Banglalink arranged the festival. The festival featured songs, dances, drama and discussion.

Shirshendu captivates fans in Chittagong
Through his spell with words, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, one of the most popular writers of West Bengal, India, captivated his readers and fans who gathered at a bookshop in Chittagong city on August 30 evening, to listen to their favourite writer. Baatighar, a mega bookshop, organised the programme titled "Amar Jibon Amar Rochona: Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay."

BNSS holds Nazrul death anniversary programme
Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha (BNSS) paid a musical homage to the Rebel Poet marking the bard's 38th death anniversary. With the theme "Amar Aponar Cheye Apon Je Jon", the event was held at Music and Dance Centre auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on September 4.

Bodhisattwa Trio discusses 'Artistes in a Material World'
The Bodhisattwa Trio, an experimental jazz-rock group from Kolkata, India, were at the Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct on September 7 in an Art Talk session titled "Artistes in a Material World", that also featured performance of a few tracks. The trio discussed with their musical backgrounds and inspirations, and essentially why they do music that followed a lively discussion with the audience on the aesthetics, philosophy and market of 'art' of essentially all forms.

Samarjit's "Montage" at Bengal Gallery
Renowned artist Samarjit Roy Chowdhury's solo exhibition "Montage" opened at the Bengal Gallery on September 6. The works at the exhibit dealt with different kinds of lines and form, and many zoomed in on the theme of childhood. The exhibition ran till September 22.

Shahabuddin conferred Knighthood in France
Shahabuddin Ahmed, one of the greats of Bangladeshi art, was conferred with "Chevalier De L'ordre Des Arts Et Des Lettres" (Knight in the Order of Fine Arts and Humanities) by the Ministry for Cultural Affairs and Communication of France, for his

contribution to art.

Pt Tushar Dutta performs at Arts Precinct
The Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct turned into a hearty congregation of classical music connoisseurs on September 11, as Pandit Tushar Dutta enthralled a discerning audience. Bengal Foundation and The Daily Star, in association with Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka organised the recital as part of the Indian government's cultural exchange activity.

Brihonnola hits screens
Brihonnola -- a film jointly produced by Filmhawk and ATN Bangla, released on September 19 across the country. The film's leading casts were Ferdous and Sohana Saba, and also featured Azad Abul Kalam, Dilara Zaman, Dr. Enamul Haque and more.

Akram Khan mesmerises Dhaka with DESH



Akram Khan, one of the world's best contemporary dancer-choreographers of his generation, left two houseful audiences on consecutive days (September 19-20) at the National Theatre Hall of the BSA in awe with a magnetic 80-minute solo. At its Dhaka staging, DESH lived up to its repute and then some. The shows were organised by The British Council in association with Bengal Foundation, and in partnership with The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Memorial programme on Feroza Begum
A memorial programme on recently-deceased legendary Nazrul Sangeet artiste Feroza Begum was organised by Gaanbangla TV, at the main auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum on September 30.

Five-day memorial festival for Lalon
The mystic songs of Baul king Fakir Lalon Shah reverberated at his den on the occasion of a five-day memorial festival dedicated to the bard at Chheuria in Kushtia, from October 16. The festival, also known as Dol Purnima, is one of the largest annual congregations of Bauls and devotees of Lalon at his den where around 1.5 lakh people from within and outside the country attend.

"Avengers 2" trailer shows glimpse of Chittagong
The release of the first teaser trailer of one of the most-hyped films of next year, Marvel's multi-superhero-starrer "Avengers: Age of Ultron" revealed a momentary shot of the Chittagong shipyard, prompting a buzz among film buffs of the country. The trailer, released on October 22, had been viewed over 22 million times worldwide in the first two days. Hollywood producer Nicholas

Simon came to Bangladesh earlier this year and shot scenes for a Hollywood film at the shipyard. He told The Daily Star at the time that he could not reveal the name of the film.

Farooqi's "Pipra Bidya" releases
"Pipra Bidya", Mostofa Sarwar Farooqi's much-anticipated film, released across the country on October 24. The fifth feature film of the director screened and contested for awards at film festivals in Busan, Shanghai, Melbourne and Dubai, while The Hollywood Reporter also lauded the film.

Photo Exhibit "Out of the Box" held
"Out of the Box" is an annual photography exhibition organised by Through the Lens Bangladesh, an online group of amateur and seasoned photographers. It brought together people who have a passion for the camera, and shared ideas of creation from every walk of life. The three-day "Out of the Box" exhibition at the Dhaka Art Centre drew big crowds.

tural exchange programme of USA, was launched on November 8 at EMK Center, Dhaka. US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Dan W. Mozena officially launched Next Level, which included a two-week workshop on hip-hop music and dance. Following the workshop, the team held their presentation at BSA's National Theatre Hall on November 17.

Nadia crowned Lux-Channel i Superstar
The grand finale of Lux-Channel i Superstar 2014 was held at the Bangabandhu International Convention Centre on November 8. Jointly put together by Unilever Bangladesh's brand Lux and Channel i, it crowned Nadia Afrin this year's Lux-Channel i Superstar. The event also featured performances by the finalists.

BNM holds exhibition on Humayun Ahmed
A fortnight-long exhibition featuring books,



Academy premises bustling from November 20-22 with young, curious minds sharing great ideas and being inspired by prolific writers, thinkers, artists and editors. Organised by The Daily Star and British Council, it featured a wide array of programmes, from panel discussions to interactive sessions, live performances, poetry reading and much more.

Celebrating Life gala held
The awarding ceremony of Celebrating Life -- a tie-up between Standard Chartered Bank and The Daily Star, was held at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the capital. The seventh event of the initiative honoured winners in the lyrics and photography contest based on the theme "Living in Harmony". Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor attended the ceremony as chief guest, while reputed dance school Shadhona enthralled the audience with Tagore's dance-drama "Tasher Desh".

Bengal Classical Music Fest spellbinds audience

The five-day Bengal Classical Music Festival -- Bangladesh 2014, the third edition of the biggest classical music festival in the world, remained an unforgettable experience for music lovers of the country. For five entire nights in a row, the Army Stadium buzzed with tens of thousands in attendance, as they enjoyed performance by the world's most renowned classical maestros. From the ever-familiar Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia to utterly unknown Carnatic chausser by Guru Karaikudi Mani and everything in between, it was the grandest celebration yet of classical music and dance forms. The festival reached its crescendo on the penultimate night with over 55,000 people in audience at once.

Short film extravaganza in town
The 13th International Short & Independent Film Festival (ISIFF) began across five venues in Dhaka on December 4 amid festivity and a pledge to promote independent filmmakers. Bangladesh Short Film Forum organised the biannual film festival, considered as one of the oldest and most prestigious gatherings of independent filmmakers in South Asia. Legendary Indian filmmaker Shyam Benegal was also felicitated at the festival.

Bangla reunites in touching tribute to Tareque Masud

The two-day Tareque Masud Festival began on December 12 at the National Theatre Hall of BSA. Bangla, a groundbreaking band in the country's music scene, reunited for a one-off performance after years, to pay tribute to someone close to their hearts. Launch of Bangla's music video, screening of "Sritikotha'r Runway" and launch of the re-mastered DVD of "Adom Surat" followed. The festival closed through Boyati songs, a memorial lecture and screening of short films of a competition themed "My Freedom My Fight" and awarding winners of the competition.

16th Asian Art Biennale at BSA
Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh, the biggest art event BSA has been arranging since 1981, was held at its National Art Plaza from December 1-31. It hosted 204 artworks by 104 artists from 31 countries of Asia Pacific region and 228 art works by 209 artists of the host country. Of the 432 artworks, three were selected for the grand prize, while another six bagged the Honourable Mention Award.

Victory Day observed
Artists and organisations held cultural programmes ushering in and celebrating the Victory Day 2014. Sammilito Sangskritik Jote arranged a four-day (December 13-16) victory festival at various venues of Dhaka. Cultural programmes and concerts were also held on the day at various places in the capital, notably at Shaheed Minar and Suhrawardy Udyan. Dhaka University student bodies also held various programmes, including fireworks display and live performances at TSC.

Chhayanaut holds Shuddha Sangeet Utshab
Chhayanaut's two-day Shuddha Sangeet Utshab, featuring vocal and instrumental music, was held from December 19-20 at its main auditorium. The eighth edition of the festival was formally inaugurated by noted music exponent Azad Rahman, and featured performers from Bangladesh and India.

Kathak festival at Chhayanaut
Kathak Nritya Sampradaye (KNS) organised a three day (December 24-26) Kathak Dance Festival at the main auditorium of Chhayanaut. The festival featured an array of solo and group performances by noted and promising dancers of Bangladesh along with several dance troupes.

Zainul birth centenary observed
Marking birth centenary of Shilpakarya Zainul Abedin, a three-week (December 11-31) Annual Art Exhibition by the teachers and the students of all the departments of Faculty of Fine Arts, DU was held. A four day (December 26-29) Zainul Mela showcased artworks collectively done by the academics of all the departments, with a Zainul Award given on the final day. Meanwhile, Bengal Gallery held an exhibition marking the occasion, while the Cultural Affairs ministry undertook year-long celebration programmes to mark the occasion.

Rajanikanta commemorated on birth anniversary
Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad (Dhaka City) organised a celebration programme marking 150th birth anniversary of Rajanikanta Sen, one of the Panchokobi (five illustrious poets). The event, featuring discussion and musical soiree was held at Chhayanaut auditorium on October 31. Eminent singer and grandson of Rajanikanta Sen, Dilip Kumar Roy along with one of his illustrious disciples Archana Bhowmik graced the occasion as chief guest.

Nrityanchal's Kathak workshop and recital at Shilpakala
Dance school Nrityanchal organised a parampara Kathak dance recital at the Music and Dance Centre auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on November 2. The event was the outcome of a four-day workshop held at BSA, conducted by Sandip Mallick and Happy. Around 70 participants of the workshop and artistes of Nrityanchal performed in the evening.

Chhayanaut's classical dance festival held
A two-day Classical Dance Festival took place at Chhayanaut from November 7, for the fourth consecutive year, organised by Chhayanaut. The festival showcased five forms of classical dance -- Manipuri, Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Gaudiya Nritya. Apart from Chhayanaut artistes, noted dance troupes and soloists from and outside Dhaka and Kolkata, India participated in the festival.

Hip-hop project Next Level in Dhaka
The Bangladesh chapter of Next Level, a cul-

manuscripts, letters, paintings and memorabilia of popular litterateur-filmmaker Humayun Ahmed was held at Bangladesh National Museum. Dr. Gowher Rizvi, advisor to the prime minister, inaugurated the exhibition on November 12 at Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the museum.

Nabanna Utshab on DU campus
With the theme "Esho Mili Shob-e Nabanner Utshab-e", Nabanna Utshab-1421 (late-autumnal festival) was held on November 15 at Bakultala, Faculty of Fine Arts on Dhaka University campus. The daylong programme featured songs, dance performances, recitation, and a colourful rally.

Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay opens
With eminent classical music vocalist Pandit Ullash Kashalkar as principal, the Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay, a world-class school of classical music on the Guru-shishya tradition opened mid-November in the capital. It took in students through two batches of auditions, and plans to expand its facilities with time, bringing in maestros like Pt. Shivkumar Sharma and Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia as visiting teachers.

"Meghmalla" releases in Dhaka
Feature film "Meghmalla" premiered on Tuesday evening at Star Cineplex in the capital. The film, written and directed by Zahidur Rahim Anjan, was the maiden production of Bengal Entertainment Limited and received a National Filmmaking Grant last year. Set during the monsoon of 1971, "Meghmalla" is based on Akhtaruzzaman Elias' short story "Raincoat".

Hay Festival at Bangla Academy
Hay Festival, the Bangladesh episode of the International literary festival kept the Bangla