

WHAT'S ON

Art Exhibition
 Intimate Fears
 Artist: Anisuzzaman Sohel
 Venue: Bengal Art Lounge
 Date: May 7-June 4; Time: 12-8pm

Solo Painting Exhibition
 Retrospective
 Artist: Abdus Shakoor
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery
 Date: May 1-15
 Time: 12-8pm

Solo Painting Exhibition
 Summer in Colour
 Artist: Nobo Kumar Bhadra
 Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
 Date: April 16-May 14
 Time: 3-9pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Title: Eternal Affection
 Artist: Sheikh Afzal
 Venue: Athena Gallery of Fine Arts
 Date: April 16-May 7
 Time: 10am-8pm

Rabindra Sangeet recital
 Artist: Himadri Shekhar Talukder / Shimu Dey
 Organiser: IGCC
 Venue: IGCC, Gulshan-1
 Date: May 7; Time: 6:30pm

Photography Exhibition
 Bangladesh & Beyond
 Artist: Shamim Shorif Susom
 Date: May 5-7; Time: 3-8pm

Rabindra Mela
 Organiser: Channel i
 Venue: Channel i premises
 Date: May 8
 Time: 4:30-8pm



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Tagore's love affair with monsoon

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Rabindranath Tagore is viewed as the lighthouse of literature, art and culture. Nature had always inspired the bard greatly. The poet had particular affinity with the monsoon season. The season when bountiful nature unfolds her beauty, is uniquely captured by Tagore.

Rabindranath's familiarity with the Bengal monsoon intensified during his trips to the family estate at Shilaidaha. The vast landscapes and the swirling rivers seemed to foster a sense of liberated creativity in close proximity with nature. In one of the letters that he wrote from Shilaidaha, Kobiguru noted, "The clouds gather over the sky – the storm match the rains. Lightning and thunder wouldn't stop. I am writing in candlelight with the window partially open. But within me there is great joy – in the force of the storm, in the shadow of the clouds, in the sound of the thunder, a deep wave rises in my heart. I feel like doing something – at least to think of an impossible imaginary event."

The famous song "Badolo Dinero Prothomo Kodom Phul"

has become a signature tune to glorify the distinctive features of the monsoon while "Esho Shyamolo Sundaro" befittingly welcomes the advent of bard's favourite season.

The real beauty of this season emerges in the lyrics and tunes of his songs. The song "Niloanjano Ghano Punjochayay Sambrito Ambar, Hey Gambhir" describes the serenity and joyous emotions evoked by the monsoon that relieves the earth, parched by the intense summer heat.

The poet composed many songs on the monsoon, such as "Abar Eshchhe Ashadh", "Pagla Haowar Badal Din-e", "Ka(n)pichhe Deholata Thoro Thoro" and "Eso Hey Eso Sajal Ghana".

The imagery that these songs sketch brings out the fervour of the season. Tunes blend well with the images and emotions. Ragas like Miyan Ki Malhar, Megh Malhar and Desh have been melliflously harmonised with the wordings. In some songs, Baul and Bhatiali impart the deep philosophical essence of life that the season sometimes evokes. Traditional folk tunes add colour to the monsoonal songs.

Tagore's lyrics also resonate with



the pitter-patter of the rain, droning sounds of the wind, thrumming sound of thunder and lightning, swaying branches and other sounds that form an integral part of the season. Sometimes when "clouds heap upon clouds" (Megher Pore Megh Jomechhe, Gitanjali), it appears gloomy and one feels melancholic. Often memories come drifting to the mind.

A number of his songs talk about the melancholy and the sense of loss that monsoon brings. Very

often such songs are associated with moments of personal grief. There are songs like "Aji Jhoro Jhoro Mukhoro Badoro Din-e" that blend this sense of melancholia with a profound sense of restlessness.

The dazzling beauty of monsoon is depicted in the song "Bajra Manik Diye C(n)atha Ashadh Tomar Mala". In another song, Tagore remembers epic poet Kalidasa, author of "Meghdootam", who imagined cloud to be a messenger. The song is "Bohu Juger

Opar Hote Ashadh Elo, Elo Amar Mone, Kon Shey Kobi'r Chhando Baje, Jhoro Jhoro Borishane."

The feminine presence with the veil has often been compared with Rabindranath's concept of the Jeevandepta who inhabits the creative, to bridge the familiar and the divine. In these poems a subtle physicality hints at the mysterious relationship between man, nature and the creator that forms a sense of a whole.

Monsoon, for Tagore, was not merely a personal experience; it was a symbol of life and nature's amazing variety; a message that he sought to transmit to his students through various festivals that he incorporated into the academic calendar. It was in these spaces that the familiarity with Nature was rejuvenated; the debt to Prakriti was acknowledged and in simple aesthetic action a sense of beauty was deepened. The educational programme at Santiniketan was thus deeply rooted in an ecological consciousness. Barsha (monsoon) initiated the festival of Barshamangal at Santiniketan where the power of the monsoon to regenerate the dried-up soil was acknowledged.

Channel i to hold Rabindra Mela

A CORRESPONDENT

Like previous years, Channel i is gearing up to hold a festive Rabindra Mela at its premises in Tejgaon in the capital on May 8, marking the 155th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

This year the organisers will confer lifetime achievement award on educationist and founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, and noted Rabindra Sangeet singer Tapan Mahmud.

A press conference was held yesterday in this regard at the Channel i office where Bangla Academy DG Shamsuzzaman Khan (chief advisor of Rabindra Mela), managing director of Channel i Faridur Reza Sagar, and Sajjad Hossain, Deputy Managing director of this year's Rabindra Mela



Abdullah Abu Sayeed speaks at the press conference.

sponsor AB Bank, were present, alongside the two recipients of this year's lifetime achievement awards.

Abdullah Abu Sayeed expressed his gratitude to Channel i and said, "Rabindranath has achieved world-

wide fame for his songs; he is unparalleled as a writer and novelist, but those works of his are relatively less appreciated. My organisation is working to spread those works, with the initiative Rabindra Chakra being one of the major efforts. Over two million students are reading the literary works of Tagore."

Tapan Mahmud said "I have been practicing Rabindra Sangeet for 47 years, but never thought I would be felicitated for it. I have practiced Rabindra Sangeet from my passion for it."

The fair will be inaugurated by noted artists, litterateurs, Tagore enthusiasts, cultural and media personalities with the channel i family, at 4:30pm. It will feature performances of Rabindra Sangeet by prominent and upcoming singers, dance-drama, children's dances, recitation of Tagore's poems, reading from Tagore's works and paintings on Tagore. Some 25 stalls will also be at the fair, which will run till 8pm. Channel i will telecast the fair live.



TAGORE'S KACHHARIBARI

SAURAV DEY, back from Shahjadpur

The once-vibrant Kachharibari of Rabindranath Tagore still stands at the heart of Shahjadpur Bazaar in Sirajganj. Between the years of 1890 to 1897, a young Rabindranath would frequently come here and stay for short periods to supervise his family estate.

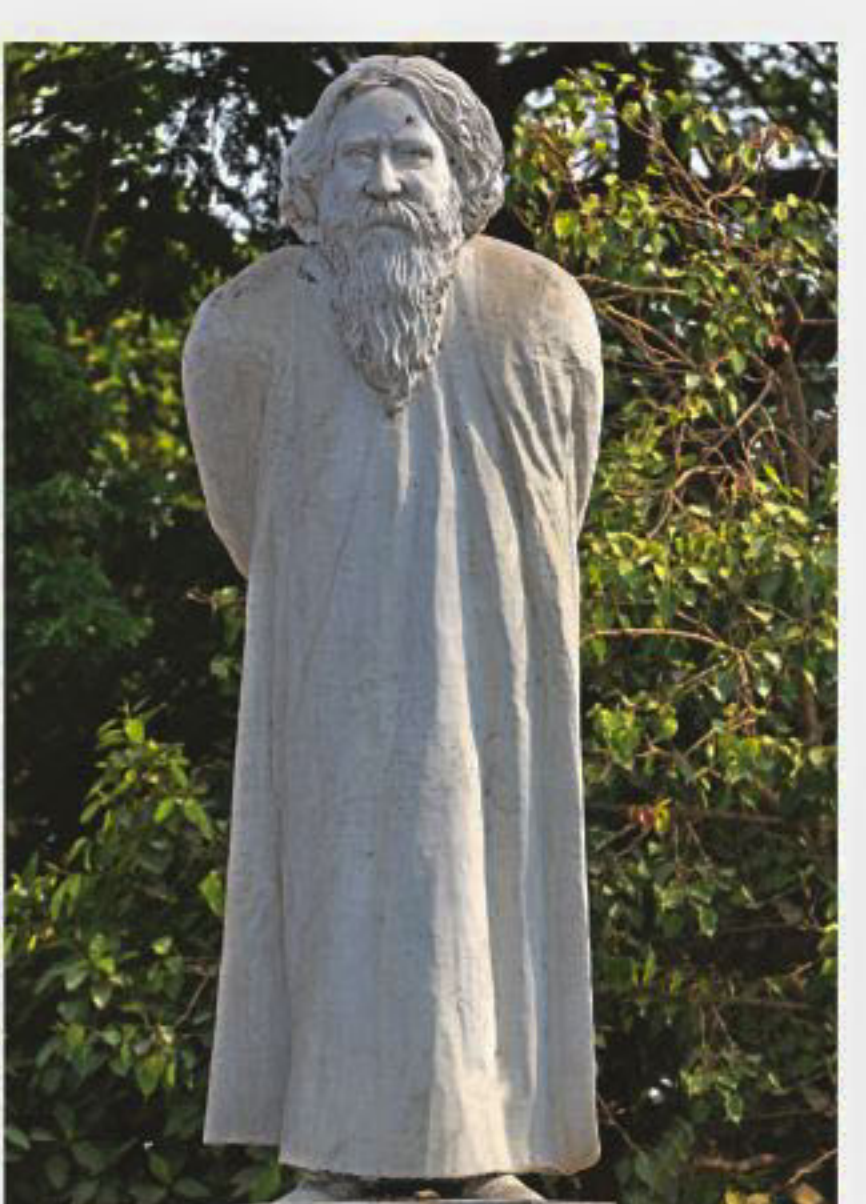


PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

This place still carries those memories associated with Tagore, as he would often take boat rides during the rainy season. The lush greeneries of the surroundings and the beauty of the nearby river influenced Tagore. During his stay here, he created many literary masterpieces including "Sonar Tori", "Chitra" and "Chaitali" (poetry); "Bishorjon" (drama), "Chhinnapatra" and short stories including, "Postmaster", "Somapti", "Chhuti", "Otiithi" and more.

Now inside the compound of his Kachharibari, stands a renovated two-storied building built following the Indo-European architecture, inside which there are memorabilia including Tagore's shoes, wooden sandals, a bedstead, couch, spectacles, palanquin, sofa, piano, harmonium and metallic objects.

The place now serves as a heritage site for local people and tourists alike who come here to spend a few hours in tranquility – some knowing Tagore's emotional connection with this place, and others without adequate knowledge.

27th Nat'l Rabindra Sangeet Festival begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the theme "Dur Koro Shongshoy Shongkar Bhar Jao Choli Timir Digonter Paar," the five-day (April 4-8) "27th Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Utshab" (National Rabindra Sangeet Festival) began at the Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbagh on May 4. The annual programme, organised by Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha (BRSSS), marks the 155th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore artists from and outside Dhaka will perform 120 solo songs at the festival. Apart from this, several musical troupes and noted elocutionists of the country are participating in the programme with songs and poetry.

The highlight of the first day's programme was solo and group performances of songs.

The day's programme kicked off with a rendition of the National Anthem. This was followed by choral renditions of "Aloker-i Jhormadharaye" and "Cholo Jai Cholo Jai" by the artists of BRSSS. A brief inaugural ceremony came next.

Noted educationist Professor Syed Anwar Hossain formally inaugurated the festival as chief guest. Sajed Akbar, general



Artistes render a chorus on the opening day. PHOTO: STAR

secretary of the organisation, delivered the welcome address. Tapan Mahmud, president, BRSSS, presided over the session. He also introduced a six-point agenda to create a favourable environment for Tagore practice and research.

In the course of the programme, the organisers felicitated veteran Rabindra Sangeet artiste Hamida Haque.

After the inaugural, the musical soiree resumed. Shemonty Monjari

beautifully performed a Pooja Parba song "Ke Go Ontorotoro Shey" while Rabita Sabah rendered "Ogo Dukho Jagania".

Yesterday (May 5), noted dance school "Nriya Nandan" staged a dance drama "Chandalika" alongside musical performance by the Tagore singers.

Today (May 6) and tomorrow (May 7), a musical soiree with presentation of recitation will be held each day at

the venue. On May 8, on the occasion of Tagore's birth anniversary, members of BRSSS will also celebrate the 92nd birth anniversary of Tagore exponent and singer Kalim Sharafi. The organisers will also felicitate seasoned Rabindra Sangeet artiste Papia Sarwar. Litterateur and former senior secretary Dr. Ranjit Biswas will attend the event as special guest. A musical event with recitation follows.