

**WHAT'S ON**  
Photography Exhibition  
Marking 91st Birth Anniversary of  
Tajuddin Ahmad  
Venue: Gallery Twenty One, 751,  
Satmasjid Rd, Dhanmondi  
Date: Jul 23-Aug 22, Time: 12noon-8pm



**Photography Exhibition**  
Title: Faces. Places. Stories  
Artist: Ata Mohammad Adnan  
Venue: EMK Center, Dhanmondi  
Date: Aug 13-31  
Time: 9:30am-8pm



**Solo Art Exhibition**  
Artist: Salma Abedin Prithi  
Venue: Kalakendra, 1/11, Iqbal Rd,  
Mohammadpur  
Date: August 12-30  
Time: 5-8pm



**Solo Painting Exhibition**  
Artist: Proshanto Karmakar  
Venue: Bay's Gallery, Radius Centre,  
57, Gulshan-1  
Date: Jul 30-Aug 30  
Time: 12am-8pm



**Group Art Exhibition**  
Title: "Shilper Aloye Bangbandhu"  
Venue: Gallery 3, National Art  
Gallery Plaza, BSA  
Date: August 1-31  
Time: 11am-8pm



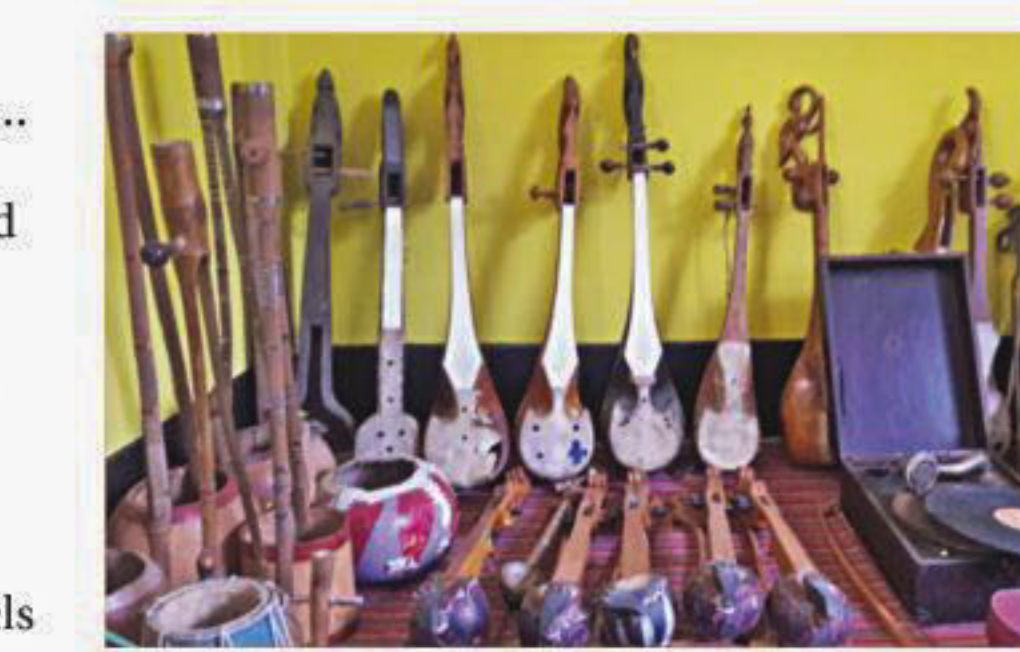
# Arshi Nagar: A platform for folk singers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Arshi Nagar Bangladesh, a platform for promoting folk songs and folk singers, is located at LGED Road in Lalmonirhat town. The organisation's network extends to villages in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts where it runs 17 folk song training centres called "Guru Griho" and four training centres for practising traditional music instruments named "Guru Griho Music Instrument Training Centre".

Around 1200 students at school and college levels have learnt to play folk songs and musical instruments at these centres. Many have been enlisted as folk singers at the local radio and television stations. Some of them have received national awards, while local awards are common.

Folk singer and dotara player Ovissek Sarker, 13, said that he won two national awards in 2014 and 2016. "Arshi Nagar runs Guru Griho and teaches me to embellish my skills on the dotara," he said. Sharifa Akhter, 18, a folk singer said, "We get support from Arshi Nagar for education, health, food and even attires."



Folksong artiste Rehana Khatun, 19, said, that in the absence of Arshi Nagar they would never have become folk artistes as they would have lived in penury. "Now we are known as folk singers, and many of us are brilliant in our line," she added.

Most of the folk artistes at these Guru Griho centres belong to under privileged families. The donor is a senior Norwegian citizen, Werather, addressed as mother by all artistes at Guru Griho. Werather visits Arshi Nagar Bangladesh's Guru Griho centres and exchanges perspectives with artistes once a year.

Arshi Nagar Bangladesh has archived about 100 archaic music instruments from elderly folk singers at remote villages, and the organisation still collects these instruments. This organisation has already archived over 3,000 extinct folksongs to keep them alive for the next generation.

Founder and the executive director of Arshi Nagar Bangladesh, Badsha Alam said, "If the present generation gets engaged, they will hand it over to the next generation." He added that he has invested personally to promote folk songs and artistes.

Alam is however concerned that some extremist elements are bent on throwing hurdles in the way of Arshi Nagar Bangladesh as they don't want a platform that researches and preserves folksongs. "I was under the direct threat several times in the last few years, but that didn't derail me from my dream of nurturing folk songs and folk song artistes," he said. "I want to build an institution that will keep alive the folk songs and produce future artistes but due to the lack of financial support, I face hurdles and don't know how to fulfil this dream," he said.

## NEWS bytes

### Kenny Baker, the 'Star Wars' actor, dies at 81

Kenny Baker, the man who brought the iconic "Star Wars" character R2-D2 to life, has died. He was 81. The Guardian, which confirmed the death, issued a statement from Baker's niece, Abigail Shield: "It was expected, but it's sad nonetheless," she said. "He had a very long and fulfilled life. He brought lots of happiness to people and we'll be celebrating the fact that he was well loved throughout the world. We're all very proud of what he achieved in his lifetime."

The actor, who was 3 feet 8 inches tall, starred in the first six "Star Wars" films starting in 1977 when he first played the robot in "Episode IV - A New Hope."

Over his career, which spanned five decades, his credits included "The Elephant Man," "Time Bandits" and "Flash Gordon." Baker had long suffered an illness and was often in a wheelchair. "He was asked to go out to L.A. for the new Star Wars premiere but he was told he was too ill to travel," Shield said.

Source: Variety



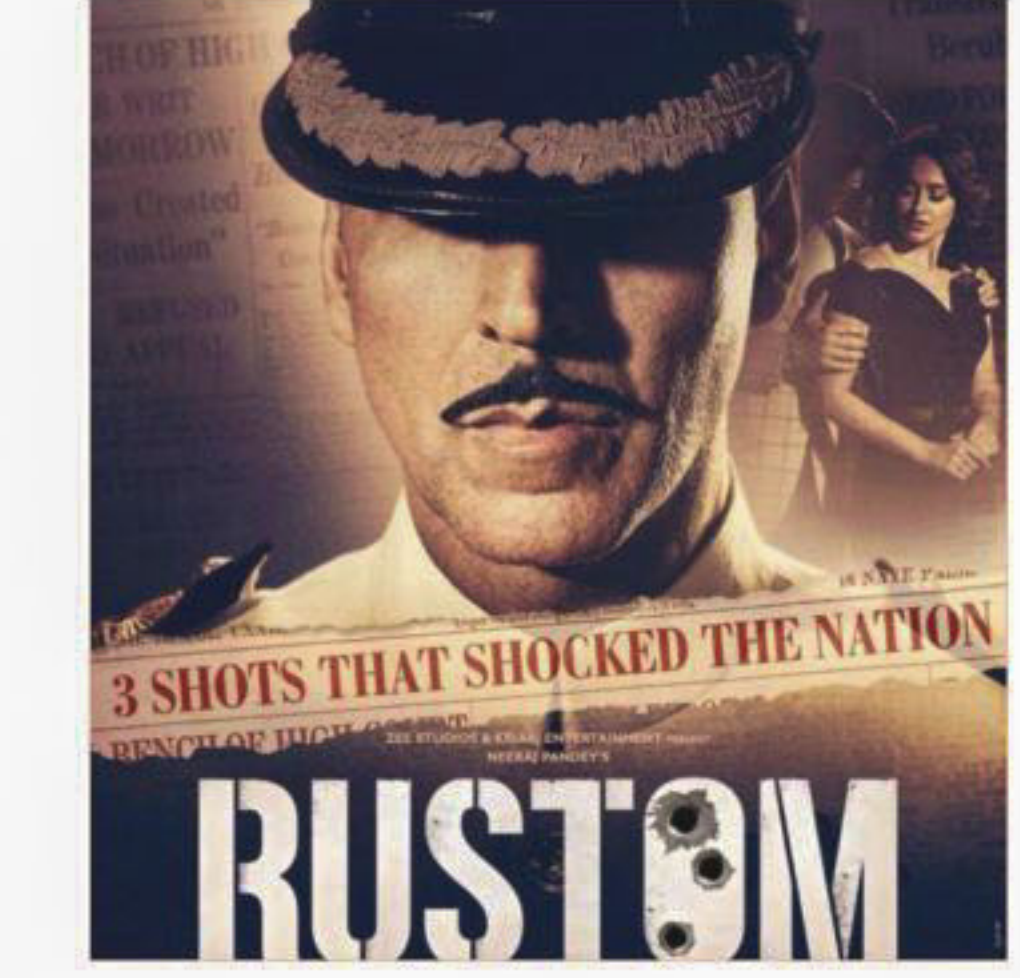
### CHHONDA in Nazrul's play

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading actress Golam Farida Chhonda recently starred in a special telefilm made for National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's upcoming death anniversary. Titled "Tobuo Amare Dibo Na Bhulitey" is adapted from Nazrul's "Ghumer Ghore Golpo". Scripted by Gitali Hasan, the telefilm is directed by Satirtha Rahman. Chhonda will play the role of Pori. Talking about her role she said, "It is a privilege act in a Nazrul play. I love to take on such assignments."

Previously the actress was seen in the poet's popular play "Shiuli Mala" and a play adapted on Nazrul's story "Shami Hara". The telefilm will be telecast by Channel i on August 26.

### Rustom has an edge over Mohenjo Daro



Akshay Kumar's latest release "Rustom" seems to have had a better start at the box office as compared to the Hrithik Roshan starrer Mohenjo Daro. According to trade pundits, the Akshay Kumar starrer courtroom-drama is getting better reviews from the audience than the Ashutosh Gowariker-directed period-drama.

"Rustom is leading. It is performing better than Mohenjo Daro. It got decent reviews and people are liking this film more. Mohenjo Daro did not seem to be appealing to the audience, while there was curiosity and hype around Rustom," film distributor Rajesh Thadani told PTI.



According to Thadani the opening day figures of Rustom can touch the Rs 12-13 crore mark and for Mohenjo Daro it will be around Rs 7-8 crore. "There is a holiday period ahead and it seems both the films will benefit from it. I think over the weekend Rustom should do Rs 40 crore and Mohenjo Daro will do Rs 20-25 crore," he added.

Rustom is based on the infamous K M Nanavati case, while Mohenjo Daro, helmed by Gowariker, is set against the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Source: Hindustan Times



### A festival of stars at Daffodil Int'l University

"Art Felicity" the annual cultural festival of Daffodil International University that cuts across three campuses was held recently at Daffodil International University Auditorium, Tower-5. Noted Tagore singer Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, chief guest at the gala festival, inaugurated the daylong festival.

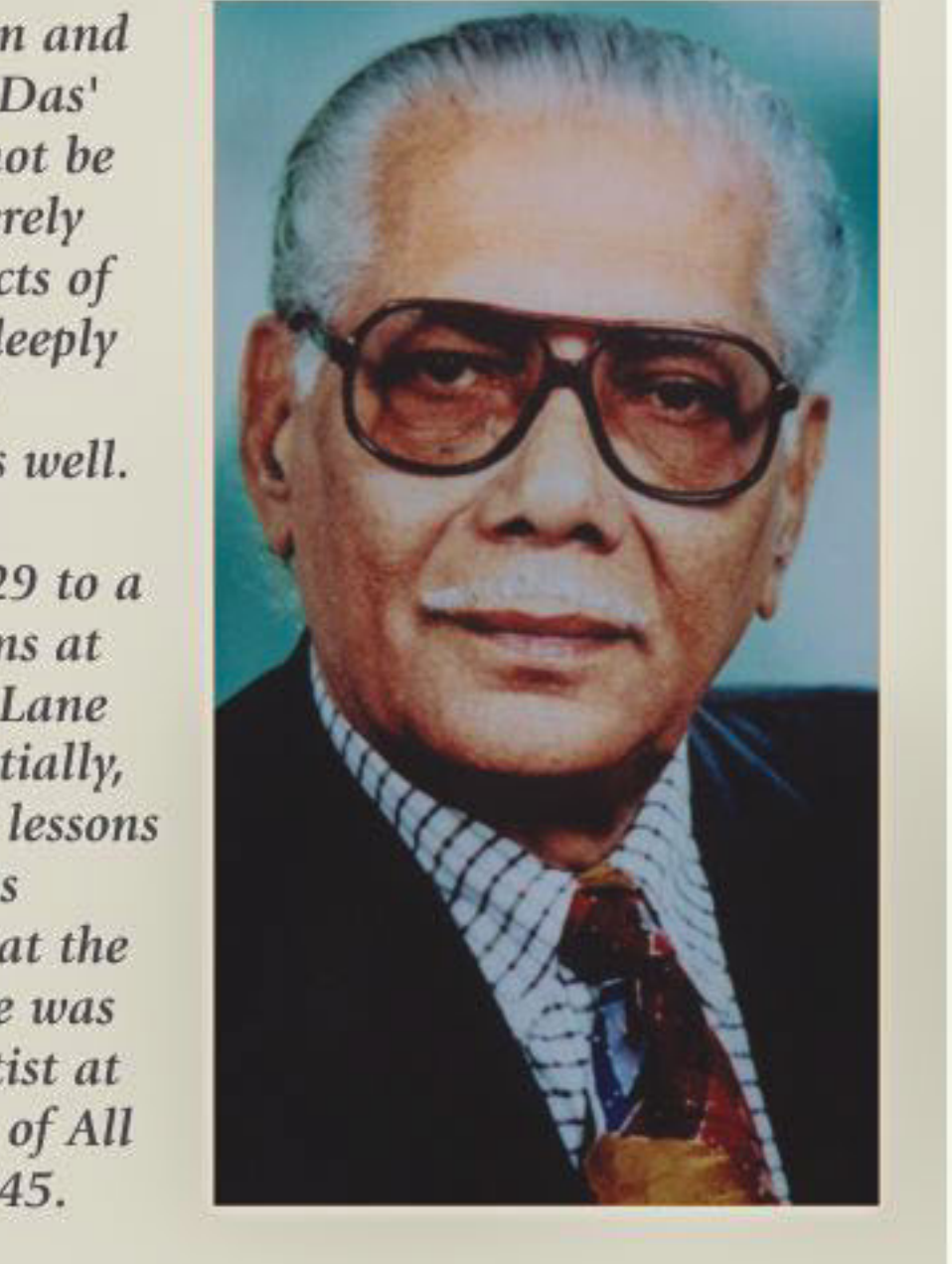
Celebrities like Shabnam Faria, Sayem Afroz Salek, Wasek, Rokeya Prachy, Fardin Sharukh Subrata, Nafeez Al Amin and Shafayet Mansoor Rana were the judges of the biggest youth event of the university, says a press release. The participants

competed in five different categories for the award: music, dance, duet dance, acting and beat boxing. Five bands of Daffodil International University were also engaged in a neck to neck competition.

# Patriotism unlimited

## Samar Das and his tunes

A prolific musician and composer, Samar Das' contribution cannot be constrained to merely the aesthetic aspects of music as he was deeply involved with the Liberation War as well. Das was born on December 10, 1929 to a family of musicians at Nabadwip Basak Lane in old Dhaka. Initially, he received music lessons at home. His skills became apparent at the age of 16 when he was enlisted as a flautist at the Dacca Centre of All India Betar in 1945.



Samar Das played a major role as an artiste in the War of Liberation in 1971. He was one of the chief organisers of the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, the clandestine radio station that inspired millions of Bengalees under Pakistani occupation. He was appointed the chief music director of the radio station. During that time he composed several patriotic songs that became immensely popular. Among these were "Purbo digontey shurjo uttechhey," "Bhebo na go tomar chhelera" and "Nongor tolo tolo shomoy je holo holo". He composed the signature tune of the newly founded Bangladesh Betar after Independence.

When Tagore's "Amar Sonar Bangla" was chosen as the national anthem of Bangladesh, Das transcribed the song into Western notation for orchestration, as is common for national anthems.

Das composed music for over 50 Bangla and Urdu films in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Songs composed by him from the Indian Bangla film "Lottery" attained huge popularity. Das also holds the record of being the music director of the first Bengali film -- "Mukh O Mukhosh" -- made in Pakistan. Other acclaimed scores under his direction were from the films "Asia" and "Nabarun". He composed the haunting melodies for one of the first films made in independent Bangladesh, "Dhirey Bahey Meghna".

Samar Das was also recognised as a musician at the international level. He directed music at the South Asian International Music Conference in 1954. In 1964 he directed and produced the music for a Bangla ballet-drama "Sonar Shabuj G(n)aye," performed at the Afro-Asian Music Conference in Lahore.

Das' endeavours in preserving songs of the Liberation War were also remarkable. In 1972 he directed music for a long play album containing 26 patriotic songs released by HMV Kolkata. Eminent artistes from both West Bengal and Bangladesh took part in the rearrangement of some of the classics. Later, at the initiative of Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust, Das compiled popular songs of the war period in two LP discs titled "Mora Ekti Phulke Banchabo Bole Juddho Kori".

It is estimated that he composed music for over 2,000 songs aired on radio and television. In recognition of his contribution to our music, he was awarded the prestigious Ekushey Padak and the Swadhinata Padak. He died on September 25, 2001 and was buried at the Christian cemetery in Wari, Dhaka.

Through his classic patriotic tunes still aired on radio, TV and performed by numerous artistes, Samar Das lives on in our collective memory.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent