

EXPERIENCE



Nooran Sisters



Paban Das Baul



Jalal's Set with Zahid

THE THREE-DAY FOLK FEST: IN SUMMARY

APURBA JAHANGIR

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The month of November started out with a bang! Starting off with the Dhaka International Folk Fest, the month has a lot in store for us --- more music and also literature. The three day long festival gathered folk icons from home and abroad---celebrating love and divinity through traditional sound, attracting thousands of music lovers from all over the country. The fest was held at the Army Stadium and organised by Sun Communications.

On day 1, November 10, after the opening act by Pallavi Dance Centre, the festival showcased its first day's line up which included artists such as Abdur Rahman Baul, Tuntun Baul, Javed Bashir and our very own queen of folk Momtaz. Abdur Rahman Baul who is a direct disciple of Baul Shah Abdul Karim won the hearts of thousands with 'Maya Lagaise' as well as Tuntun Baul, whose rendition of Lalou's 'Bolo Shwarup' mesmerised the stadium. Javed Bashir -- the larger than life Pakistani classical and

qawwali singer, opened with a tarana titled "Hans Dhun". Although the sound engineering fell apart in places, it didn't dissuade him from bringing out his musical expression as he continued with original numbers like 'Aje Latha Naiyo', 'Tera Naam Japdi Phiran' and 'Ye Tune Kya Kiya', reciting shers in between. He also brought along two very familiar numbers on his set-list, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's 'Sanu Ek Pal Chayn Na Aave' and the iconic 'Dama Dam Mast Kalandar'. The highlight of the first day was Momtaz who announced to the audience that she would be performing traditional folk numbers, instead of her popular numbers. She took the audience on a musical trip paying tribute to the legendary creators. Her rendition of 'Khaja Morey Nai Morey Nai' broke hearts as well healed many!

Day 2 witnessed one of the largest crowds, ever! The famous flute player Jalal opened up the proceedings of the second day, where he combined his finest folk dhum with rhythms of the two dhol accompanists. He kept the best for last as the young internet sensation Zahid performed his hit Chittagangian folk 'Modhu Khoi Khoi' while Jalal concluded the set with a kirrtan. Another outstanding act was the band Indian Ocean. The band paid their admiration to rich Bangladeshi

folk music, starting with the song 'Bandhu'-- a tune set to a familiar bhatiali song. One after another the festival was enriched with performances by Baul Shafi Mondol, Labik Kamal Gourab, Spanish artists Karen Lugo and Ricardo Moro and others. The last performance was by the headliner of the night -- Kailash Kher. Making the thousands of admirers dance to his tune, he performed very short versions of his famous songs 'Teri Diwani', 'Allah Ke Bande' and 'Saiyyan' for lack of time.

On day 3, one of the best debut performances was done by the Nooran Sisters. Despite frustrating issues with the sound, they began with a Bulleh Shah Kalam "Allah Hu". Their performance needless to say took the listeners on a melodic sufi journey. Bari Siddique was also one of the artists who mesmerised the gallery with his enchanting flute and voice.

Famous British guitarist Sam Mills featured singer Susheela Raman in the festival, who gave an engaging and theatrical performance. Susheela's stage presence and candid dance moves were complemented brilliantly by Sam and the other accompanists in songs like -- 'Come on Down Together', 'Sajna', 'Ghost' and 'Main Sharabi'. The festival closed with its

last act Paban Das Baul. The folk legend opened with the soulful rendition of "Guru Doyal Botey" followed by 'Manush', 'Jonom Dukhi Ma' and others.

As per Dhaka's condition, the security was supposed to be tight but proper behaviour from the security personnels were expected, which they failed to deliver. Many of the audience complained of harassment from the security. There are records where security officers took away lipsticks, kajals and other makeup items despite not mentioning these as sanctioned items. The slot timing of artists was also mismanaged. For example Paban Das Baul was a huge deal for us folk fans. It was Paban Das' 1997 collaboration with Sam Mills in the album "Real Sugar" that brought him to many of us urban listeners, and the much-anticipated duets of the two were cut short. Eventually, the dejected duo had to perform just one song together. The same incident happened with Susheela Raman's performance.

Despite the 'ups and downs' of the three-day Folk Fest, the gathering, the food and the music gave everyone a platform to showcase love, harmony and happiness -- elements that make us who we are as a people.

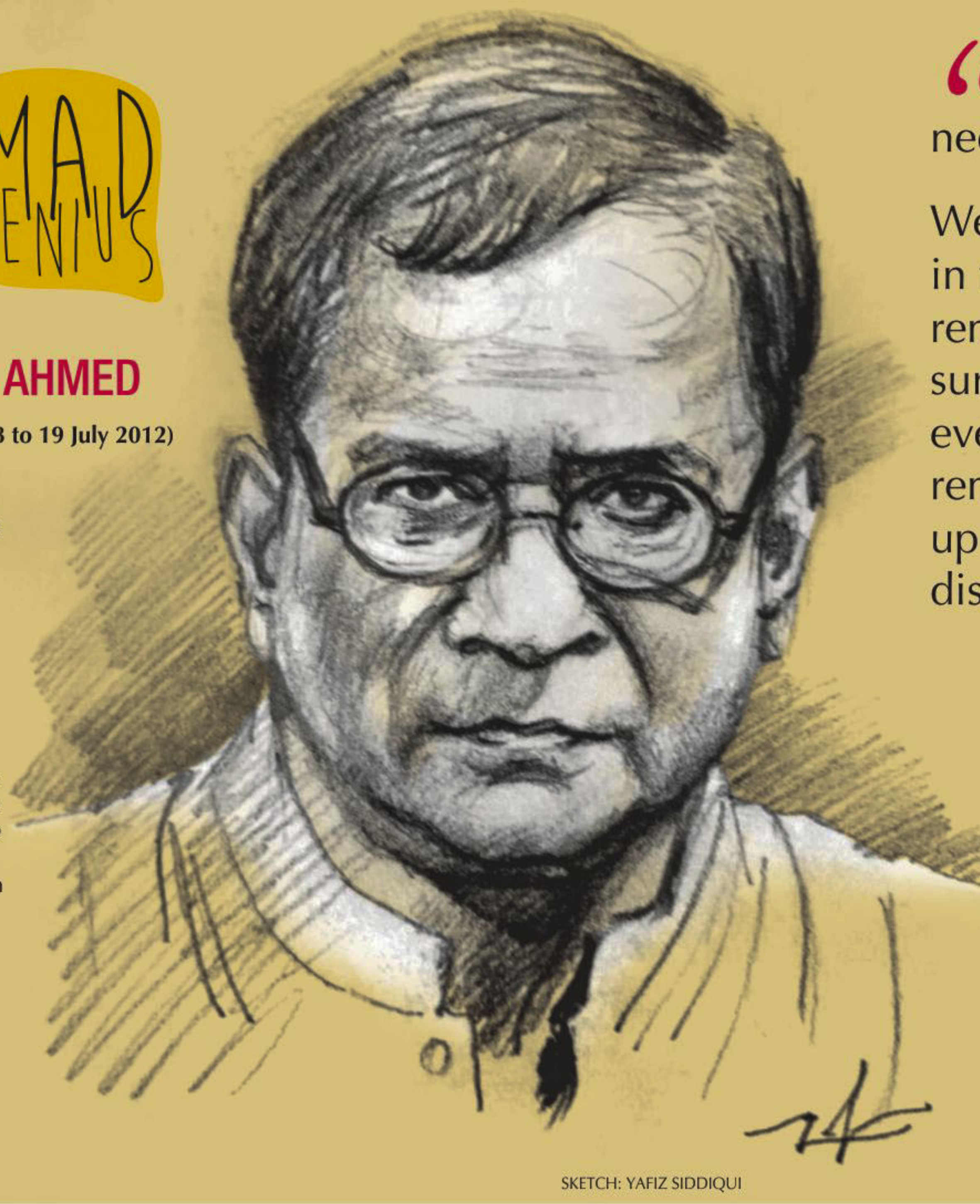


MAD GENIUS

HUMAYUN AHMED

(13 November 1948 to 19 July 2012)

Humayun Ahmed was an author, dramatist, screenwriter, playwright, filmmaker and cultural legend of Bangladesh. Humayun reached the peak of his fame with the publication of his novel Nondito Noroke (In Blissful Hell) in 1972, which remains one of his most famous works, winning admiration from literary critics.



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES

“ People lie on account of necessity and self-interest.

We fail to see things that exist in front of us. We don't remember the love that surrounds us. every day, at every moment. But we remember the love that wafted up like a cool breeze and disappeared just as quickly.

Be careful about those who smile without making a sound.

There is a certain kind of joy when you touch food. People who eat with spoons and fork are deprived of that joy.”

STARDIARY

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A RARE EVENT OF HUMANITY

I witnessed an accident while being stuck in a traffic jam. A young boy, who broke into a run to cross the road, was hit by a motorcycle which severely injured his foot. But instead of being helpful, the passersby and onlookers were scolding him for being reckless. The motorcyclist was checking on his nephew who seemed shaken but was otherwise fine to ensure that he was alright. I thought that the cyclist was very inconsiderate as he seemed to be neglecting the injured boy who was probably the same age as his nephew. However, to my surprise, after reprimanding the boy for a while he helped him to his motorbike, helping him to sit in front of his nephew. He informed the onlookers that he would take the boy to a nearby hospital. I was happy that he realised that it was his duty to save the child.

Rakin Khan
Dhaka University

BECAUSE WE ARE MINORITY



When it comes to house rent, being discriminated on the basis of religious status, no matter how absurd it may sound, prevails in our society. Throughout my childhood and life as a student, the discrimination against minority groups in our day to day work was always been there and unfortunately it still is. Last month we almost finalised a house followed by a number of meetings with the wife of the landowner. The landowner himself was out of the country. As soon as he returned and found out that his wife was about to rent out their house to a Hindu couple, he immediately refused to do so. This is not just one instance, there are more instances like these when this discrimination is more subtle and difficult to detect. After all, unless a landowner specifically admits otherwise, who can say for sure why they made a particular decision to not rent a certain individual? That said, there are some instances where an employer too displays some discriminatory intent. No one knows when it will end.

Monjuri Bhowmik
Lalmatia, Dhaka

PHOTO: KAZI TAHIRIN AGAZ APURBO