

# 2016: A FESTIVE YEAR FOR THE ARTS

STAR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

*2016 is just one more day to go, and it's safe to say this has been a fantastic year for arts of all forms – be it music, dance, theatre, visual arts or films. Cultural organisations remained active throughout the year. Festivals -- big and small -- were spread across the calendar, from grandiose International ones like Dhaka Art Summit, Asian Art Biennale and Bengal Classical Music Festival, to ones surely making a mark – like Dhaka International Folk Fest and Ganga-Jamuna Theatre Fest and even more niche ones like Nazrul Mela and Chhayanaaut's Kathak festival, every culture-loving Bangalee had enough to indulge in. "Aynabaji" brought audience back to cinemas in hoards while other films held Bangladesh's reputation at international festivals, and the terror that struck the nation in July was defied by thousands who came out to join celebrations of our culture, music and heritage, wherever it happened. As we prepare to embrace a brand new year just around the corner, here is a fond look back at the year that passed us by, in the fields of arts and entertainment.*

## BANGLADESH CULTURAL FESTIVAL AT BSA

The first Bangladesh Cultural Festival was held at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). The 18-day (January 1-18) cultural festival, aiming to build an artistically and culturally rich, creative and humanistic Bangladesh, took place at Nandanmancha of BSA. Organised by BSA, the artistes of all the District Shilpakala Academies offered performances of music, dance, recitation, acting and traditional folk items.

## YEARLONG CELEBRATIONS OF SHAH ABDUL KARIM'S BIRTH CENTENARY

In celebration of Baul Samrat Shah Abdul Karim's birth centenary, a yearlong programme began in February in Dhaka. A three-day programme was held in Sylhet first, and then in other parts of the country. The celebrations will wrap up in February 2017.

## CELEBRATING LIFE 2015 GALA HELD

The awards ceremony of Standard Chartered-The Daily Star Celebrating Life 2015 took place at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on January 10. Actress Babita, photographer Afzal H Chowdhury and lyricist Alauddin Ali received Lifetime Achievement Awards for their monumental contributions to Film, Photography and Music respectively. Popular band Chirkutt performed at the programme while Sabina Yasmin and Syed Abdul Hadi performed songs penned by Alauddin Ali.

## SADARANG'S CLASSICAL MUSIC CONFERENCE IN CHITTAGONG

The 19th National Classical Music Conference was held at Chittagong District Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Organised by Sadarang Uchchanga Sangeet Parishad Bangladesh, the two-day conference featured vocal and instrumental music performances by the artistes from all over Bangladesh and Kolkata, India.

## MEMORIAL FESTIVAL ON SELIM AL DEEN

Marking death anniversary of Selim Al Deen, a towering figure of Bangla theatre in post-Rabindranath era, Dhaka Theatre held a four-day programme at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. The event was supported by the Shilapakala Academy and Bangladesh Graam Theatre.

## DHAKA INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST HELD

The 14th edition of the Dhaka International Film Festival opened in Dhaka with the theme "Better Film, Better Audience, Better Society". Organised by Rainbow Film Society, the weeklong festival featured screening of 184 films from 60 countries across four venues.

## BANGLADESHI ARTISTS AT PRUDENTIAL EYE AWARDS

The third edition of the Prudential Eye Awards 2016 was held at Singapore as part of Singapore Art Week. Internationally acclaimed Bangladeshi artists Shumon Ahmed and Promotes Das vied for awards in two categories -- Photography and Sculpture respectively, where Shumon Ahmed received the award in photography category.

## 9TH INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL HELD

The ninth edition of International Children's Film Festival Bangladesh was held at 15 venues in Dhaka, Sylhet and Rajshahi. In addition to the screening of over 150 films, the event also featured competitions in a number of categories, a seminar, workshop and more.

## MADHU MELA WRAPS UP AT SAGARDARI

Madhu Mela, an annual festival celebrating the 191st birth anniversary of the pioneer of Bengali sonnets, poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta, ended on January 28 at Sagardari, Jessore. Thousands of people from different parts of the country and abroad visited the weeklong festival and fair, the largest in south-western Bangladesh.

## BOOK FAIR RETURNS WITH THE SPIRIT OF AMAR EKUSHEY

In line with previous years, Amar Ekushey Book Fair returned in February with its ever-buoyant spirit. The month-long fair, the largest and most popular book fair in Bangladesh, was commenced on February 1st at Bangla Academy premises and the adjacent Suhrawardi Udyan.

## INT'L POETS SUMMIT AT BSA

The inauguration ceremony of Kathak International Poets Summit 2016 was held at National Art Gallery auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. A group of renowned poets from Sweden, Slovakia,

Morocco and Taiwan joined the summit, along with ace Bangladeshi poets. The event featured different programmes including recitation, award giving ceremony, views-exchange and discussion where rising Bangladeshi poets interacted with noted local and international poets.

## DHAKA ART SUMMIT ENTHRALLS ART LOVERS

With a call to celebrate the world's largest non-commercial research and exhibition platform for South Asian Art, the third edition of Dhaka Art Summit returned to the capital's Shilpakala Academy on February 5. The four day summit, jointly organised by Samdani Art Foundation in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh Tourism Board, as well as over 50 international partners offered a cornucopia of diverse art: be it fine, video, installation, photography, performance, architecture, film, critical writing, artists' talks and more.

## CHANDRASHEKHAR PERFORMS IN THE CAPITAL

Padmabhushan Professor Chandrashekhara, Bharatnatyam dancer, musician, composer, choreographer, vocalist, natuvanar, dance teacher and researcher, conducted two dance

Barisal district administration and included discussion, a book fair and cultural functions on the premises.

## JOY BANGLA CONCERT MAKES A COMEBACK

On the occasion of the historic March 7, an audience of around 30,000 youths gathered at the capital's Army Stadium to sing along with their favourite bands at the Joy Bangla Concert. Young Bangla and the Centre for Research and Information (CRI) arranged the musical extravaganza. The concert saw power-packed performances of seven leading bands-- Warfaze, Shironamhin, Shunno, Arbovirus, Lalon, Cryptic Fate and Nemesis.

## THREE-DAY LALON FESTIVAL IN KUSHIA

A three-day Lalon Smaran Utshab (Lalon Memorial Festival) was held at the shrine of Lalon Shah at Chheuria in Kushtia. Introduced by Lalon himself, the festival is held every year to celebrate Dol Purnima, where followers of Lalon's music and philosophy from all across the country come together.

## NATIONAL FILM DAY OBSERVED

Elaborate programmes were held in the capital on April 3 to mark National Film Day. Bangladesh Film Development Corporation

art festival, began on April 18 at Zainul Gallery in Dhaka.

## Brss holds five day festival

Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Shangstha (BRSS) held a five day festival to celebrate Rabindranath Tagore's 155th birthday from May 4-8 at Shawkat Osman Auditorium of Central Public library. An award was conferred upon Tagore artiste Hamida Haque on the opening day, and the event featured solo performances of 120 Tagore singers, as well as a dance drama titled "Chandalika" by Nriyandan.

## SEVEN LUMINARIES WIN SHILPAKALA AWARD '15

BSA awarded seven luminaries from different fields with Shilpakala Award 2015. The ceremony took place at the National Theatre Hall where President Abdul Hamid conferred awards upon the winners. The winners of this year are Saleha Chowdhury (dance), Nadira Begum (folk culture), Kazi Borhanuddin (theatre), Sujeyo Shyam (instrumental music), Nikhil Sen (recitation), Syed Abdul Barq Alvi (fine art) and Minir Humar Nandi (vocal music).



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workshops at Savar and at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on invitation from dance school Nriya Nandan. The living legend also performed in a magical in his showcase at the concluding event.

## PAHELA FALGUN CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE CAPITAL

The arrival of Pahela Falgun, was greeted with a profusion of flowers, poetry, songs and dances in the capital and all across the country. Dhaka wore a festive look on the first day of Bangla month of Falgun. Jatiya Boshonto Utshab Udjapon Parishad organised cultural programmes across the capital, centred at Bakultala of Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University. The second phase saw cultural performances at Dhanmondi's Rabindra Sarobar, Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka and Uttara Secot 7 Park field, and featured a wide range of music, dance and recitation performances.

## JIBANANANDA UTSHAB IN BARISAL

A four-day Jibanananda Utshab to observe the 117th birth anniversary of influential modern Poet Jibanananda Das was on at Ashwini Kumar Hall with a call for more study and research on him. The festival was organised by

(BFDC) chalked out celebrations to mark the occasion. Programmes included a red carpet reception, live talk show, photo exhibition, film screening, and a fair – featuring puppets, nagordola, and bioscope.

## THE NATION USHERS IN PAHELA BAISHAKH

Marking Chaitra Sangkranti and Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year 1423, leading cultural organisations and schools Chhayanaaut, Faculty of Fine Art (FFA) of University of Dhaka (DU), Shurer Dhara and Bengal Foundation ushered in Noboborsho through various programmes. The festivities included the traditional programme at the Ramna Botomul, the Mongol Shobha Jatra (that was recognised as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity later this year), Hajaro Konthe Borshoboron were some of the biggest attractions of the day.

## JOYPURHAT FINE ART FESTIVAL BRINGS SUCCESS

To inspire creativity and to diffuse practice of science and culture among students of rural schools, the first Joypurhat Fine Art Festival was held in March at Teghar High School premises, Joypurhat. A five-day (April 18-23) art exhibition, featuring outcomes of the fine

art festival, began on April 18 at Zainul Gallery in Dhaka.

## STAR MELODIES CELEBRATE TAGORE'S LYRICAL/DANCE-DRAMAS

Star Melodies held a soiree highlighting songs of Tagore's lyrical dramas and dance dramas. The programme featured songs by promising young Tagore artistes Shuma Roy, Shimu De, Chhaya Karmakar, Nayeema Islam Raj, Dipanjan Mukherjee, Mustafizur Rahman, Anupam Kumar Paul and Jibon Chowdhury. Eminent dance exponent Sharmila Banerjee performed with her troupe at the event.

## NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2014 HANDED

Winners of the 2014 National Film Awards received their statuettes from the Prime Minister at a ceremony in the capital. First time awardees included actors Tariq Anam Khan and Bidya Sinha Mim, Belal Khan, while Ferdous picked up his fourth career award at

the ceremony.

## KATHA LALITAKALA ACADEMY HONOURS GUNJAN

Marking its 23rd anniversary, Katha Lalitakala held a programme which featured a reception of noted personalities, where the organisers honoured three noted singers this year – Sadya Afreen Mallick, Amena Ahmed, and Rehana Siddiqui.

## TAGORE'S PAINTINGS EXHIBITED AT BNM

Marking 155th birth anniversary of the Rabindranath Tagore, an exhibition showcasing his paintings was showcased at Bangladesh National Museum (BNM). Besides the Bard's works, the exhibit also displayed a number of photographs of Tagore, his friends and family, as well as several artists of both the east and west of his time.

## BNAP CELEBRATES NAZRUL'S BIRTHDAY

Bangladesh Nazrul Abritti Parishad (BNAP) organised a gala evening of talks, songs and poetry recitation at the Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium of Central Public Library to celebrate the 117th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. The programme was presided over by BNAP president professor Shaila Ahmed.

## NAZRUL'S RAAGA-BASED SONGS AT STAR MELODIES

The Daily Star's regular initiative Star Melodies held a musical evening at the AS Mahmud Seminar Hall of The Daily Star Centre marking the National Poet's 117th birth anniversary. Subir Nandi, Yasmin Mushtari, Priyanka Gope, Sheikh Jashim and Chhanda Chakrabarty presented Nazrul Islam's kabayageeti and Raaga-based songs.

## CHHAYANAUT'S MUSICAL HOMAGE TO NAZRUL

Chhayanaut organised a two day programme marking Kazi Nazrul's birth anniversary at its main auditorium. The event featured dance, musical performances and recitation from artistes of the leading music school, as well other promising and noted artistes.

## AWARDS HANDED TO THE BEST IN BANGLADESHI MUSIC

The Symphony-Channel i Music Awards honoured artistes, lyricists and composers in 17 categories. Eminent singer Shahnaz Rahmatullah was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. A number of artistes and bands performed in the evening, with noted personalities of the music industry in attendance.

## ART WEEKEND AT SEVEN EMBASSIES

Ambassadors of Brazil, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and High Commissioner of Canada hosted a joint art weekend on May 27-28 at their respective residences. The weekend highlighted the works of Bangladeshi artistes, to build bridges between the Bangladeshi and international art scene.

## AFD CELEBRATES WORLD MUSIC DAY

Alliance Française de Dhaka celebrated Fete de la Musique 2016 in June, where individual and group songs presented in Bangla, English and French by the students and teachers of French at AFD were featured.

## ASIAN FILM RETROSPECTIVE COMMENCES

Asian Film Retrospective 2016, an event organised by Moviyaana Film Society and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy was held in July. The event screened 65 films from 19 countries over a 17-week period. The Retrospective featured discussions on Asian films and noted Asian film makers.

## SABINA YASMIN CONFERRED FEROZA BEGUM MEDAL

To pay tribute to legendary singer Feroza Begum, Dhaka University launched a musical award named after her. The ceremony was held on the birthday of the singer (July 28) at Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University. The first award of this honour was conferred on noted singer Sabina Yasmin by Vice Chancellor Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique.

## BAUL ROB FAKIR PASSES AWAY

Baul Rob Fakir, one of the foremost exponents of Lalon's songs, breathed his last on August 7 at the age of 49 at a local hospital in Kushtia. Family members said he had a stroke and left behind his wife, a son, a daughter, and a number of disciples and fans.