

**WHAT'S ON**

**Ekushey Book Fair**  
Organiser: Bangla Academy  
Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan  
Date: February 1-28  
Time: 3-8pm



**Chobi Mela IX**  
Title: Transition  
Venue: BSA Art Gallery, Northbrook Hall, BAFA, Beauty Boarding  
Date: February 3-16

**CHOBIMELA 2017**  
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY BANGLADESH

**Iranian Film Show**  
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum  
Date: Feb 5-8  
Time: 11am-1pm & 3pm-5pm

**Iranian Film Show**  
5-8 February, 2017  
Everyday 11.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.  
Venue: Main auditorium Bangladesh National Museum

**Asian Curatorial Forum**  
Organiser: Bengal Foundation Visual Arts program  
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Date: Feb 9-11  
Time: 10:30am-5:30pm

Asian Curatorial Forum

**Group Print Exhibition**  
Chhapi Chhobi-3  
Venue: Galleri Kaya  
Date: Jan 28-Feb 10  
Time: 11am-7:30pm



# CHOBIMELA IX: AN OLD DHAKA EXCURSION

Astral images, intimate portraits and introspection

**FAHMIM FERDOUS**

The 9th edition Chobi Mela, Asia's first and largest photo festival, is in town, offering a rare opportunity to experience photography (and contemporary photographic arts) from around the world. This year's festival, unlike the previous edition, is mostly concentrated at the National Art Gallery of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, a few exhibits are placed in three historic establishments of Old Dhaka – Northbrook Hall, Beauty Boarding and Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA).



The old, paint-peeling walls of Northbrook Hall provide the perfect ambiance for Igor Pisuk's complex "Deceitful Reverence" series of photos.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The ambiance that these settings organically offer is a curator's dream, and when used properly, the setting can be as powerful as the art itself. Whoever braves the dingy, chaotic lanes of Old Dhaka to get to these venues, the exhibits offer an 'experience' instead of just photographs hung on a wall. Here are impressions from two of the three venues, in the first of this two-part story:

The Northbrook Hall auditorium, standing at about 136 years old, is a bit of a time machine. The steep gallery, bulky old-timey stage lights and the stairs on the side feels like a different century. Bangladeshi documentary photographer Debashish Chakrabarty's "Stardust" is on display there...but they are not documentary photos. They can barely be called photos. The large, backlit graphically-manipulated works of pure abstraction are

spread across the darkened auditorium, reflecting the artist's interest with astrophysics, neuroscience and the likes. The images are mostly just forms, shapes and light paintings on textured backgrounds, in what can be interpreted as time and timelessness of the universe and conscience.

Just behind the stage, Polish photographer

Igor Pisuk's "Deceitful Reverence" is a series of photography that's hard to connect at the first glance. But know the back-story and all the dots line up to create an artist's struggle and looking deep into self. Igor suffered from alcohol addiction in high school and spent time in a closed institution for treatment. His suggestive portraits and bizarre images give a

glimpse not into the life inside such a rehab centre, but of introspection and a battle with self to be set free.

No more than a 10-minute walk from Northbrook Hall is Beauty Boarding, an icon of the romantic past of Bangladesh's artistic intellect. This small boarding house used to be a common gathering space for writers,

artists and creative minds of all kinds, where luminaries across generations would come together to chill out and open up their brilliant minds. Nasir Ali Mamun, who was felicitated with a Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's festival, has a small section of his exhibit "The Poet with the Camera" at Beauty Boarding. Mamun, early in his career days, spent time here with literary greats like Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Haq, Shahid Qadri, Belal Chowdhury and Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, and the portraits of them come full circle at the exhibit, placed on the same walls where these men once breathed, laughed and probably wrote. Mamun's signature use of light and shadow in his black-and-white portraits bring out candid, intimate moments that not just show the men, but their personalities as well.

The other exhibit at the venue is German photographer Katrin Koenning's "Dear Chris" (2010-2013). It's a personal, touching work focusing on Chris, her cousin's husband, who killed himself at age 29. He was a patient of depression and had previously tried to commit suicide too, and the photos seem to look for answers of that deep, dark struggle. The photos are somewhat divided in three 'chapters': photos from Chris' childhood, photos of some of his possessions, and of places that were important to him. The large negative spaces in the photographs speak of emptiness, the soft-tone monochromes bringing a sense of melancholy, and some of the images, in circular frames, offer a sort of a 'telescopic' view into his life.

[The second installment of the story will feature exhibits "Iran, Untitled" by Gohar Dashti and Pushpamala N's "Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs", both at BAFA.]



PHOTO: STAR

**AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh**

A two-day poetry recitation festival, dedicated to versatile poet-novelist-playwright Syed Shamsul Haq, concluded on January 4 in Mymensingh. The event was organised at Town Hall Shaheed Minar premises.

Shabda Aritt Charcha Kendra, a local recitation forum, organised the festival marking its three-decade long journey. Eminent elocutionist Syed Hasan Imam inaugurated the event.

Prominent members present at the inaugural session included Deputy Commissioner of

Mymensingh Md Khalilur Rahman, Mymensingh Police Superintendent Syed Nurul Islam, Bangladesh Aritt Samonnoy Parishad's (BASP) presidium member Isteqbal Hossain and advocate Moazzem Hossain.

Other participants at the festival were Golam Sarwar, Rafiqul Islam, Rezina Wali Lina, Md Ahkam Ullah, Masqur-a-Sattar and Majumder Biplob of BASP; Mir Barkat of Kanthashilon, Nazmul Hossain of Sanon, Masum Azizul Bashar of Trilok and Fayzullah Saeed of Swarokompon in Dhaka; Abu Naser Malik of Karukantha in Comilla; Amjad Dulon of Kabial in Mymensingh; president of Mymensingh Sahitya Sangsad Yazdani

## Poetry Festival dedicated to SYED SHAMSUL HAQ

Quraishy Kajol; poet Rubina Azad and Mujahidul Islam of Tarunyer Uchhash in Chittagong.

Shabda president Joydev Saha and its secretary Khan Sohana Kabir delivered the welcome speech. Group recitation sessions were directed by Md Saimul Haque and Moushumi Das Gupta. The festival included a colourful procession in the town, awarding crests, solo and group recitation.

Professor Amir Ahmed Chowdhury Ratan, president of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Mymensingh unit, was awarded 'Shabda Padak' this year.



Shakib Khan

## The Bangladeshi invasion in Indian cinema

Four stars nominated for Filmfare Awards East



Kusum Sikder



Arifin Shuvo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi film stars have been making an impression across the border, with Bangladesh-India joint film ventures, with some even making their strides in full-on Tollywood projects. And now, the industry is taking notice. Four big stars of our silver screen have been nominated in India's Filmfare Awards East, which celebrates Bangla films from India, to be held later this month in Mumbai.

Shakib Khan leads the pack with a nod for Best Actor, for his role in a Jaaz Multimedia-Eskay Movies joint venture project "Shikari". Talking to The Daily Star prior to flying to Kolkata where he will perform at a stage show, he said: "I wasn't aware that I had been selected in the final nomination. Bangla Filmfare Awards is a very prestigious recognition, and I am truly honoured to be a part of it. To be selected alongside great actors such as Prosenjit is a huge milestone. I feel that my successes represent Bangladesh's success."



Nusraat Faria

Awards will be given out on February 25 in Mumbai, in various categories: Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director,

Best Film, Best Song, Best Singer, and more. Apart from Shakib Khan, this year's Bangladeshi contenders include Jaya Ahsan for "Eagoler Chokh" (Indian film by Arindam Shil), Kusum Sikder for Gautam Ghosh-directed joint venture "Shongkhochil", Nusraat Faria for "Hero 420" (also a Jaaz-Eskay venture) and Arifin Shuvo for "Niyoti", a Bangladeshi production that also released in West Bengal.



## Lady Gaga leaves her heart on the dance floor at Super Bowl

Nearly a decade into her career, Lady Gaga has flaunted many personalities: the glitzy 'Poker Face' breakout, the meat dress-wearing Mother Monster, the bluesy, stripped down 'Joanne' crooner. But for her halftime show debut at Super Bowl LI at Houston's NRG Stadium on Sunday, Gaga was simply herself.

The singer (born Stefani Germanotta) started on the roof with a patriotic light show of a red, white and blue constellation while singing Woodie Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land". She also uttered part of the Pledge of Allegiance: a fitting salute to America on the country's biggest stage in the midst of president Donald Trump's immigration executive order that have sparked protests across the country.

Dressed in a shimmering silver and blue number, Gaga bounced across her intricate, half-star-shaped stage as her army of fans cheered her on. She opened her show atop a

tall pillar before seemingly levitating down to ground-level as she delivered her catalogue's most upbeat offerings like "Edge of Glory" and "Poker Face" with a special shout-out to Texas, and the one-song-fits-all anthem "Born This Way". She carried on solo for "Telephone", a number that featured two-time halftime show performer Beyoncé (who had announced her pregnancy with twins at the start of February) – as attendees hugged their seats for her throwback hit "Just Dance".

The most illuminating segment of her halftime show arrived with "Million Reasons", the heartbreak ballad off her fifth studio album "Joanne". Prior to her performance, a prompt flashed on the Jumbotron asking the audience to use their smartphone lights when the message "Go! Flashlights" hit the screen. Despite the song's message of heartache, Gaga stroked

the keys of her keyboard and sang like it was the performance of a lifetime.

For the finale of "Bad Romance", paws were up as Gaga and a team of white-clad dancers strutted across the stage. Fans who stood front and center on the field waved wands of light with synchronised choreography, making Gaga appear like the general of a dance army. A fireworks display erupted following her high-octane performance. With her trio of wardrobe changes, Gaga's dynamic versatility on the stage made her somewhat like the Falcons' quarterback Matt Ryan during the match-up: the real MVP.

Although some may have expected her to get a little more political, fans around the world had a blast from the performance, which drew a major tweet storm of 5.1 million.

Source: Billboard