

WHAT'S ON

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



Bengal Sangskriti Utshab
 Organiser: Bengal Foundation
 Venue: AMA Muhith Sports Complex, Sylhet
 Date: Feb 22-Mar 3
 Time: 4pm onwards



Theatre
 Play: Crutch-er Colonel
 Troupe: Bot Tala
 Venue: Mahila Samity Auditorium
 Date: Feb 24-25
 Time: 7pm



Concert
 Jatra Biroti Live Sessions
 Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
 Date: Feb 23-25
 Time: 7pm



Theatre Festival
 3rd Ekushey Natyotshab
 Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan
 Date: Feb 1-28
 Time: 4pm




PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

“The Book Fair celebrates our language”

In conversation with Selina Hossain

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Recipient of the Bangla Academy Award, the Alawal Literary Award, the Philips Literary Prize, the SAARC Literary Award and more, eminent litterateur Selina Hossain's works have been translated into several languages. Some of her works have been regarded as a crucial element of academic discourse and is part of the university curriculum both at home and abroad. The novelist is currently the Chairperson of Bangladesh Shishu Academy, and in the wake of Ekushey February and the Ekushey Book Fair, The Daily Star recently got in touch with the author about her writing and more:

February is the observation of Ekushey Book Fair, which is closely connected to the Language Movement in 1952. How has its significance changed over the years?

Selina Hossain: The Ekushey Boi Mela holds a pivotal role in upholding the respect and prestige accorded to our mother tongue. There are many native languages around the world that is slowly becoming extinct, and our Book Fair

Language Movement and Liberation War histories. Out of all the books you have written, which do you hold most dear?

Selina Hossain: I have written several novels on the Language Movement and the Liberation War. Out of the 39 novels I have written, two are set against the backdrop of the Language Movement, and eight in the Liberation War setting. I feel that writers must address a diversity of issues, or else their works may turn monotonous. Writing my novel “Mogno Choitonnyo Shish” in 1977 gave me much joy. My novel “Lara”, written in 1999, was an important journey in self discovery as an artiste.

How did your passion for writing begin?

Selina Hossain: I had an enriching childhood. Nature, poverty, the people and their experiences surrounded me during those years. When I was a student of Dhaka University in the '60s, the urge within me to recount all those memories and experiences began, and that is when I started writing.

What are the responsibilities a writer must be aware of when working on a manuscript?

“Ekush was our stepping stone on the path to emancipation”

... Asad Chowdhury

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Noted poet Asad Chowdhury has won various prestigious awards in his long career span. He is a TV anchor as well. He recently received Khalekdad Chowdhury Literary Award. The literary figure spoke to The Daily Star in a recent conversation about the spirit of Ekush, his writing and the Ekushey Book Fair. Excerpts:

“Ekush means not bowing one's head. Ekush is our pride. Ekush is the month of Bangalees' self-identity. Ekush was our stepping stone on the path to emancipation. We have a language because Ekush happened. Ekush is eternal. It is and always be our pride.

“Personally, Ekushey February is a promise to myself. It's a test of our own identity. We can reflect on how far we have come when we look back on this day. I think the Shaheed

Minar is a beacon that will show us the path. “Ekushey Boi Mela is our own fair. It is a fair for everyone, irrespective of caste, creed and opinions. Here, I find my closest friends, the books.

“My connection with the book fair goes way back. I have visited the biggest book fairs in the world, in Frankfurt and in Kolkata, but our month-long fair is a unique one. No other fair draws me in like it. This fair is a melting pot of all Bangalees. It is our own festival. The readers

can meet the writers and publishers in person through the fair.

I have been involved with the book fair since 1973. Readers have kept me in their blessings and love for many decades now, and I consider myself very fortunate for that.

Writing is my passion, love and a longtime habit. People across the country know me through my writing and I want to continue it till my last days.



ensures that our language is celebrated and widespread. Furthermore, publications of the many books are crucial for the education and development of younger and future generations. Over the past decades, the fair has been a key in the growing significance of our culture and roots. It is a passion for life, where people from all backgrounds can gather to mingle under one common interest.

Your works have been regarded as influential in shaping the discourse of

Selina Hossain: When it comes to writing a manuscript, the writer must keep in mind whether what he wants to write is being put down correctly. If it is a novel, then the ideas must be cohesive and it is careful to check whether the story is progressing the right way, with defined characters and well-thought out sentences without spelling mistakes. Overall, the utmost responsibility an author holds is to make sure his readers are receiving a manuscript that is organised and clear.



Children paint pictures of Language Movement

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Children participated in a painting competition marking International Mother Language Day recently, at the premises of town's Premier Ideal High School.

Sherpur Zila Samity at Mymensingh organised the competition. The event also included a handwriting competition for children, and a discussion.

Some 100 children from different educational institutions took part in the painting competition, on themes such as Shaheed Minar, Probat Feri (the midnight procession to pay tributes to Language Movement martyrs) and Language Movement.

Former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Dr. Mosharraf Hossain Mian attended the event as chief guest. Upazila Nirbahi officer of Tarakdand Md Sher Mahmud Murad; headmaster of Premier Ideal High School Md Chand Mia and Mymensingh Press Club Secretary Md Babul Hossain were the special guests with convener Dr ASM Ruhul Quddus Rupom in the chair.

Language veteran Khondaker Abdul Malek Shahidullah of Mymensingh was honoured at the programme with crests.

The guests later distributed prizes and certificates among the winners of the competitions.

TV WATCH

“ALO” AIRS ON RTV

A CORRESPONDENT

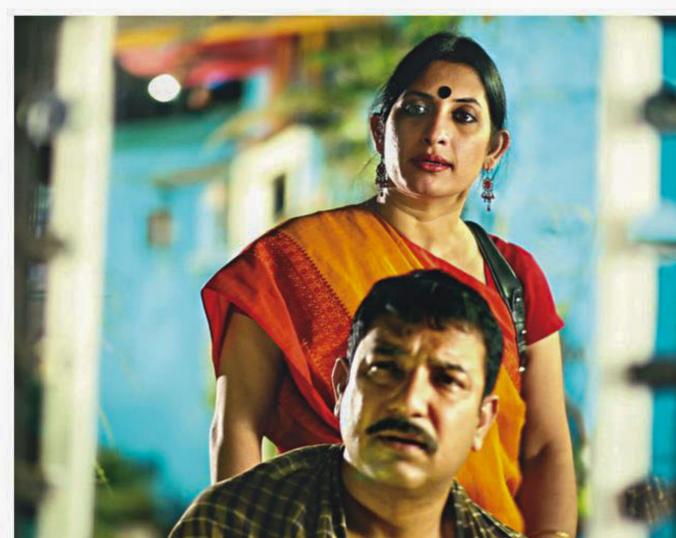
In remembrance of Language Martyrs and International Mother Language Day, Rtv will air a single episode TV play titled “Alo” tonight at 8:10pm. Scripted by Sujat Shimul and directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud, cast members include Tariq Anam Khan, Zakia Bari Momo, Sujat Shimul and more.

The plot revolves around the tribulations faced by a cultural club at a university. Rahat Kabir is a final year BBA student and the president of a cultural club at a private university. A precocious student involved in many cultural activities, Rahat and his club members prepare to stage a play written by Munir Chowdhury



on International Mother Language Day. To the club, this venture is an uprising of the newer generation to uphold the Bangla language in its pure and proper form. However the Vice Chancellor of the uni-

versity issues an administrative injunction on the play's staging, causing the students of the club to revolt. This puts a strain on the relationship between Rahat and his girlfriend, who is the VC's daughter.



“Lal Ronger Golpo” on Ekushey TV

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking International Mother Language Day, Ekushey TV will air a single-episode play titled “Lal Ronger Golpo” at 12:20pm today. Scripted and directed by Mahmud Didar, the cast includes Tauquir Ahmed, Bipasha Hayat, Bipash Anwar, Monir Zaman, Sharmin Akhtar, Khondokar Himel and more.

The story centres on Jamil, and his pursuit for a hundred-year old philosopher who only emerges each year in February. Jamil's endeavours affect his family, steeping them in financial problems. His wife Lily convinces him to take up English speaking courses and a job, but as time goes by, she finds herself further removed from his life's purpose, and identity. She eventually gives it all up to wait for the answer to Jamil's question.