

WHAT'S ON

**Film Festival**  
 Title: Dhaka International Mobile Film Festival 2019  
 Venue: University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh  
 Date: February 15

**Live Art Show**  
 Title: Dhaka Live Art Biennale  
 Venue: University of Dhaka  
 Date: Jan 21 - Feb 14  
 Time: 10 am - 8 pm

**Exhibition**  
 Title: LAL - An Ode to the Moon & Menstrual Cycle  
 Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani  
 Date: February 19 - 23  
 Details: www.facebook.com/jatrabirotiworld

**Book Fair**  
 Title: Ekushey Boi Mela 2019  
 Venue: Suhrawardi Udyan and Bangla Academy, Dhaka  
 Date: Feb 1 - 28

**Photography Exhibition and More**  
 Title: Counter Foto's 6th Anniversary  
 Venue: Bishwo Shaitto Kendro & Counter Foto Mirpur Campus  
 Date: Feb 10 - 15

# Nirmal Kumar Das honoured in India



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**ZAHANGIR ALOM**  
 Bhawaiya Sangeet Academy O Parishad Cooch Behar, West Bengal India, recently honoured renowned Bangladeshi dotara artiste Nirmal Kumar Das with Sangeet Churamoni Samman. In conversation with *The Daily Star*, the artiste shared his experiences. "I am really happy to receive the award as recognition to my dedication to Bangladeshi folk music," says Nirmal Kumar Das. "They scrutinised different aspects prior to selecting me for the award. They are very serious and sincere about nurturing folk music because of their rich legacy. Legendary singer Abbasuddin Ahmed was born in Cooch Behar."

According to Das, singers in Cooch Behar perform folk music with instruments like harmonium, dhol, dotara and flute. Because of the passion shown by the folk musicians in both the countries, plans are being made to organise musical exchange programmes in Bangladesh and India.

"As they are farmers by profession, the spirit of Bhawaiya is closely associated with their life style," says Das. "They practice from morning till midnight. There is also a museum here containing many folk musical instruments along with daily life farming tools which are thousands of years old."

Hailing from Fatikhchari, Chittagong, Nirmal Kumar Das started his musical career by singing Bhatiali, Bhawaiya and folk songs of Chittagong. He even won a completion, performing in front of legendary singer Abdul Alim when he was a child. But dotara recitals by his father, Bijoy Kumar Das, moved him so deeply that he decided to take up the instrument in 1968. He also received dotara training from legendary folk artiste Kanai Lal Sheel and his youngest son, Abinash Chandra Sheel.

He was enlisted as a dotara artist in Bangladesh Betar in 1972 and later joined folk musician Abdul Latif's team to sing for the Green Revolution Movement. "Bangabandhu had inspired us when we had gone to meet him," recalls Das, who was also a regular dotara and mandolin artiste at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA).



PHOTO: BANGALORE OPEN AIR OFFICIAL

In what is the most historic event in the Bangladeshi metal music industry, Trainwreck recently beat the other participants of Bangalore OpenAir's competition segment to ensure a place in the biggest metal concert in the world, the Wacken Open Air in Germany.

## PORTRAIT OF A COVER ARTIST

# Shibu Kumar Shil

**PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY**  
 Popular nation-wide for his music and writing, Shibu Kumar Shil is also a prominent cover artist of our time. He has been designing book covers for over a decade now. The busy artist talks to the *The Daily Star* for a candid interview.

**How do you perceive the art of cover design?**  
 I do not believe that cover design is an independent art. The cover represents the text inside. However, while I design, I try to maintain a semi-abstract form, which has its own character, but also represents the book as a whole.

**Throughout the years, what has been your biggest challenge in this particular art-form?**  
 The entire concept of book-launch in the Ekushey Boi Mela is the biggest crisis. Throughout the rest of the year, there is not enough work. As a result, the artist, who designs about 500 covers in the month of February, remains unemployed otherwise. Such artists should get work on a regular basis.

**What could be the possible solution to it?**  
 Publications should run throughout the year. The book fair should be a place for the appreciation of literature. If writers and publishers can decentralise the system, the industry would benefit greatly. By the grace of social media, it should not be too hard to reach the audience.

**What is your take on the writer-publisher-designer relationship as of now?**  
 We fall short of maintaining a healthy working relation. For example, often the



PHOTO: COURTESY

writer would put up the cover design online, and ask for public voting without the artist's permission. Imagine if the artist has put up the text and asked if it was good enough to design? It is not the case for all, but many writers dictate the design to the artist. We definitely need to respect each other more.

**Who are your favorite artists in cover design?**  
 I am always attracted to book by Penguin or Verso publications. I adore with works

of Krishnendu Chaki. My favourite artists in the country include Biren Shome, Kazi Ahsan Habib, Qayum Chowdhury, Samar Majumder and Dhruva Esh. Among the contemporary artists, I appreciate the work of Sabyasachi Mistry and Razib Datta.

**Do you have any suggestions for newcomers?**  
 Give no chance to mediocrity. Choose your text carefully and invest in it because if the text stays alive, so will the design.



**A five-day long biennale art festival titled Chittagong Open Art Biennale is being held at Institute of Fine Arts, University of Chittagong, and Alliance Francaise de Chittagong (AFC). The festival will continue till tomorrow.**

**AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR, from Chattogram**  
 A total of 12 artistes, from six different countries, are participating in the festival with their work.  
 Professor Dr Ifetkhar Uddin Chowdhury, vice chancellor of University of Chittagong attended the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest. Professor Dr Faizul Azim of IFA, and Dr Selvam Thorez, director of AFC, were the special guests at the event, presided over by Shaela Sharmin, chairman of IFA.  
 The festival includes cultural performances, painting, sculpture exhibition, and art discussion by Dr Nityananda Gain and Professor Sufia Begum.

# Chittagong Open ART BIENNALE ends tomorrow



PHOTO: STAR

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