

WHAT'S ON

Live Concert
 Title: Baroque Music Concert
 Venue: National Theatre Hall, BSA
 Date: Tomorrow
 Time: 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Group Art Exhibition
 Title: Musicality in Wood
 Venue: Gallery Cosmos-
 Villa de Anjuman, New DOHS
 Mohakhali
 Date: February 22 – March 5

Exhibition
 Title: LAL - An Ode to the Moon & Menstrual Cycle
 Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
 Date: February 19 - 23
 Details: Jatra Biroti's Facebook page

Book Fair
 Title: Ekushey Boi Mela 2019
 Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan and Bangla Academy, Dhaka
 Date: February 1 – 28

Photography Exhibition
 Title: PARK – In place for public
 Venue: Counter Foto Mirpur Campus
 Date: February 10 – March 10
 Time: 10 am onwards

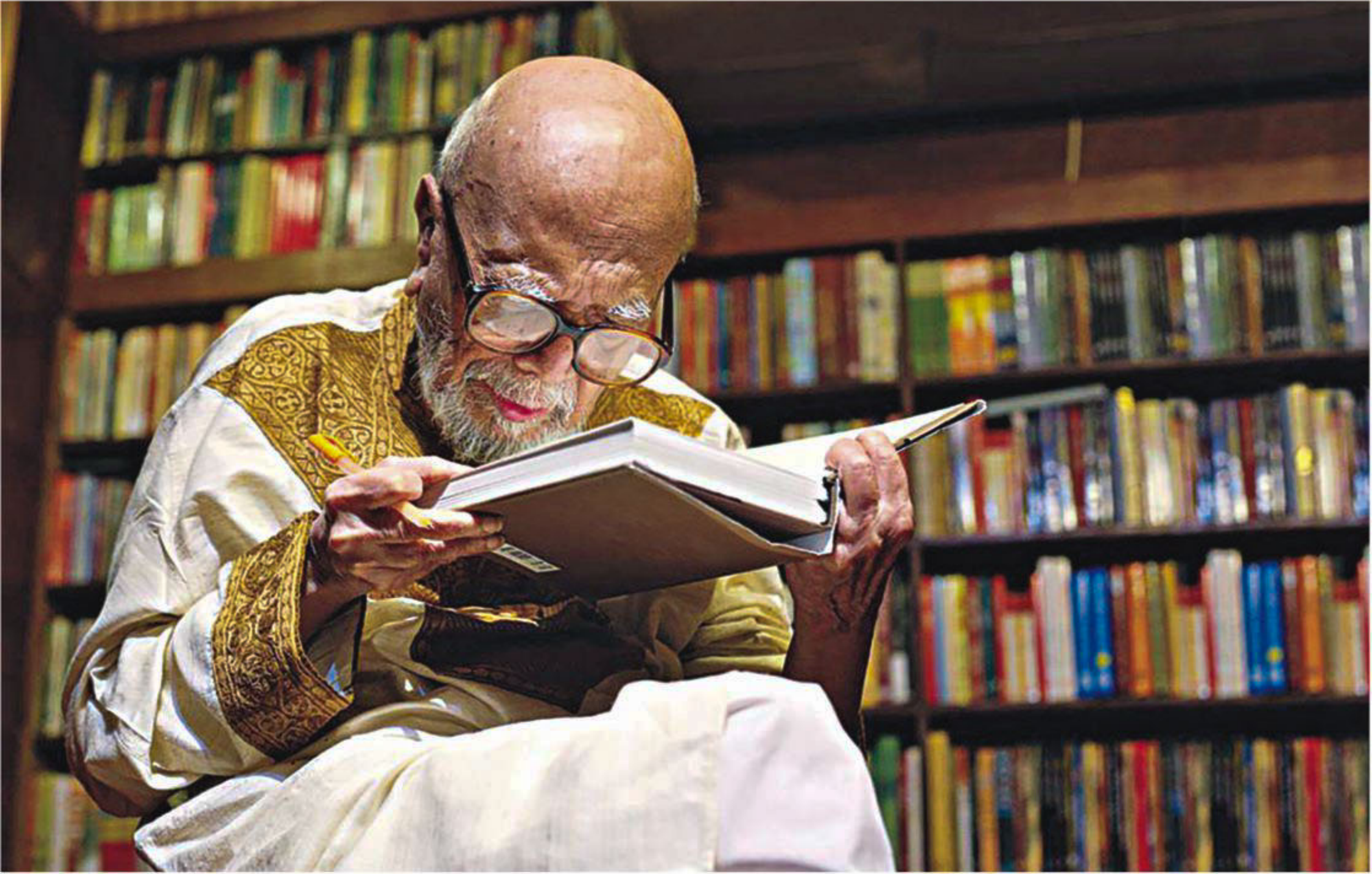


PHOTO: COURTESY OF BAATIGHAR CHATTOGRAM

REMEMBERING AL MAHMUD'S LITERARY CONTRIBUTION

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Al Mahmud was one of the most iconic poets in Bengali literature. In his early youth, he entered Dhaka city with a broken suitcase. The same man, through his masterful poetry, took us to a wonderful journey of imagery. Conscious readers of poetry have watched his magic over time, and were repeatedly spellbound. Al Mahmud is one of those poets who have contributed a lot to the progress of modern Bengali poetry.

Lok Lokantor, Kaler Kolos, Sonali Kabin, Mayabi Porda Duley Otho, Adristabadider Rannabanna, Bokhtiarer Ghora, Arabya Rojonir Rajhas and Doel o Doyita are some of his remarkable poetic works. However, the book which has been accepted by critics and connoisseurs as a classic piece is this Sonali Kabin.

Al Mahmud entered into the realm of poetry following the styles of Jasimuddin and Jibanananda Das. Jasimuddin uniquely depicted the picture of rustic Bengal in his poems. People of the agro-based Bengali Muslim society first saw their identity in literature through

Jasimuddin's work. Their sorrow, sufferings, poverty, hunger and love, depicted vividly in his poems, attracted not only the Bengali society, but also the entire world. Unlike Jasimuddin, Jibanananda Das depicted the scenic beauty of Bangladesh. Another difference between them is that Jasimuddin followed the language of rustic people in poetry, whereas Jibanananda Das was very sophisticated in using poetic dictions. Walking the paths of his two great forerunners, Al Mahmud had to struggle a lot to find his own identity. He finally reached his goal with the release of his third book -- Sonali Kabin.

Al Mahmud instigated the core of poetic appeal through wielding colloquial words from local dialects, creating a new trend. For Lok Lokantor and Kaler Kolos, Al Mahmud won the Bangla Academy Award in 1968. The initiation of relevant subjects, frequent use of colloquial dialects and outspoken approach to poetry fetched him international acclaim.

His literary creation, Upomohadesh, is considered to be one of the finest novels on the Liberation War. With the passing away of the major Bengali poet Mir Abdus

Shukur Al Mahmud, an epoch of Bengali poetry ceases to go further.

Al Mahmud, a Language Movement veteran, was a freedom fighter and was deeply involved with several literary and progressive movements. His writings also expose our socio-political issues providing the readers with an authentic perception of the real Bangladesh. His popular poem Nolonok is based on this theme.

He would regularly write for Chatushkon, Chaturanga, Mayukh and Krittibash. Several poems by Mahmud were published in Kobita, edited by Buddhadev Basu, creating uproar amidst the contemporary literary giants. In Dhaka, he started writing regularly for Sikandar Abu Zafar's Shamokal.

His other literary creations include Dinjapon, Ditiyo Bhangon, Pankourir Rokto, Nodir Bhitore Nodi, and Prem Prokritir Droho Ar Prarthonar Kobita amongst others.

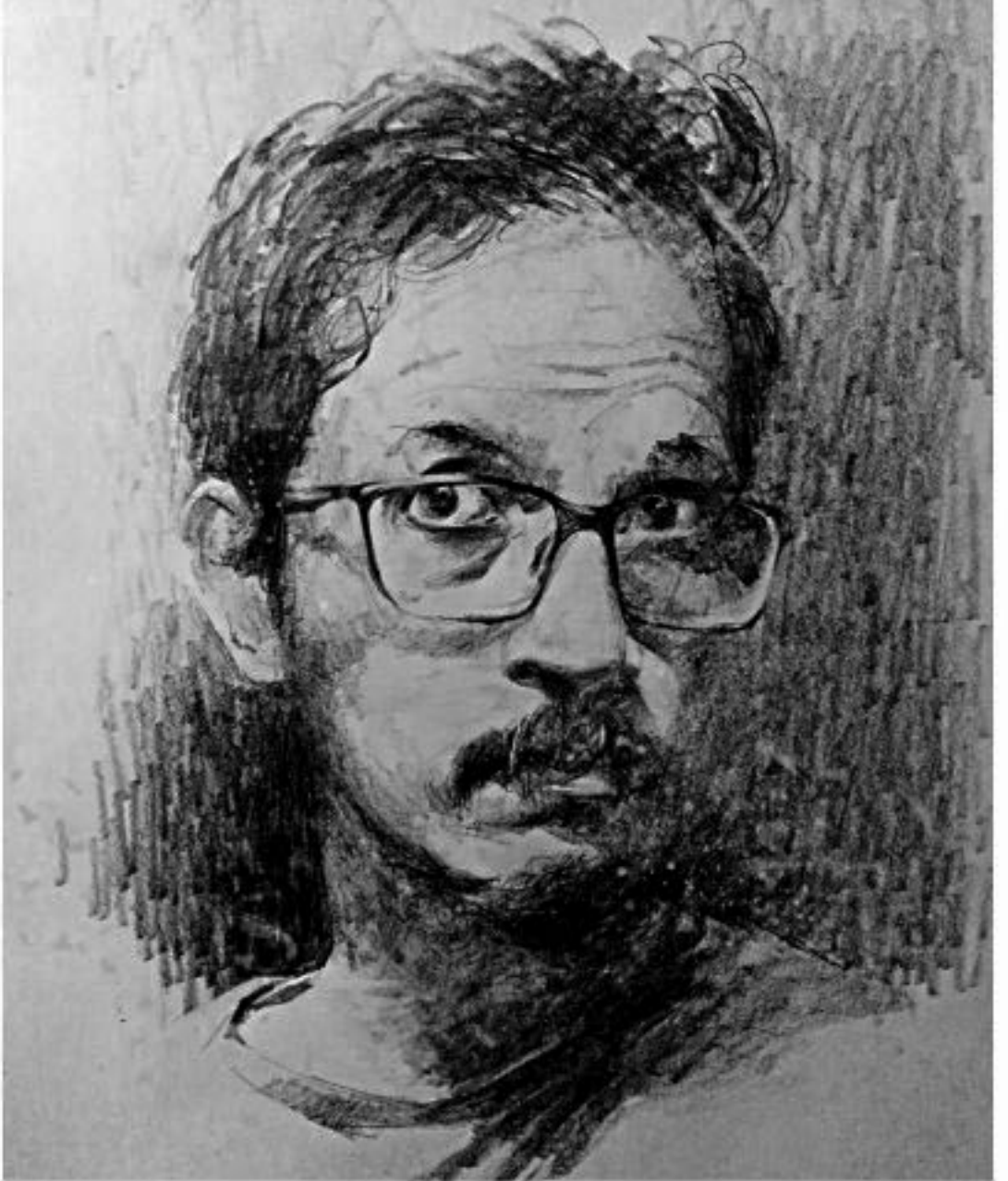
Born in Brahmanbaria, Al Mahmud was honoured with many awards including the Ekushey Padak, Kabi Jasimuddin Award, Joy Bangla Award, Humayun Kabir Memorial Award and Jibanananda Memorial Award in recognition of his contribution to Bengali literature.

PORTRAIT OF A COVER ARTIST

Sabyasachi Mistry

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Sabyasachi Mistry is considered as one of the most gifted contemporary cover artists in the industry today. Over the years, he has established himself as a concept artist and an illustrator. He has contributed to the cover designs of numerous books. In his artwork, the artist plays with light, structure and figure. His apt style is a hit among adults and children alike. In a conversation with The Daily Star, he shares his journey as a cover artist.



A self portrait by Sabyasachi Mistry.

What got you interested in doing book covers?

I always found book cover designing very fascinating, but I began working quite late. In fact, I'm one of last ones among my friends to take up the job.

What is the most important factor for your design?

The design is an abstract representation of the content, but it needs to be unique. Otherwise, the cover would not be coherent. For me, it is important to comprehend the text. If I cannot connect myself with the writing, it becomes difficult to design a cover.

Who do you admire among the contemporary artists?

Dhruba Esh and Sabyasachi Hazra are among my favourites. I find Shibu Kumer Shill's work fascinating as well. To my surprise, I see many young artists in the industry now, whose works are quite interesting and original.

How can an artist stand out?

Believing in what you do is the first step. When I began working, I was an old-school artist. I may have been influenced by others, but I quickly recovered from it. I used to closely observe the works of the artists who had the most impact on me, and I tried to avoid style. I believe it is best to try to be your own leader, rather than being someone else's follower.

What would be your suggestion for young artists?

Many of us assume that digital platforms automatically make someone a good artist. It is not true. Those are just tools and mediums you use. The idea and the concept are the most important factors. Artists should spend time thinking about their designs. I also think they should come out of the glamour of only the book industry, because an artist always has to be a multitasker. If cover design becomes the sole profession, then the works are bound to be ordinary. I would humbly request them to aim for quality, not quantity.



PHOTO: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA

Abdul Gaffar Babu's 'Pixel of Emotion' at AFD

MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

Artist Abdul Gaffar Babu's third solo exhibition, titled Pixel of Emotion, is currently taking place at Allaince Française de Dhaka (AFD). The artist is an MFA graduate in Printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka.

Gaffar's artworks may be categorised as psychedelic, surreal and op-art. It is interesting to observe elements of the contemporary art evolution that is taking place in the western world, and elsewhere in Gaffar's body of work. For a long time, Bangladeshi artists have been inclined to stay within the traditional realms of making art, which gave rise to an art culture that is distinct and separate from the rest of the world. Nowadays however, many new and upcoming artists dare to stray away from the conservative modes of creating art and delving into a much more exciting and experimental process. This is inspiring for the artists as well as the art lovers who crave to see the broadening of the art sphere in Bangladesh.

Many of the subjects in Gaffar's art are common in still-life paintings. Yet, he has chosen to take those subjects and paint them in his own style of geometric patterns and line art, which he tweaks to

create illusions as well as portray shape, depth and form. It is also apparent that the artist is affected by many of the social and moral issues of being a citizen in today's world. Some artworks which depict his reflections of modern society include a drawing of a man's head within which lies a lock and many keys, none of which seem to be the one to open the lock. Another painting shows wild animals baring their sharp teeth encircling a human. A particularly moving painting is one that seems to be a mesh of his signature checkered pattern, but upon close observation, reveals a bird wearing a gas mask.

Gaffar's use of colour is clever, subtle and effective. On many occasions, he turns to somber hues of brown and grey, black and white. His style and subjects alone create a striking enough effect and forces the viewer to stop and stare.

The artist believes that it is his duty to show something new with every solo exhibition. He has developed this body of work over five years. He included installations made out of a curtain of beads which incorporate black and white to spell out the words, 'Peace' and 'Love'. He believes that much of what we see around us is inevitably filtered through our emotions. The exhibition will run till February 22.

Pandit Barin Mazumder Music Fest Concludes

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

In 1963, music exponent, educationist and Ekushey Padak winner Pandit Barin Mazumder, founded the Government Music College in Agargaon, Dhaka. To commemorate the 98th birth anniversary of the maestro, Government Music College recently organised a two-day long music festival titled Pandit Barin Mazumder Sangeet Utshab 2019, at its premises.

The festival was inaugurated by Honourable Education Minister, Dr Dipu

Moni, MP, who spoke at the event as the chief guest. Special guests of the event included Member of Parliament, Al Haj Sadek Hossain Khokon; Senior Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education Division, Md Soharab Hossain; and Director General of Primary and Secondary Education Division, Professor Dr Syed Golam Farukh. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by the Principal of the college, Professor Krishti Hefaz.

The festival began with the song Shurer Badhone Bedhey Nijেকে, performed by the

students of Government Music College. Students of music departments from different universities including the University of Dhaka, University of Rajshahi, University of Development Alternative (UODA) and Chhayanaut performed at the event.

The festival also featured renowned musicians Asit Dey, Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, Tapan Mahmud, Yeakub Ali Khan, Mujib Pardeshi, Lily Islam, and Priyanka Gope, among others. Discussions on various topics, including women's contribution to folk music, also took place.



Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni (Centre) was the chief guest at the event.

PHOTO: COURTESY