

In search of people's history

A rendezvous with Syed Manzoorul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People's history is more important than state-endorsed narratives, said prominent writer and former Dhaka University Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam yesterday.

"All my stories are collected from people's lives, from the people on the margins," he shared, during an interactive discussion on his book, *Bela Obelar Golpo*, a collection of 13 stories published by Prothoma.

The virtual discussion was the fourth instalment in a lecture series titled "Bidyapeeth Baithaki: Antaranga Alapey Gunijan", organised by Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation.

"In the 80s, journalist Monajat Uddin came to me and said, write the people's history of the Liberation War. I went with him to Rangpur and spoke to a mother who had lost her son in the war -- over a goat," recalled Islam.

"She told me that her son was still alive -- that he lived in the stars," he remembered. "I still get chills down my spine when I recall that story."

"We need to know the people's history. We know the history of zamindars, but the people on whose backs their buildings were built are lost from the archives," he added.

At the discussion, in regards to Dhaka University's 100 years of founding, he said the institution generated a thirst for knowledge "like the Renaissance did for Europe."

"Dhaka University has made significant contributions to improving women's education in the country," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



These artworks by Mustafa Monowar (1), Pranesh Mandal (2), Debdas Chakraborty (3), Ranjit Kumar Neogi (4), Nitun Kundu (5), Biren Shome (6), and Abul Barok Alvi (7), which depict the horrors of genocide committed by the Pakistan army and its collaborators in 1971, were donated to the Liberation War Museum yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY



'Recognise artists who campaigned for independence'

Eminent citizens donate war-time memorabilia to Liberation War Museum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a ceremony yesterday stressed the need for state recognition of artists and writers who campaigned for independence, which bolstered Bangladesh's fight for liberation.

While freedom fighters fought the enemies on the battlefield, such indirect contributions were also significant for the country's independence, they said.

The ceremony was organised by the Liberation War Museum at its auditorium in the capital's Agargaon in which eminent citizens donated war-time memorabilia to the museum, maintaining social-distancing and health guidelines.

Eminent citizens included war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir, rights activist Sultana Kamal and Prof Anisuzzaman's wife Siddiqua Zaman.

Shahriar Kabir handed over seven oil paintings on the Liberation War from his personal collection.

The artworks were painted by noted artists Mustafa Monowar, Debdas Chakraborty, Abul Barok Alvi, Biren Shome, Ranjit Kumar Neogi, Pranesh Mandal, and Nitun Kundu.

The artworks depict the horrors of genocide committed by the Pakistan army and its collaborators,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

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