

'Rebuilding the Nation' concert to celebrate the spirit of July Uprising

A massive open-air concert titled *Rebuilding the Nation*, under the banner of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (SAD), is scheduled for tomorrow at the Sher-E-Bangla Nagar in Agargaon, Dhaka, the former venue of the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF).

The concert, inspired by the spirit of the July Uprising, will feature performances by renowned rockstar Nagar Baul James and popular bands including Artcell, Chirkut, Shonar Bangla Circus, Bengal Symphony, Bangla Five, Cryptic Fate, and Kureghor, among others.

The concert aims to unite the youth for change through music. At a February 19 press



conference, organisers announced an expected attendance in the hundreds of thousands, with preparations underway for the open-to-all event.

THE ANTHEM OF DEFIANCE

How 'Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano' came to be

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

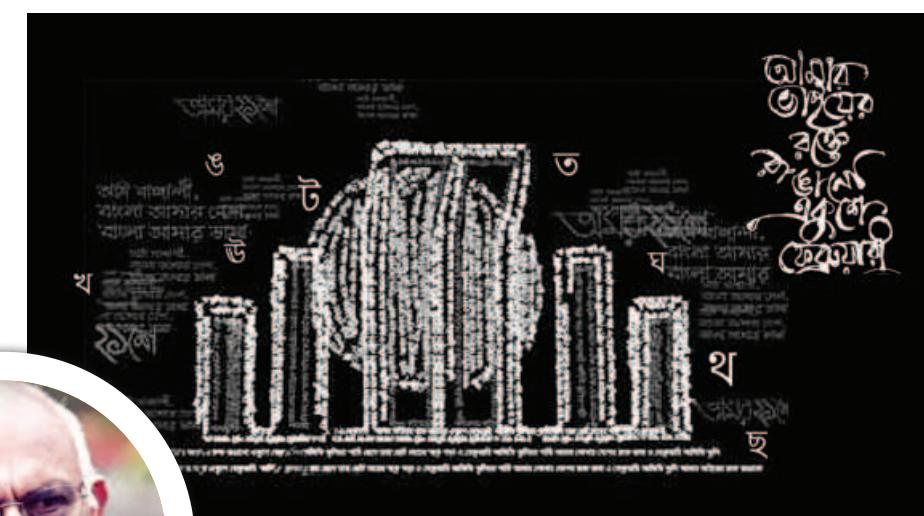
On this very day on February 21, 1952, the streets of Dhaka became a battlefield, soaked with the blood of young martyrs, who stood resolute in the face of oppressive authority, demanding the right to speak their mother tongue, Bangla. It was a day that would carve itself into the collective memory of the Bengali people—a day when the language movement claimed its sacred place in history, and shaped the identity of the country, as a nation.

It was in the shadow of that fateful day that legendary lyricist and poet Abdul Gaffar Choudhury, then a young student and translator, found himself in the hospital, stepping carefully over the bodies of the wounded, as the echo of gunfire was still ringing in his ears. The scene before him was unimaginable: in the sterile quiet of the Dhaka Medical College outpatient ward, the lifeless body of Rafiq Uddin Ahmed lay sprawled on the cold floor, a symbol of the unyielding spirit extinguished in the struggle for something as simple and as profound as words of a certain language.

In that haunting moment, Abdul Gaffar Choudhury was struck by a sorrow so deep it seemed to bleed from his very bones. Looking at the martyr, he felt an inexplicable connection—Rafiq, though a stranger, was his brother, his kin, someone whose sacrifice transcended the individual and became the essence of a cause. It was in this gut-wrenching grief that the first two lines of what would become an anthem of the movement rose within him, words as raw as the blood that soaked the ground outside:

"Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushey February, ami ki bhulite pari?"

The weight of the tragedy settled in



PHOTOS: COLLECTED | VISUAL: DOWEL BISWAS

Choudhury's heart, but so did a fire—an urgency to immortalise the day, to give voice to the bloodshed, the tears, the unwavering demand for justice. Yet, as he

shared these lines with his friend Syed Ahmad Hossain, the poet was reluctant to let the words escape too quickly. It was not the kind of poem that could be written casually, standing on a crowded street corner. But Hossain's persistence was relentless, urging him to capture the poem before it slipped away like so many fleeting thoughts.

Choudhury, in the chaotic aftermath of the protests and amid the uncertainty of curfews and shutdowns, found himself on a journey through the alleys of Dhaka, desperately clutching his words. In the solitude of his temporary residence, the poem began to take shape. The verses seeped out, a testament to the violence and beauty of a people united by language, a people whose loss would never be forgotten.

Though the poem was still not finished, it was shared, quietly at first, with a handful

of students, distributed in leaflets that captured the anger and sorrow of a nation in mourning. The words spread like wildfire through the city, rising against the heavy hand of oppression.

As the song found its voice, it was embraced by the people as something more than just a memorial—it became the pulse of a revolution. The iconic tune composed by Altaf Mahmud, and later immortalised in films and performances, carried the weight of those who had given everything.

In 2006, BBC Bangla ranked it as the third greatest Bengali song of all time, a recognition of its earnest impact on the Bengali identity.

Through the years, the poem's legacy has only deepened, transcending generations and borders, carried in translations, and echoed in the hearts of those who hear it, no matter where they are in the world.

In this simple yet profound song, the words of Abdul Gaffar Choudhury continue to remind us: Can we ever forget?

This article is based on a piece originally written by Ahmad Istiak and published in The Daily Star on February 21, 2023.

'Peyarar Subash' wins Hiralal Sen Award 1431



Nurul Alam Atique's film *Peyarar Subash* has been honoured with the prestigious Hiralal Sen Award 1431 at the Amar Bhashar Chalchitra Utsab, organised by the Dhaka University Film Society (DUFFS). Shamol Shishir received the award on behalf of the director from Habiba Rahman, assistant professor at Dhaka University.

The festival nominated four films for the award, including *Kajol Rekha*, *Nakshi Kanthar Jamin*, and *Priyo Maloti*. *Peyarar Subash* received the Best Editing Award, while *Kajol Rekha* won Best Screenplay, *Priyo Maloti* earned Best Sound Design, and *Nakshi Kanthar Jamin* was honoured with Best Cinematography.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Sheeter Adda': Krishnokoli o Gaaner Dol live

Dhaka Sessions, in collaboration with Jatra Biroti, presents *Sheeter Adda* featuring Krishnokoli o Gaaner Dol.

Tomorrow, the celebrated artiste Krishnokoli will perform her popular tracks, including *Nai Hoye Jai, Ichchhe Moton*, and *Bondhu Tomar*, among others. The event has been designed to immerse the audience in an evening of soulful music.

Date: Saturday | February 22
Time: 7:15pm-9pm
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani



NEWS

SC restores appointment

FROM PAGE 16
by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, delivered the verdict after hearing arguments on the appeals.

With this verdict, the 1,137 cadres can join service with seniority in 90 days, appellants' lawyers Md Salahuddin Dolon and Mohammad Shishir Manir told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Public Service Commission's (PSC) lawyer Muhammad Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan said his client may take necessary steps after receiving the full text of the verdict.

Barrister Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal also appeared for the candidates while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state during the hearing of the appeals.

On September 1, 2007, during the tenure of the caretaker government, the PSC, cancelled the first viva voce results of 27th BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examinations on charges of gross irregularities, including question leaks and corruption. A total of 3,567

Sylhet MC College student beaten up by 'Shibir activists'

FROM PAGE 16
Islamia, a student organisation.

Mizanur is also an activist of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Talking to reporters, Juned Ahmed, a master's student of the college's Bangla department, who was present during the attack, said two days ago, Riyad commented on a post regarding a recent incident at Kuet, stating that those who engaged in disorderly conduct in the past and those doing it now are the same.

"Around midnight, a total of 12 to 13 Chhattri Shibir activists entered our room and started questioning Riyad about his comment," said Juned, also assistant organising secretary of the college unit of Talamiz.

During the altercation over the issue, the Shibir men began beating Riyad with iron rods, he said.

Juned said the college unit secretary of Chhattri Shibir arrived at the scene during the attack.

"Under his directive, the attackers took away our mobile phones and money," said Juned. "Riyad is now receiving treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital," Juned said.

Denying the allegation, Jawhar

candidates passed that oral examination.

Challenging this decision, several candidates filed a writ petition with the HC.

Following the petition, an HC bench led by Justice Abdur Rashid on July 3, 2008, declared the PSC's decision to cancel the first oral examination legal.

After the HC verdict, the oral test was held for the second time.

Candidates who failed the second test filed another writ petition with the HC in 2008 challenging the legality of the second viva voce.

Following this petition, an HC bench headed by Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury on November 11, 2009, declared the second oral examination illegal and ordered the government to appoint those candidates who passed the first oral exam.

The verdict also said the people who joined the service on the basis of the second oral exam would remain in service, and the seniority of the writ petitioners would be determined yesterday.

After holding a hearing of the review petitions, the Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on November 7 last year allowed the petitioners to move appeals before this court against its July 11, 2010 judgement.

In continuation of the legal proceedings, the Appellate Division concluded the hearing on the appeals on February 19 and delivered the judgement yesterday.

According to law.

However, after hearing three appeals filed by the government, the Appellate Division, headed by the then Chief Justice Mohamad Fazlul Karim (now deceased), on July 11, 2010, upheld the HC verdict that cancelled the first oral examination of the 27th BCS.

At the same time, the apex court also scrapped the HC verdict delivered on November 11, 2009.

Three separate review petitions were then filed with the Appellate Division challenging the verdict delivered by this court on July 11, 2010.

After holding a hearing of the review petitions, the Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on November 7 last year allowed the petitioners to move appeals before this court against its July 11, 2010 judgement.

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