

Celebrating the Power of Darkness

Centre for Asian Theatre presents Tagore's *Raja (The King of the Dark Chamber)*

By Saima Islam

THE First day of spring, man is at play with God, celebrating Him in His supreme beauty. When the 'formless' appears in the form of the flower, the fruit, when all conflicts and contradictions of life are reconciled, knowledge, love and action harmonised, pleasure and pain become one in beauty... this is how Nalla Azad, the director of 'Raja', described the dawn that features the opening scene of the play. And amazingly, the philosophical overtone of the above description of dawn was clearly felt in the opening scene of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Raja'.

Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) presented an excellent production of 'Raja' on 5 and 6 April at the Shaukat Osman Auditorium, Public Library, Shahabag, Dhaka. The play was directed by Nalla Azad from University of California, Los Angeles, who without doubt left a mark of perfection in her work.

'Raja' is the story of Queen Sudarsana who got married to the King (Raja) in her girlhood. She meets the Raja every day in a dark chamber but she has never seen him. The queen is very eager to see how the King looks like. Raja has a maid called Surangama, who looks after the queen.

The queen insists to see the king in the broad daylight. In response he says that he will appear during the spring festival, among thousands of people, and the queen has to recognize him from the crowd.

Subjects of the king have never seen him. Kings from different countries were invited to the festival and seeing no King they start questioning whether there is one or not. Kanchiraj (the king of Kanchi) is sure that there is no king.

Meanwhile, taking the advantage of the king's absence, Subarna, a handsome young gambler, appears at festival and

pretends to be the king of the country. Only the cunning Kanchiraj recognizes the charade under Subarna's false appearance. However, Kanchiraj wants Queen Sudarsana and decides to use Subarna to serve his purpose.

In the spring festival, Queen Sudarsana sees the handsome Subarna and makes the mistake of thinking that he is her king, and sends the maid Rohini to Subarna with flowers of worship in a lotus leaf.

Hoping to get hold of Sudarsana, Kanchiraj sets fire to the flower garden near the palace where the festival was

unless really prepared? The darkness that you see today and that has shaken your soul will one day be your solace and salvation'.

In these words, lies the quintessence of Tagore's philosophy. One has to prepare oneself to embrace the infinite, but that power has to come from within. The power lies in letting it go, not in longing for something, which prepares one to recognize the true beauty and see the light in darkness. But Sudarsana is not yet prepared to understand the beauty in its spiritual form. She leaves the king's palace with her false

his umbrella thinking that it might attract Sudarsana towards him. Seeing Subarna in such a condition Sudarsana realizes her mistake of choosing a worthless metal as gold just by its glittering appearance.

Meanwhile the real King comes and regains power over the situation but does not come to take Sudarsana. The entire situation makes Sudarsana understand the true meaning of love, sacrifice, beauty - hence she finds the power of spirit and understands that she could only find the king when she can give herself totally up to him.

'Raja is a play with several layers of brilliance' says the director. And the production surely unfolded a brilliant interpretation. The play will take one to a spiritual journey. And then again, it will never cease to entertain.

The review would remain unfinished if the energetic performance of the whole crew is not mentioned. The songs, choreography, dress design, lighting, and the music were all blended in nicely to complement the whole production.

The interpretation of a universal philosophy in a modern way must have been very difficult, but the message came out spontaneously. The hard work and dedication of everyone involved in the production could easily be traced in its success.

The spring outside and the celebration of the spring festival in the play added to the appeal of the whole production.

The cast includes, Tahmina Sharif as Sudarsana, Rokeya Rafique Baby as Surangama, Md Delwar Hossain Dulu as Thakurdada, Md Shahadat Hossain as Subarna, Kazi Anisul Haq as Kanchiraj and others.

The play will be staged in Pabna on April 10, 11 and 12, in Rangpur and Bogra on April 15, 16 and 17, in Chittagong on April 20, 21 and 22, and at the Guide House auditorium in Dhaka, on April 28.



(From left) Sabina Sultana (Rohini) and Tahmina Sharif (Sudarsana) in a scene from 'Raja'.

taking place but the fire started spreading in all directions. Seeing the fire, Sudarsana runs out and asks the fake king, Subarna, to save her life. In response Subarna confesses that he is not the real king. And that leaves Sudarsana spellbound with shame and remorse.

At that moment the Raja comes and assures the queen of her safety but, then, Sudarsana can only say: '...Oh, you are dark and terrible as the everlasting night... I could not look on you anymore.'

In reply the king says: 'Didn't I warn you that you would not bear the sight of me

sense of pride and vanity. Surangama accompanies her.

The word spreads that Sudarsana has left her husband's house Kanchiraj, and other kings take this chance to get hold of Sudarsana. As a result, a war breaks out among seven kings. The kings get together and defeat Sudarsana's father, Kannayakubjaraj. Since all the seven kings were suitors for Sudarsana, it was decided that he should win her, whom Sudarsana in a Shayambar meeting (event to select one's bridegroom) will give her garland and choose. In the meeting, Kanchiraj asks Subarna to hold

Baisakh Celebrations

Traditional extravaganza begins at Shishu Academy premises on Friday

By M Kamal Nasser

B AISHAKHI Mela, a traditional fair marking the Bangla New Year will begin on the Bangladesh Shishu Academy premises on the Pahela Baishakh (the 1st day of the Bangla month Baishakh).

This is for the first time that the mela is going to be held in a new venue at Shishu Academy instead of its usual site - the Dhanmondi Math (Dhanmondi playground). Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed is likely to inaugurate the mela organised by BSCIC.

The week-long mela will remain open for the visitors everyday from 11 am to 8 pm.

Various handicraft and small and cottage industries establishments including those from the hill districts and remote rural areas of the country are expected to take part in the mela, BSCIC, the organiser of the mela, told The Daily Star.

This year, mela will be held in a smaller area with respect to earlier venues. As a result member of stalls will obviously

be lesser. A total of 170 to 200 stalls will be erected, due to space constraints. In previous years as many as 600 to 700 stalls were set up in the wider space at the Dhanmondi playground, a source of the organisers told The Daily Star. The stalls will be allotted on the basis of first come first serve. The stalls with an space area measuring 8x8' (ie eight feet long and eight feet width). The rent for each stall has been fixed at Taka 2500/- (two thousand five hundred).

Apart from stalls of various kinds of small, cottage industries and handicrafts, a few stalls with light food, refreshments will also be there in the fair, it has been learnt. Apart from stalls of different handicrafts, small and cottage industries establishments individuals will also take part in the mela.

According to a source in the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), the organiser of the mela informed different kinds of handicrafts products made of

bamboo, cane, clay brass, rope, wood will be the main attraction of the mela. Apart from it different kinds of food items like *pitha* (cake) and *Khai Chira*, Muri Moa etc. will be available in the mela.

In every products, the Bangladeshi tradition and culture will be reflected, the source said. The main objective of such a mela is to make familiar the urban people with the indigenous products which are very much our own and reflection of our culture, heritage and tradition, said an organiser of the mela. Such a mela, will no doubt very much helpful for the new generations who are quite ignorant of rural areas, life of the rural people, products of villages - specially our tradition, culture which are about to be lost. Apart from it, such a mela, according to the organiser, play a vital role in creating interest and enthusiasm among their producer and thus help its expansion and wider escape for marketing of the products which are put on for display and sale, the source added.

event

A Perfect Blend of Food And Fun

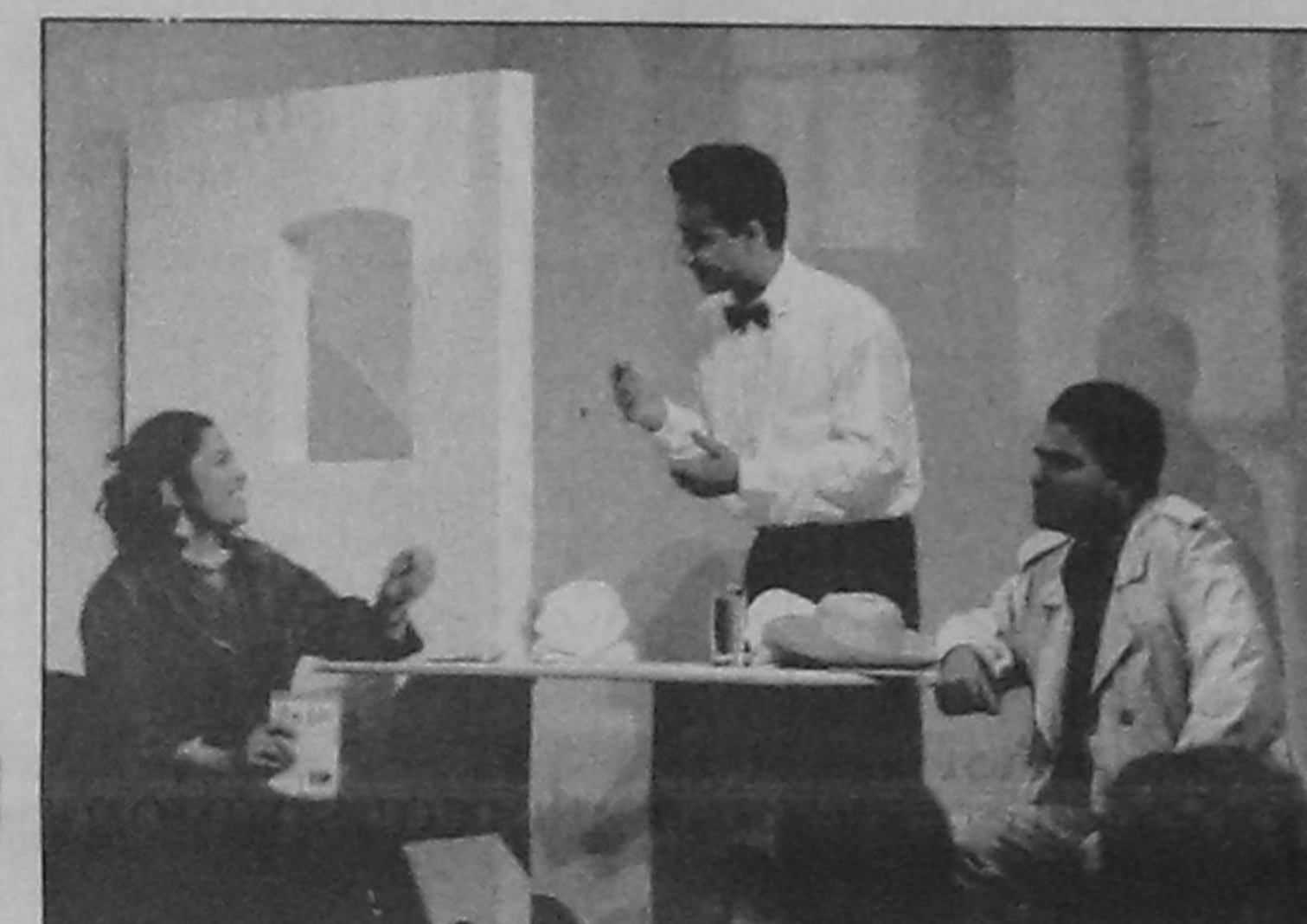
Inauguration of a different kind of restaurant

By Cultural Correspondent

THERE are a handful of places where the Dhakaites can go and have an entertaining time out. Asparagus, a theatre restaurant combines food and fun together to create the perfect hang around place for the whole family.

The restaurant was inaugurated on March 30. Sayeed Ahmed, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, inaugurated this unique restaurant. Eminent playwright and art critic Sayeed Ahmed was present as the chief guest.

A play based on W. Somerset Maugham's 'The Luncheon' was selected to be performed on the inaugural function. A splendid choice for a theatre restaurant.



(From left) Muneera Iusuf Memei, Tareq Iqbal and Shams Shumon in a scene of 'The Luncheon'.

TV Guide

Sunday 9th April
(All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme)

BBC

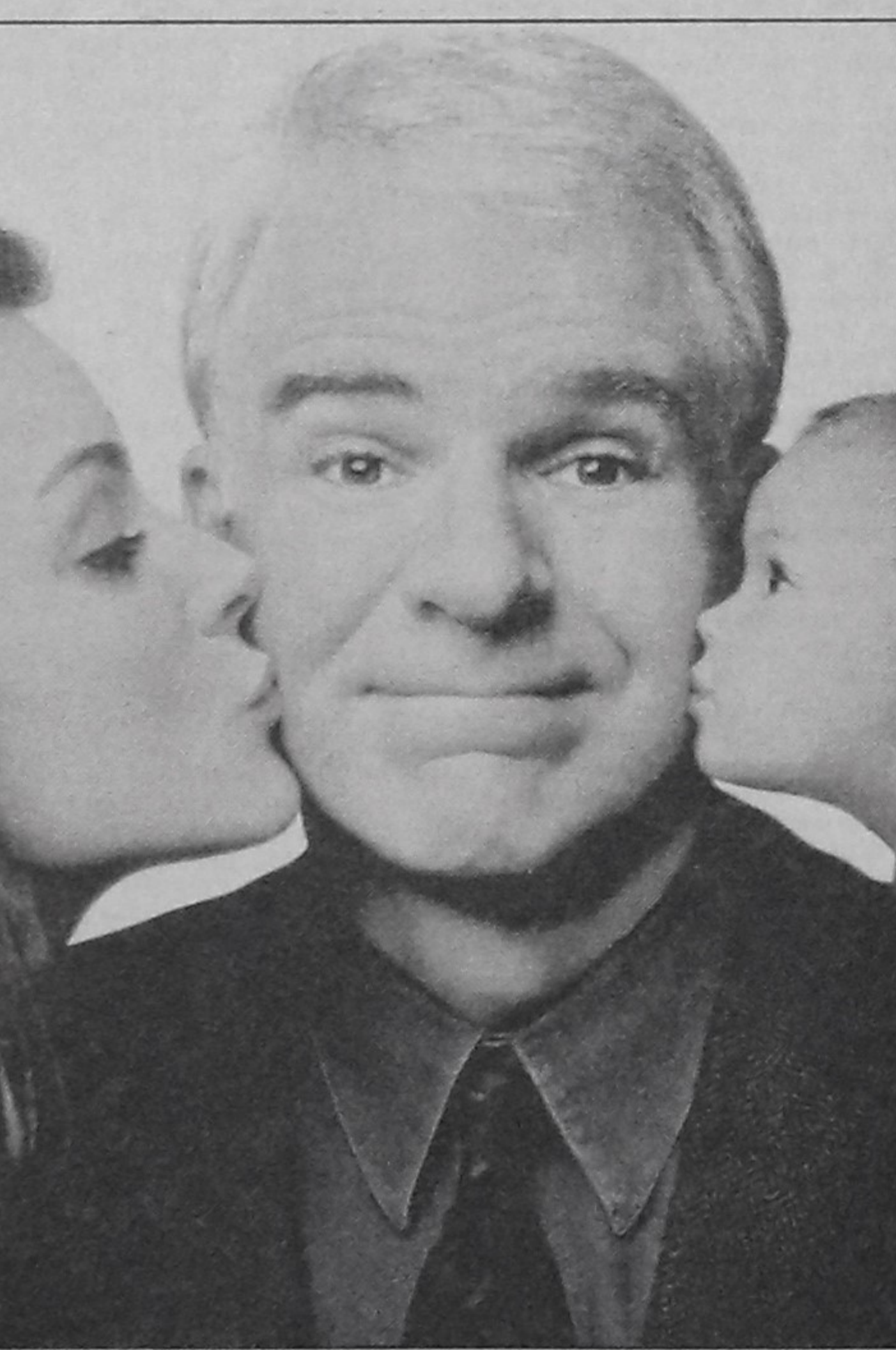
6:00 BBC World News Headlines 6:30 World Living: Holiday 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 Australia Direct 8:00 BBC World News 8:30 Correspondent #2/2- The Corsica Rebellion 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 This Week 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Wheels 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 India Business Report 12:00 BBC World News 12:30 Wild World: Face To Face India (Presenter- Karan Thapar) 1:00 BBC World News 1:30 Moneywise (Presenter- Sucharita Ghosh) 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 This Week 3:00 BBC World News 3:10 Correspondent- Licence To Kill 4:00 BBC World News 4:30 Click Online (Pres-Stephen Cole) 5:00 BBC World News 5:30 Australia Direct 6:00 BBC World News Headlines- 6:10 Full Circle #2/10- Japan And Korea 7:00 BBC World News 7:30 Top Gear 8:00 BBC World News 8:10 Dateline London 9:00 BBC World News 9:10 Horizon: Antarctica- The Ice Lives 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 India Business Report 11:00 BBC World News 11:10 Correspondent- Licence To Kill 12:00 BBC World News Headlines 12:30 Australia Direct 1:00 BBC World News 1:10 Full Circle #2/10- Japan And Korea 2:00 World News 2:30 Top Gear 3:00 World News 3:30 Dateline London 4:00 BBC World Newsdesk Inc. World Report / 24 Hours

CHANNEL [V]

7:30 [V] Hit Machine 11:30 [V] Sunday Special 12:30 [V] Hit Machine 1:00 [V] Line Lagao 1:30 [V] Hit Machine 2:30 [V] The Ticket 3:00 [V] Lunch Pad 3:30 [V] Karaoke 4:00 [V] Hit Machine 5:30 [V] Tonight 6:00 [V] Dares You 6:30 [V] Hit Machine 8:30 [V] Sunday Special 9:30 [V] Hit Machine 10:30 [V] Mainstage 11:30 [V] Billboard US Countdown 12:30 [V] Hit Machine

STAR PLUS

6:30 Ninnad 7:30 Good Morning India (News, Ent.) 8:30 Spiderman 9:00 Robocop 9:30 Ninja Turtles 10:00 Power Rangers 10:30 Janata Ki Adalat 11:00 Fast Track 11:30 Amul India Show 12:00 Master Card-Family Fortune rpt. 12:30 India



Father of the Bride on Star Movies at 10:00 PM

Business week 1:00 The Great Escape 1:30 Star Sunday Lunch 2:00 Mega Hit Parade 3:30 Viewpoint 2:40 Sunday Tea Time Film: Kabhi Kabhi (Amritabha, Rakhee, Shashi Kapoor, Waheeda Rehman, Rishi Kapoor, Neetu Singh) 6:00 Jubilee Plus 6:30 Zindagi 7:00 Zara Hat Ke Zara Bach Ke 7:30 Serial: Gumrah 8:00 Katha Sagar 8:30 Bakeman's Ooh La La 9:30 STAR News Sunday (Eng) 10:30 Saboot 11:30 Janata Ki Adalat 12:00 Mega Hit Parade 12:30 Sart News Sunday 1:30 India Business week 2:00 Bakeman's Ooh La La 3:00 Fast Track 3:30 Master Card-Family Fortune rpt 4:00 The Great Escape 4:30 Star Sunday Lunch 5:00 Ninnad 6:00 Travel Asia

STAR WORLD

7:00 Crystal Maze 8:00 Mr. Belvedere 8:30 Lassie 9:00 The Adventures of Sinbad 10:00 Small Wonder 10:30 Doogie Howser 11:00 Series: Xena: Warrior Princess 12:00 Series:

STAR MOVIES

7:15 Comedy: Love At Stake (15) 8:45 Action: Goldeneye (Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean, Izabella Scorupcu, Famke Janssen, Robbie Coltrane) (15)

11:00 Bhaskar Ghose Show 11:30 Sunday Best: Big Business (12) 1:30 Thriller: Black Death (*Kate Jackson, Howard Hesseman, Jeffrey Nordling) (12) 3:30 Star Kids Club: Last Great Warrior (PG) 5:30 Thriller: Hard Rain (*Morgan Freeman, Christian Slater, Randy Quaid, Minnie Driver) (15) 7:30 Drama: Romeo Is Bleeding (15) 9:30 Starbiz 10:00 Sunday Night Premiere: Father of the Bride-2 (*Steve Martin, Diane Keaton, Kimberly Williams, Martin Short) (G) 12:15 Comedy: Big Business (12) 2:15 Action: Goldeneye (*Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean, Izabella Scorupcu, Famke Janssen, Robbie Coltrane) (15)

Sony Max

6:30 Rangela Re 7:00 Chartbusters 7:30 Music Mantra 8:00 Film Show: 11:00 Chartbusters 11:30 Music Mantra 12:00 India Down Under 1:00 Film Show: 4:00 Chartbusters 4:30 Music Mantra 5:00 Film Show: 8:00 Chartbusters 8:30 Music Mantra 9:00 Harmony 9:30 Film Show: 12:30 Film Show: 3:30 Film Show:

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

6:30 Ushuaia 7:30 Travelers-8:30 Challenge 9:30 Adventure 10:30 Naturequest 11:00 Crocodile Hunter's Croc Files 11:30 Buck Staghorn's Animal Bites 12:00 Jaws and Claws 12:30 Blue Reef 1:00 Two Worlds 1:30 Discovery Profile-Series 7:30 India Hour: Gulsitan 8:30 Wild Discovery 9:30 Science Frontiers 10:30 Discovery Showcase 11:30 Discovery Profile-Series 12:30 Wild discovery- 1:30 Science Frontiers 2:30 Discovery Showcase 3:30 Discovery Profile-Series 4:30 Splat 5:00 Beyond 2000 5:30 Discovery Magazine

ALPHA TV

6:30 Alaap 7:00 Kee Darun Dreshow 7:30 Monihaar 8:00 Serial: Amaar Tumi 8:30 Serial: Reen 9:00 Shyaola (*Kushal Banerjee, Pallob, Sab-bosachi, Biplob Chatargee) 9:30 Serial: Ekushe Pa 10:30 Serial: Sanghaat 11:00 Serial: Amaa Probashini 11:30 Zee Jalsa 12:00 Serial: Shoni-Robi Mojar Chobi #4 12:30 Serial: Half Chocolate #6 1:00 Serial: Nil Chander Alo 1:30 Khana Khazana 2:00 Serial: Guest House 2:30 Bangla Movie- Bolidan 3:00 Bharat Bhromon 5:30 Asian Sky Shop 6:00 Serial: Mukhoshor Antara Ley

(*Alpona Gowsami) 6:30 Serial: Memsahab 7:00 Serial: Parinita 7:30 News In Bangali 8:00 Serial: Shoni-Robi Mojar Chobi #5 8:30 Kichu Smriti Kichu Gaan 9:00 Serial: Agni Yuger Padatik 9:30 Serial: Iskabanar Bibi (*Indrani, Shila Dittay) 10:00 News In Bangali 10:30 Serial: Ekushe Pa 11:00 Serial: Ek Akasher Niche 11:30 Sanghaat 12:00 Serial: Amaa Probashini #6 12:30 Bharat Bhromon 1:00 Grhosajja 1:30 Bangla Movie- Bolidan 4:00 Serial: Memsahab 4:30 Serial: Shoni-Robi Mojar Chobi #5

National Geographic

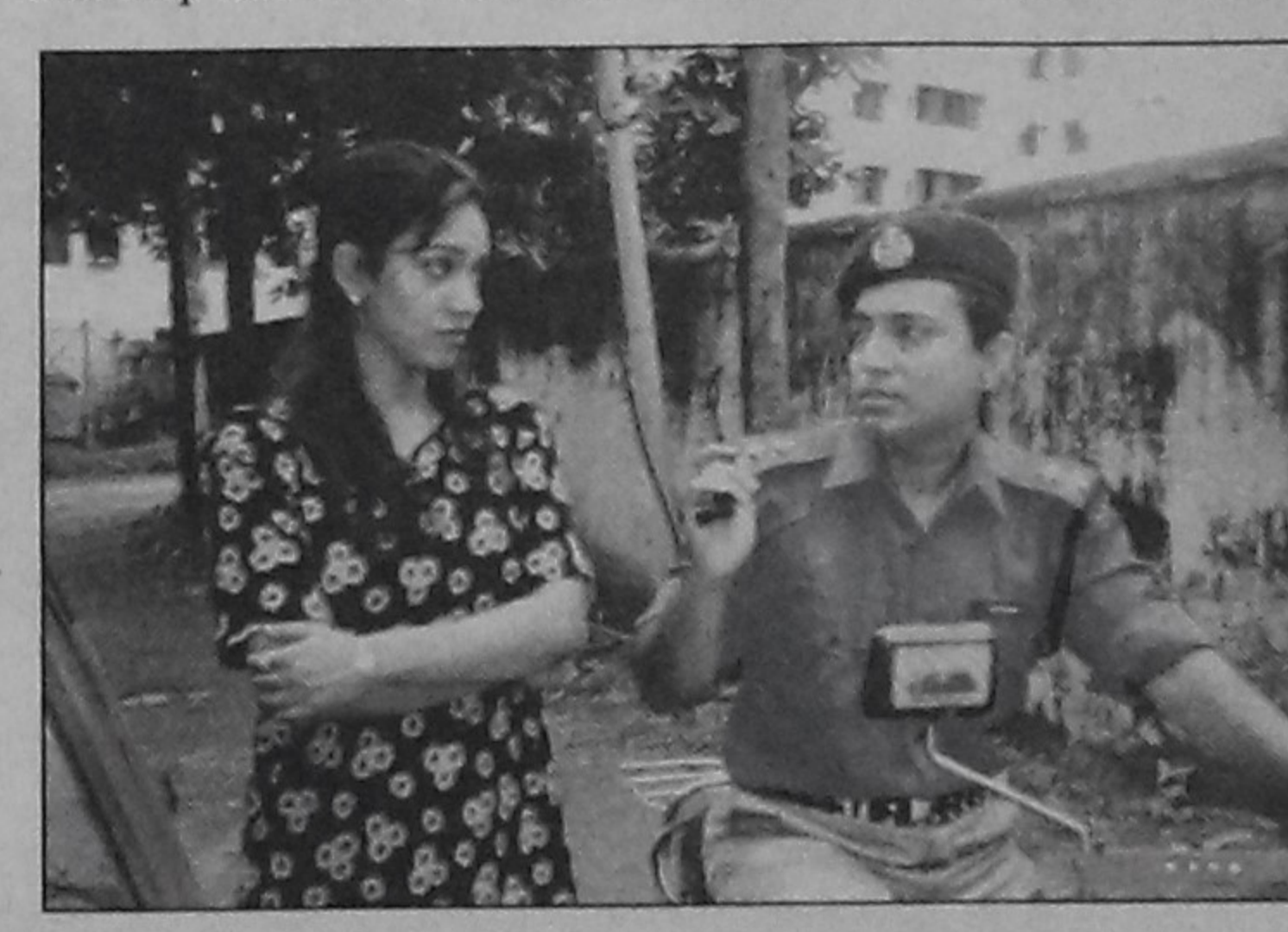
7:00 Family Hour- 8:00 War Horses- 9:00 Family Hour- 10:00 Insects- 11:00 About Asia- 12:00 Violent Earth- 1:00 National Geographic Special of The Week- 2:00 On The Edge- 3:00 Human Impact- 4:00 Going The Distance- 5:00 Family Hour- 6:00 Insects- 7:00 About Asia- 8:00 Violent Earth- 9:00 Best of The Week- 9:30 Insectia- 11:00 About Asia- 12:00 Violent Earth- 1:00 National Geographic.

ZEE News TV

7:30 Zee News: Hindi 8:30 News In English 9:00 Namaste Zee 9:26 News Outlook 10:00 Ru-Ba-Ru 11:00 The Premier Show 12:00 Guftagu 7:00 Business News 7:30 Zee News: Hindi 9:00 News In English 10:00 Zee Prime Time Show 11:30 News In English 12:00 Business News 12:30 Am to 6:30AM Every Half Hour - Zee News: Hindi

MTV INDIA

7:00 MTV Non Stop Hits 8:30 MTV Unplugged 9:00 MTV Boom 9:30 Pop Indonesia 10:00 MTV Non Stop Hits 11:00 MTV Chito



Sumona and Shovon in a scene from the drama Nil Nil Akash.

Chato 11:30 MTV Top 2000 12:30 MTV Hit Film Music 1:00 MTV HouseFull V Nafisa 1:30 MTV Hafta VJ Shenaz 2:30 MTV Non Stop Hits 3:30 MTV Cinemascope 4:00 MTV Bakra 4:15 MTV Non Stop Hits 4:30 MTV Ek Do Teen VJ Raageshwari 5:30 MTV Most Wanted VJ Shehzad 7:30 MTV Loaded 8:00 MTV Trillite AIDS Special 8:30 MTV Top 2000 9:30 MTV Hit Film Music 10:00 House Full VJ Nafisa 10:30 MTV Fresh VJ Rahul 11:00 Non Stop Hits 11:30 Destination Dance - The Grind - Beach Show 12:00 MTV Non Stop Hits

MUSIC ASIA

7:30 Alaap 8:00 Ta Ra Rum 9:00 Brake Fail 10:00 Total Recall 10:30 Hit Mix 11:00 Colgate Zig Zag Best Of The Day 11:30 Teen Talk 12:00 Bajaj Music Box 12:30 Saare Ga Ma Classic 1:00 Himani Gold T. Jharokha 2:00 Stars Day Out 2:30 Old Is Gold 3:00 Music Mag 3:30 Brake Fail 4:30 Bajaj Music Box 5:00 Dil Se 5:30 Hit Mix 6:00 Saare Ga Ma Classic 7:00 Kumar Ajay Saree Prs Rangen Tarane 7:30 Dial M 8:30 Pepsi W2K 9:30 Bajaj Music Box 10:00 DSP Sizzlers 10:30 Himani Gold T. Jharokha 11:00 Artist of The Fortnight 11:30 Shabab 12:00 Brake Fail 1:00 Colgate Zig Zag Best Of The Day 1:30 Himani Gold T. Jharokha 2:00 Bajaj Music Box 2:30 Dil Se 3:00 Ta Ra Rum 4:00 Music Zone 4:30 Brake Fail 5:00 Artist of The Fortnight

DD 7

7:15 Sambad 8:40 Khas Khabar 9:00 Gane O Kothai 9:30 Movie Club Film (Last Thursday's Film Rpt): 12:00 Barnali 12:30 Movie Club Film (Last

Friday's Film Rpt): 1:30 Sananda Quiz 2:00 Hada Bhodra Kandarkhana 2:30 Continuu...Movie Club Film (Last Friday's Film Rpt): 3:30 Geet Sangeet 4:30 Sunday Bangla Film: 5:30 Sambad 6:40 Khas Khabar 7:20 Binodan (Magazine show) 7:30 Bangla Sambad 8:00 Serial: Sonargaon 8:30 Special Prog- Sur Sadikhat 9:00 Special Prog- 9:30 Serial: Sidhanta 10:10 Khas Khabar 10:20 Mokho Mukhi 10:50 Sambad 11:00 Robibarar Jurnal

DD CHANNEL-1

5:55 Vande Mataram 6:15 CIFT Programme 6:30 UGC Programme 7:00 IGNOU Programme 7:30 Samachar 7:45 Rangoli 8:45 The News 9:00 Sanjhi Bani (Regional) 9:32 Beetaal Pachisi (Series) 10:32 Meethe Meethe Bol (Series) 11:00 Serial: Swati 11:32 Picnic Antakshari 12:00 School Days (Serial) 12:32 Serial: Shaktiman 1:32 Current Affairs Programme 2:30 Samachar 2:40 News In English 3:05 News For Hearing Impaired 3:20 News In Sanskrit 3:30 Samachar 3:32 Serial: Mahatma 4:32 Feature Film in Hindi 7:30 Samachar 7:45 Jan Hai Jahan Hai 8:00 Series: Jai Mata Ki 9:00 Samachar 9:15 The News 9:30 Surabhi (Cultural Magazine) 10:00 Nehla Pe Dehla 11:00 Current Affairs Programme 11:32 Business Magazine 12:00 National Programme of Dance 12:32 Fugitive The Most Wanted 1:00 Picnic Antakshari 1:30 School Days (Serial)

CARTOON NETWORK

6:30 Jetsons 7:00 Flintstones 7:30 The Popey Show 8:00 The New Scooby Doo And Scrappy-Doo Show 8:30 I Am Weasel 9:00 The Powerpuff Girls 9:30 Ed, Edd And Eddy 10:00 Garfield & Friends 10:30 Big Bag 11:00 Paddington Bear 11:30 Academy Award Toons 12:00 Scooby's All Star Laff-a-Lympics 12:30 The Twisted Tales of Felix The Cat 1:00 Bugs & Daffy Show 1:30 The Detective Squad 2:00 Goldie Gold And Action Jack 2:30 Captain Planet 3:00 The Mask 3:30 Adams Family 4:00 The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest 4:30 The New Scooby Doo And Scrappy-Doo Show 5:00 The Popey Show 5:30 I Am Weasel 6:00 The Powerpuff Girls 6:30 Ed, Edd And Eddy 7:00 Tom & Jerry Show 7:30 Bugs & Daffy Show 8:00 Garfield & Friends 8:30 Academy Award Toons 9:00 The Twisted Tales of Felix The Cat

RECOMMENDATIONS



The Wandering Lens

"From Shiraz to Samarkand, Himalaya and some more" that is how the on going exhibition of the Indian photographer Deb Mukharji's exhibition is being described. The inauguration of the exhibition was held on April 7 at 5pm at Drik Gallery. The exhibition will go on till April 15, everyday from 3 pm to 8 pm.



Tana Poron

3rd solo tapestry exhibition by Chandan Shafiqul Kabir was held at the Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka on April 7.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka, Professor Md Shahadat Ali was present as the chief guest and Kh Rashidul Huq, Chairman, Handloom board as special guest. Renowned art critic Syed Manzoorul Islam introduced the exhibition as the main speaker. The exhibition was inaugurated by Jamdani Weaver Abdul Gani. Eminent artist Abdur Razzaque presided over the ceremony. The exhibition will remain open till April 13 everyday from 2pm till 8pm.



Photography Exhibition by Tarun

The first solo photography exhibition by Tarun was inaugurated on April 7 at the National Photographic Gallery, Bangladesh Photographic Society, 87 Science Lab, Out. Road (1st floor), Dhaka.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Mostafa Monwar. The exhibition will remain open to all from 12.00pm to 8.00pm till April 30.

Shishir at Gallery 21

Shishir Bhattacharjee's solo exhibition was inaugurated on March 31 at Gallery 21. Artist Quayyum Chowdhury inaugurated the exhibition. Starting from Shafuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Kibria, Aminul Islam to Rafiqun Nabi, Munirul Islam, Mahmudul Haq, all of his teachers were present at the inaugural ceremony. This exhibition will be open to all till April 10 from 10 am to 8 pm.



Australia-Portraying a Nation

Bangladesh Shilpakal Academy and the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh has organised a week-long photography exhibition titled *Australia-Portraying a Nation*. The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition was held on April 4 at 5.00pm at the Academy Gallery.

Painting Exhibition by Salahuddin Ahmed

A painting exhibition of Salahuddin Ahmed is being held at the gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka from April 7 to 21. The exhibition will remain open daily from 3 pm to 8 pm.