

Exhibition

Changing faces of Dhaka

A current photography exhibition at Drik Gallery which is the result of a previous workshop depicts cheap lifestyle of the commoners



A blend of lifestyle is seen in the photographs of the upcoming photographers from Pathshala

RECOMMENDATIONS

Etching Print Exhibition

A solo etching prints exhibition by Rashid Amin, a Charupith Fellow (2001), starts at Gallery 21 on February 1, 2002 at 6 p.m. Eminent artist Qayyum Chowdhury will inaugurate the exhibition. Artists Nisar Hossain and Rafiqunnabi will be present as Special Guest and President of the evening, respectively. The exhibition will remain open till February 10 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Drama Festival

'Fair & Lovely Drama Festival 2002' starts at the Showkat Osman auditorium of Central Public Library from February 1, 2002. The weeklong festival has been arranged with the theme 'Reach for the Skies'. DESH NATOK has composed five of the seven theatrical plays of the festival.

Drama Festival

Nattoy Utsav 2002, the national festival of drama will begin from February 1 and will continue for the next three weeks till February 21. To be organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, the drama festival will feature 'Nattoy Jalsa' after the staging of the theatrical productions, each evening. Each Jalsa will include cultural events to be performed by members of the theatre groups. Coinciding with the drama festival will begin the 'Street Drama Festival 2002' that will continue till February 7, 2002.

Group Art Show

The 45th Grand Group Art Exhibition of leading Bangladeshi artists organised by Saju Art Gallery is now being held at its gallery space at Gulshan, North Super Market 2nd circle. The month-long show, open to all, will run until February 7 from 10 am to 8:30 pm barring Fridays.

Documentary

Ymako is a 51-minute colour documentary film in French with English subtitles. The film, based on events of street performance in Ivory Coast, will be exhibited on January 29 at 6 p.m. at the auditorium of Pathshala, a photography school at Dhanmondi, Road # 27. The same show will exhibit 'Ethnic', a documentary with settings in North Vietnam. Three videos on Children's Daily Life will be exhibited at the auditorium of Goethe Institut at 6 p.m. on January 31, 2002.

TAWFIQUE ALI

LATELY lifestyle in the capital city has become a quiet popular object to mull over and debate. Blend of cultures, Eastern and Western, is obvious within the youth, their manner and way of life. A remarkable shift in their belief and psyche is taking place. They are adopting, incorporating, co-opting, borrowing and in the process redesigning themselves and the images of their own in the cultural mirror. The city dwellers have developed an interest in style, an inclination for a touch of sophistication in their daily life.

photographers who chose to present the changing aspects and features of the city. Belonging to Pathshala, the South Asian Institute of Photography, all the apprentices participated in an eight-day photography workshop conducted last November by two German photographers, Christoph Mukherjee and David Steets. The on-going exhibition, which ends on January 31, has been co-hosted by Pathshala, Drik picture library and Goethe-Institute Dhaka.

The names of participating students of 2nd & 3rd year diploma courses of Pathshala are Monirul Alam Danny, Khoka, Momena Jalil, Wilson Gohwa, Zahedul Karim, Mahbubul Karim, Khaza Reza-Ahmed and Muhammad

Aminuzzaman. They have composed seven brief photographic tales focusing on different old and new urban scenarios. The exhibition contains fifty-three colour photos depicting themes like 'Youth culture in Dhaka', 'Shopping Centres', 'Street Beggars', 'Food during Ramadan', 'Road-crossing', 'Video Game Shop', and 'shopping mall decoration'. A host of patrons and renowned accomplished photography enthusiasts graced the inaugural ceremony.

Monirul, Danny and Khoka have worked on the theme 'Youth Culture in Dhaka'. It deals with many changing trends that have recently occurred among urban youths. Once young people had a craze for folk songs with re-mixed beat.

Mystique songs reigned the arena but at present Hindi and English songs have taken over. Many young people now have obsession for foreign music, ahead of Bangla numbers.

Momena Jalil, under the title 'Shopping Centres', has focused through her lens on newly added aspects and trends incorporated by City's shopping mall entrepreneurs to enhance their business. To provide the shoppers with high-tech convenience, city's shopping complexes have introduced escalators, central air-conditioning system and dummy human figures to attract shoppers. Agora, One Stop Mall, Stop N Shop and Shop N Save are a member of instances which offer one stop shopping opportunity for

the busy city dwellers.

These modern shopping plazas are too sophisticated that they lack in warmth of old traditional market. Besides, these exclusive shopping arrangements and relatively more expensive, hardly mean anything to those with limited income.

Begging by the roadside in city areas is a very common act, which is sometimes embarrassing for passers-by and considered as a social problem. Wilson Johwa's work is on street beggars. He has gathered several women and one of them begs at Farmgate area accompanied by her invalid husband. His another piece depicts a scene of a rushing group of beggars towards an Ifter gathering during Ramadan.

Snaps by Zahidul Karim and Mahbubul Karim jointly narrate some familiar features at crossings of city streets titled 'Road crossing'.

One photograph captures beginning of a new day of a pedestrian who has to climb up a footbridge to cross the busy city streets. Some other pieces show aerial view of serious health hazards caused by air pollution at road crossings, crowded public transports boiling in summer heat and people doing brisk business of sliced fruits and artificial juice.

'Food during Ramadan' is a photograph by Khaza Peza and it is a depiction of earning high profits through sale of Ifter at temporary stalls beside roads and pavements. Subjects of other works include City

After at posh expensive restaurants and snacks shop. Regardless of price, an affordable quarter of the society considers buying at such high price.

Video Game in recent years has added a new dimension to children's past time in the city.

Muhammad Aminuzzaman saw the aspect of city life through his lens and captured kids fighting to get a turn to play. One photograph shows 'Game Over' as the child has emptied his purse.

The exhibition is open for visitors every day from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Drik Gallery in Dhanmondi.

Music

Supergroup for a Golden Queen An obsession to remember

British rock "supergroup" to perform at Queen's Golden Jubilee Ismat Chughtai could not have asked for a better lover than Naseeruddin Shah whose affectionate homage to the Urdu writer held Delhi'ites entranced in 'Ismat Appa Ke Naam', writes Annu Ratta

AFP, London

FORMER Beatle Paul McCartney and Rolling Stone Mick Jagger will set aside old rivalries to perform on stage together for the first time ever at Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee, the Sunday Telegraph reported.

Billed as "the world's greatest-ever supergroup," McCartney on bass and Jagger on vocals will be joined by former Genesis front man Phil Collins on the drums, the paper said.

The trio will head a list of rock luminaries including Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder and Bryan Adams performing to over 12,000 fans and the entire royal family at the lavish concert at Buckingham Palace scheduled for June 3.

The concert will also be shown on giant video screens in parks around the capital.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman confirmed that the event was planned, but said he did not know who would be playing as the BBC, which has exclusive broadcasting rights, was organising the show.

Demand for tickets is expected to be such that audience members are to be chosen by a ballot organised by Buckingham Palace and the BBC. Applicants need not be British, but must have a British address.

The concert should inject some interest into celebrations for the queen's 50 years on the throne.



Royal advisers were said to be worried that the occasion might be a flop given rising apathy among Britons towards the monarchy. A recent poll found that only five

percent of Britons believed the golden jubilee would have the greatest impact on the country's mood this year, with five times more people saying a victory in this year's

World Cup by the English football team would have the most impact.

Royal advisers are hoping to repeat the success of the queen's silver or 25th jubilee in 1977, when millions turned out to celebrate, with street parties held across the country in a huge display of affection for the monarch.

There is a risk however that younger Britons could be turned off if the line-up does not include younger artists. But another report in the News of the World said that pop star Robbie Williams might also appear.

The event, which is understood to be the brainchild of The Beatles' producer George Martin, is "certainly going to be spectacular," a spokesman for Buckingham Palace told AFP.

"The whole purpose of both concerts, because there's a classical concert on June 1... is for the queen to say 'thank you' to the people of Britain for their support over the last 50 years.

"In principal it would have been wonderful to have 60 million people there but it just wasn't practical, so there's going to be a ballot and anyone can apply for an invitation."

Guests at Buckingham Palace will also receive free food hampers.

The concert will be the highlight of the celebrations, which will also see the queen, who ascended the throne in 1952, embarking on a tour of her kingdom.

Interview

WELL, if you are a Naseeruddin Shah fan you may well have to turn into a stage bum, as Naseer has sworn to stay away from Bollywood, at least for a while. He's at the present content to be a "Super Selector" for television and stage.

He proved his point on January 15th at the National School of Drama (NSD) auditorium, Abhimanch, where he, his wife, Ratna Pathak Shah and daughter, Heeba Shah, paid their homage to writer Ismat Chughtai by performing *Ismat Appa Ke Naam* on the occasion of Society for Promotion of Indian Classic Music and Culture's (Spic Macay) silver jubilee.

The evening comprising three Ismat Chughtai stories selected and directed by Naseer was in his words, an attempt to pay homage to the genius, gumption, and "realness" of Chughtai, one of the critical authors of the Urdu literature of the 1940s. By the time the performance came to a close the audience could only clap and admire the actor and his family for projecting Chughtai's works in the most affectionate and profoundly touching manner. It was one of the rare moments of Hindi theatre, one that harked back to the glory of mid-70s when actors lived and relished the roles they played.

Naseer has kept his passion for theatre alive, acting with directors such as Feroz Khan (in *Mahatma versus Gandhi*) and Peter Brook (in *Hamlet*) apart from appearing in his own theatre company, the Motley Group, started with Benjamin Giliani. *Ismat Appa Ke Naam*, is Motley Groups first non-English production which was first staged in Mumbai nearly a year ago. The choice of the latest production, says Naseer, was guided by his disillusionment with English Indian theatre and its alien context if not content and the urge to perform in his native tongue. "There is



something about speaking in your native tongue that makes your voice immediately assume its natural timbre and fullness of character," he says.

Finding a good Hindi play that hadn't been done before was another cup of tea though. In desperation he turned to literature - without realizing that he was stumbling into a gigantic treasure trove. He had read English translations of Ismat Chughtai's work earlier and was impressed. In fact he had also met her as a little old lady on the sets of the film *Junoon*. But it was when a Hindi transliteration of her Urdu work fell into his lap that he felt a buzz of electricity from the language, the beauty of the characters, the "realness" of the story - and decided that this story had to be the one. "Why look for plays set in big cities like Bombay or Delhi. I'm not even born in these cities, they're not really in my system the way smaller places like Meerut and Lucknow are." Besides the characters and stories of these old places are so much more real than the artificial big city world.

Ismat Appa Ke Naam has been performed in many cities including remote ones like Ludhiana and is expected to travel to other Indian cities as well. Motley is already performing another play, *Ismat, Munto Hazir Hain*, four stories from Ismat Chughtai and Sadaat Hasan Munto. Naseer is also working on directing a short film on one of Chughtai's stories.

Ismat Appa Ke Naam feels like a revival of the art of story telling. Daddy Naseer, daughter Heeba and mummy Ratna (all three of them are National School of Drama graduates), each narrated one story of Ismat Chughtai - *Gharwali*, *Chhui Muee* and *Mughal Bachcha*.

Naseer held forth in the opening act with a jovial, tongue-in-cheek tale about an amorous relationship between a Muslim-lass of loose morals and an aged, status-conscious nawab. With his sonorous, rasping Hindustani, energetic mannerisms and an ocean of expressions, nuances and characters ebbing and flowing over his animated face he kept the audience on the edge of

their seats as they laughed and smirked at the duplicity of the social mores of the decaying Muslim *nawabi-thhat* of the 1940s.

Heeba followed the 'tough daddy act' and held her own in *Chhui Muee* enacting a short but poignant tale of the social chasm that exists between the privileged and the underdogs when found in a similar situation. Ratna, on her part essayed a languorous tale of social decadence through *Mughal Bachcha* a tale about social quirks and obsessions with white skin.

The three stories, chosen for their humour, poignancy and social comment found its appreciation among the audience, proving in one go, how little has changed in the last 50 years.

As a theatrical performance, dependant largely on the histrionic ability of the actors on stage, the evening undoubtedly belonged to Naseer whose stage presence over the years has become larger than life.

International



Beach Boys singer-lyricist Brian Wilson performs on stage at the Royal Festival Hall in London, at a concert celebrating MOJO music magazine's 100th edition on January 27, 2002.



Shirley Zhou Xue from Vancouver (C), Miss Chinese International 2001 is flanked by 1st runner-up Angela Christie Bartrum from Toronto (L) and 2nd runner-up Angela Sue Ee Foo from Kuala Lumpur in the southern Chinese city of Pang Yu on January 27, 2002. Miss Zhou beat twenty other contestants from around the world for the title.