

RECOMMENDATIONS

Painting exhibition

Art works of Bangladeshi landscape done by an American artist, Sarah Sutro, is being exhibited at Divine Art Gallery...

Festival

To commemorate the completion of fifty years of Language Movement, Dhaka Theatre organises a series of programmes including Theatre Festival, Seminar, Village Theater Convention and Reception from March 16 to 22...

German Theatrical Video Shows

Jointly organised by Zahir Raihan Film Society and Goethe Institute Dhaka, a four-day German contemporary theatrical video show started from March 11 to 14...

Art Exhibition

Japan and Bangladesh are holding a joint art exhibition at the National Museum art gallery in the city. The exhibition will end on March 20...

Solo exhibition

A solo art exhibition of Abdus Shakoor is being held at Bengal Art Gallery at Dhanmondi in the city. The exhibition features recent works of the artist who is inclined to pause and look back...

Discussion

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion program and recitation on March 14 at 11:00 a.m. at the seminar hall of the academy to mark the death anniversary of Poet Jashimuddin...

Fashion

Local trends at Haute Couture

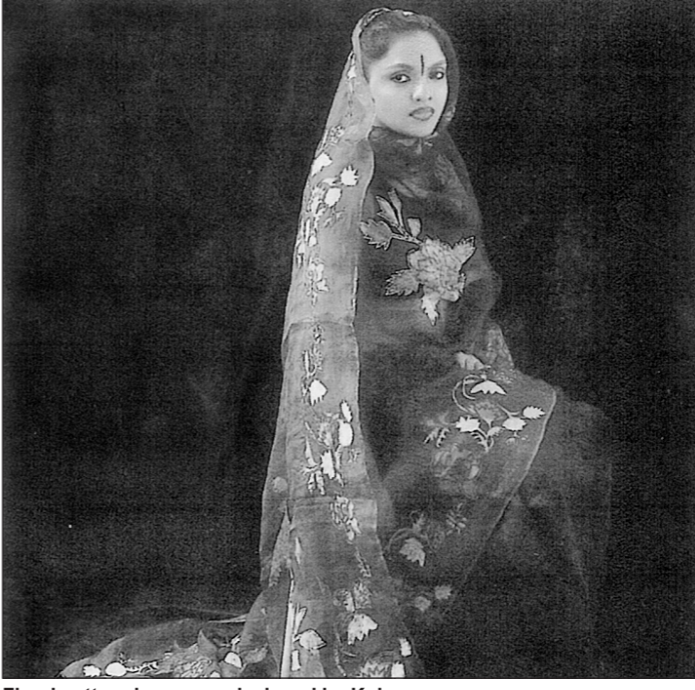
Three of the five participating designers of the forthcoming French fashion show express their thoughts and plans on the event

AZIZ AMIRUL

ANEELA Haq, one of the five participating designers of the forthcoming French fashion event in the city, has her clothing items ready for display on the evening of March 14. As the graphic-turned-fashion designer tells, 'I regard myself as a designer of clothing and I follow the concept of ethnic style in dresses'...

of fusion style of the east with that of the west is all that I want to provide among the clothing', adds Aneela, a fusion fashion designer of the contemporary period. Aneela wants to draw a picture of the contemporary society and its attitude through the symbolic patterns inscribed in her designed costume. The vibrant colours of the dupatta and the khadi items give off a vibrant sparkle from a variety of striking shades. Paintings in shades of electric blue, purple, red and violet on the surface of the costumes designed by Aneela could be termed as great creations of fusion fashion in this part of the world. Aneela Haq, who has com-

pleted her higher studies in the United States, feel very much satisfied with her present position as a designer who is permanently based in her homeland. The forthcoming fashion show to be presented by the Trade Commission of the Embassy of France is a fine example of global harmony', mentions Aneela. 'Bangladesh is a country that has quite an ill image in the western world. The fashion show, besides promotion of the latest trend of vogue to the people of Bangladesh, will certainly help to upgrade the image of the third world nation in front of the world', the designer adds. Maheen Khan, a popular trendsetter in fashion for the young generation, who is a participant of



Floral pattern in a saree designed by Kuhu

the forthcoming big show, says in brief about her plan of presenting fusion collection. 'I intend to send six pieces of sarees, designs of which have been done by me. The sarees would be of nakshikantha cloth to provide a touch of traditional elegance', mentions Maheen. As further said by the designer, flair of high fashion will be found more in the blouses. The presence of the sarees of Maheen, as she believes, would create a sense of exclusiveness in the affair. Embellished with kundan, the elegant long one piece of the Bengali culture would certainly have a strong impact on the total show. Blouse outfits are at present considered as item of fusion fashion as it always possesses some new style in its design. The trendy short piece of outfit to be worn by gorgeous models will truly be a focus of the high fashion show. Kuhu, a fusion fashion designer of the contemporary period, will present at the show three sarees. The first one will be a wearable art consisting of the flowing lines, contrasted with straight lines of long jackets. Eastern floral pat-

terns, combined with contemporary black, white and red colour scheme will be there within a single space. Structured jackets made from heavier silks will be chosen to wear with soft silk drawstring pajamas, a combination that will blend not only texture, but will also look from western angles with fluid eastern designs. The last two pieces of saree collections of Kuhu is influenced by Christian LaCroix, a French designer and by Kandinsky, an artist whose artistic expressions have always been preferred by the local female designer. 'One of the three sarees, to be displayed at the Haute Couture fashion show in Dhaka, has been designed with the native nakshikantha stitch. To complement this saree, Kuhu has used tiger stripes and snake spots joined with deeply shaded wild poppies to create a modern approach. The other two designers, who have their items at the mega-event at Sonargaon hotel on March 14, are Roxana Salam and Nasrine Karim.



Sarees designed by Kuhu

PHOTOS: ZAHEDUL I. KHAN

Music

Matsushita develops system to select music according to mood

AFP, Tokyo

FEEELING "kind of blue", or "feeling groovy"? If you know the mood you are in, Japanese electronics giant, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. has come up with a digital search function to come up with the music to match it. The Osaka-based company, best known for its National and Panasonic brands said Monday it would introduce its "Musicsommelier" technology in commercial audio equipment later this spring, and planned to use it in consumer audio systems in future. "Now that hard disks can store vast amounts of musical content, it is becoming difficult to match the user's desired mood at that particular moment solely on the basis of song title," the company said in a statement. Whereas the parameters of most conventional search systems for digitally recorded music are the artist's name or song title, Matsushita's new technology uses statistical analysis of eight musical features of a song and its emotive "feel". "The technology in 'Musicsommelier' deduces the relationship between a song's emotive 'feel' and musical features from any music source such as CDs or FM radio," the statement said. The features including tempo, beat fluctuation, fundamental beat, beat intensity and the degree of rising notes, are "extracted" as the music is registered on a hard disk. The system assesses the music's emotive qualities in terms of how soft, how simple, how refreshing, how dynamic and how exciting it is, and then uses statistical analysis technology to relate the feel to the features to determine the mood. The technical specification of the new search tool would be announced at a conference of the Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers Society in Tokyo at the end of the month, the company said. It has applied for nine patents in Japan in relation to the new technology and eight overseas patents.

Art

Portrait attributed to Renoir finds buyer at \$ 200,000 price mark

AFP, Montreal

The untitled portrait of a rich woman, attributed to Auguste Renoir, was purchased for nearly 200,000 dollars at auction in the Quebec town of Lac Megantic, auctioneer Olivier Chalifoux said. The tiny Encans Elizabeth auction house last year sold a painting by the Spanish artist Goya last year, as well as a drawing by Picasso. The sale Sunday was to an international broker who showed up personally to claim the canvas, likely on the behalf of a European client, Chalifoux said. The slightly-damaged Renoir oil, had been painted between 1874 and 1877 at the request of a woman who, after being unhappy with the result, declined to purchase the canvas, he added. The painter then offered it as a gift to a friend, Canadian Arctic explorer J.E. Bernier, whose estate was divided after his death in 1934, a part of which was bought by Chalifoux. Chalifoux had "no doubt" about the authenticity of the canvas, which was damaged in the 1940s by a framer who stuck it on a cardboard box, which irreparably damaged the canvas' colors. The painting was examined in Europe because of the lack of such experts in Canada, Chalifoux said, adding that the buyer would have 30 days to guarantee its authenticity.

Heritage

On the issue of reconstructing Afghan relics

Martin Bailey writes on UNESCO's intention of holding an international meeting next month to discuss options on rebuilding the destroyed sculptures of Bamiyan Buddhas

UNESCO is to convene an international meeting in Afghanistan next month to discuss the reconstruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan. Rebuilding these symbols of the country's illustrious heritage has already received the support of Afghan minister of information and culture Raheem Makhdoom. The work would take up to four years and cost an estimated US \$30 to US\$50 million. News of official backing for the reconstruction of the 1,700-year-old Buddhas has come from Paul Bucherer-Dietschi, Director of the Bibliotheca Afghanistanica Museum-in-exile at Bubendorf, near Basel. He returned a month ago from a five-week Unesco mission to Kabul, where he found universal support for rebuilding the three statues destroyed by the Taliban. "When I talked with people in the bazaars, I pointed out that restoring one statue might cost as much as 30 bridges," he reported. Afghans then told him: "The bridges we can rebuild ourselves, and we will anyway. But the Buddhas must also be rebuilt which is a world heritage."

Reconstruction at Bamiyan is regarded as "an absolute political priority". Symbolically, it would be a dramatic rejection of what the Taliban and Al-Qaeda represented. Economically, it would encourage foreign tourists to return to Bamiyan. "Why else would they make an eight-hour drive on gravel roads from Kabul?" Bucherer admits that the question of whether it is worthwhile to proceed with the reconstruction is a question, which needs to be seriously addressed by archaeologists at the Unesco meeting.

Bucherer's recent visit to Bamiyan has enabled him to give a detailed account of the terrible events of a year ago. "I had hoped that some of the feet of the Buddhas might still survive under rubble, but the destruction was done in a highly professional way," he reported. Local Taliban had been reluctant to undertake the task, so foreign Al-Qaeda supporters were brought in

from Kabul, along with two Chechen explosives specialists. On February 20 of last year, they began at the base of the statues, drilling holes up to a depth of 1.8 meters with sophisticated equipment. Explosives were placed in the cavities, destroying the feet. Work then continued until March 8. Bucherer found that the destruction had been extremely thorough: "Absolutely nothing remained of the Buddhas, other than a few boulders from the inner core. I made a long search, and found only one small piece of the outer plaster, the size of my hand." This he took with him, for



Photogrammetric measurement of the largest Buddha, taken in 1970

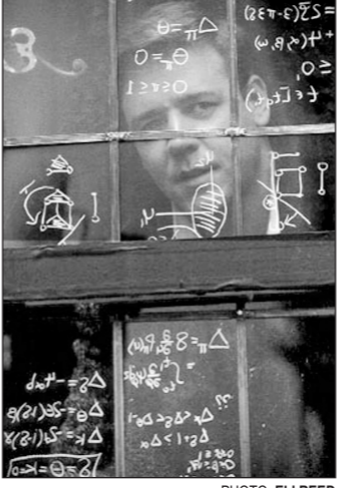
ered rest of the data in the 80s. It should therefore be possible to reconstruct the statues so that they would appear virtually indistinguishable from the perished originals. The remains of the rubble would be quite unsuitable for the reconstruction and various materials have been proposed, ranging from local stone to concrete. One idea is to build horizontal supports every three meters or so, and cover this profile with a lightweight cladding. This would show the shape of the original, without the deception of using solid material. It would also make it possible to build an internal spiral staircase to the top. Another option would be to build the replicas a few hundred meters away, not in the original niches. Bucherer also visited the remains of the Kabul Museum, which was devastated last year by Taliban militants. "Virtually the entire collection was reduced to a mound of six cubic-meters of debris," he explained. Curators informed Bucherer of how every box of artifacts was methodically emptied onto the ground, and objects depicting human or animal forms were then individually and systematically smashed with a hammer. Hardly any of the pieces were bigger than a thumbnail. It took 10 people three weeks to complete the task. Sadly, very little was saved, although occasionally curators were able to move small objects into boxes, which had already been combed. This may have saved up to a hundred items. Mystery still surrounds the Bactrian gold, which had been stored in a secure vault within the ministry of finance. The 20,000 gold objects, excavated in 1978, are said to be sealed in boxes, which required seven keys to open. Despite extensive inquiries, Bucherer was unable to discover the fate of the Bactrian treasure. The fact that none of the items discovered in 1978 has come onto the market gives grounds for optimism, although they could have been melted down. Source: Internet

Oscar

Hellraiser Oscar-nominee Crowe on charm offensive

AFP, Beverly Hills

AUSTRALIAN actor Russell Crowe was on best behaviour Monday following a series of public rows over his behaviour and his Oscar-nominated film "A Beautiful Mind." Best actor Oscar nominee Crowe, who has a reputation for being a brutally frank and often rude to journalists, was smiling and joking with reporters at luncheon less than two weeks ahead of the Academy Awards here. "I was thinking I might do some poetry for you," quipped the brooding actor who last month furiously shoved and abused a British television producer who cut short his awards acceptance speech which included a poetry reading. "As you can see, I'm really tense," he said laughing. "We'll see what happens (on Oscars night). There's no guarantees in any of this and that's really the fun of it," he said. Amid studio fears that the brawl could prevent the actor, who won the best actor Oscar last year,



Russell Crowe as mathematical genius John Forbes Nash Jr. in Universal's A Beautiful Mind 2001.

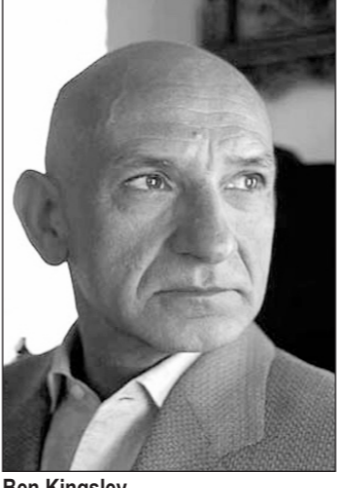
from winning a second time, a contrite Crowe told reporters he had apologized to the producer for the outburst. "A Beautiful Mind" is nominated for eight Oscars including best picture, best director for Ron

Howard, best actor and best supporting actress at this year's Academy Awards that will go ahead in Hollywood on March 24. But in the weeks preceding cinema's top awards, the film -- the story of real life schizophrenic mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr. -- a whiff of scandal has surrounded the picture. Its makers, Universal Studios, have been at loggerheads with news media that have highlighted the film's factual shortcomings, after references to Nash's alleged anti-Semitism and homosexual behaviour were left out. But the studio and Howard have been at pains to stress that the film was never intended as a historical bio-pic but as an artwork inspired by Nash's story. With final Oscar voting ballots due in next Monday, the timing for potentially damaging controversy over the film is bad for the studio that is spending millions on pre-Oscars advertising and publicity campaigns.

Sir Ben Kingsley seems to treasure knighthood over Oscar

AFP, Beverly Hills

OSCAR-NOMINATED British actor Sir Ben Kingsley seems more excited about his new knighthood than about his Academy Awards nod. The star, who already has a best actor Oscar awarded for his 1982 epic film "Gandhi," was asked at a lunch for this year's Academy Awards nominees on Monday where he was when he heard he had been nominated. "Do you mean my Academy nomination, or my knighthood nomination?" the actor -- who was included in Queen Elizabeth's New Year's honours list in December -- asked seriously to peels of laughter from assembled journalists. When told to describe both nominations, he went on at length about how he had learned he was



Ben Kingsley

Wanted: Oscars date for Nicole Kidman



Nicole Kidman

AFP, Beverly Hills

NICOLE Kidman, one of Hollywood's hottest stars who was recently divorced from heart-throb Tom Cruise is looking for a date for the Oscars, she confided Monday. The Australian actress, nominated for a best actress nod at the March 24 Academy Awards ceremony, does not yet have an escort to Hollywood's biggest night out. "I don't really have anyone to bring at the moment," she told a luncheon of Oscar nominees at a plush hotel in Beverly Hills. "I'm still looking." Rated as one of Tinseltown's top leading ladies following her Oscar nomination for "Moulin Rouge" and with the critical success of her other 2001 film "The Others," Kidman is still emerging from the shadow of her collapsed marriage -- in style. "It means a lot to me," she said of her Oscar nomination which follows her Golden Globe win in January. "It's nice to be at the party." Kidman and Cruise split up after 10 years of marriage just more than a year ago and were finally divorced in August following a very public spat over custody of their children. But following an "annus horribilis" which saw the demise of cinema's hottest couple, mother-of-two Kidman is bouncing back professionally -- if not on the date front. Her ex-husband is romantically involved with Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, but Nicole has frequently brought female friends along to Hollywood premieres since her divorce.