

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## Exhibition

April 01-29  
Russian Cultural Centre has arranged a photo and stamp exhibition on aviation and cosmonautics to celebrate the International Day of Cosmonautics and Aviation at the center's library.

April 02-13  
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has arranged a photography exhibition by Japanese photographer Hiroko Kobayashi title 'I wish to go to Bangladesh once again' at the art gallery of the Academy. The display will remain open for all from 11 am to 7 pm everyday and 3 pm to 7 pm on Fridays.

April 04-24  
On the occasion of its fifth anniversary, the Bengal Foundation, is organising a solo exhibition by artist Jean Dometti. The show will remain open for all from 12 pm to 8 pm everyday.

April 09-19  
Sajau Art Gallery has arranged a ten day retrospective exhibition of painting by Shamsul Islam Nizami at the gallery. The display will remain open for all from 10 am to 8:30 pm, Saturday through Thursday (Friday closed).

April 01-13  
A photography exhibition on the fire in the Karail slum is going on at the Goethe Institut (House-10, Road-9, Dhanmondi R/A). The show will remain open for all from 2 pm to 8 pm daily.

## Film show

April 11  
Son of the World-Yuri Gagarin and Tragic Death of Yuri Gagarin will be screened at the library of the Russian Cultural Centre at 12:00 pm.

April 05-26  
The Indian High Commission will screen 7 films as part of its regular bi-weekly film show programme. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, Gulshan-2. Time: 6 pm. The schedules are given below:

April 12 Khoobsurat, April 15 Bhoot, April 19 Bobby, April 22 Hungama, April 26 Aankhen

## Sculpture

April 13-30  
British Council Bangladesh holds a bamboo sculpture exhibition at its compound at 5 Fuller Road. The display presents works of 9 sculptors- RA Kajol, Saidul Haque Juise, Saleh Mahmood, Shakhatullah Hossain, Shwadhin, Shameen, Badsha, Tarun Ghosh and Kakoli. The exhibits also include works of two traditional bamboo artisans Mir Abdul Hamid and Belayet Hossain. The display remains open from 10 am to 7 pm daily.

Andrzej Wajda  
Retrospective

April 11-14  
Zahir Rahan Film Society, in association with the Alliance Française of Dhaka, will screen eight films in a retrospective to the world-renowned Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda.

April 11  
5:00 PM: Landscape after the Battle (1970),  
7:00 PM: The Birch Wood (1970),

April 12  
5:00 PM: Ashes and Diamonds (1958),  
7:00 PM: The Young Ladies of Wilno (1979),

April 13  
4:00 PM: Danton (1982);  
6:15 PM: Man of Marble (1977),

April 15  
4:00 PM: Pan Tadeusz (1999),  
6:30 PM: Man of Iron (1981).

Venue: The Alliance Française of Dhaka, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi.

## Dialogue

## The musical duo

A chat with Abida Sultana and Rafiqul Alam

NOVERA DEEPIKA

**A** BIDA Sultana and Rafiqul Alam are amongst the most prominent singer couples in Bangladesh. Although they perform in duets, they are renowned for their individual contributions to music.

Abida and Rafiq are very busy with stage performances, tours and album releases. They just have come back from Canada where they performed in four stage shows in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. They are now on a government tour to Australia. The latest album of Abida is a joint venture with two of the Indian singers Haimanti Shukla and Arundhati Holme titled *Chokh jure borshe*. Rafiq is also working on an exclusive album called *The Best of Rafiq*, which will be released soon.

Abida started to sing from her very childhood. Both her parents were culture-oriented people. This is why, she reminisces, it was easier for her to build a career in music. In her words, 'When my elder sister Rebecca used to learn music under Ustad Ram Gopal Mohanti, I used to curiously peep into the room. The ustad noticed and called me. He told me to sing a song and I sang accurately. This impressed him and from then on he started calling me a 'tape recorder'. He also gave me music lessons. Later on I learnt classical music under Akhtar Sadmani, Bareen Majumdar and Gul Mohammad. I also learned Nazrul and Tagore songs under Sohrab Hossain, Feriza Begum and Shudhun Das.'

Rafiq's story of learning music runs along parallel lines. He, too, started to sing in his childhood because he felt that music was in his blood. He started to learn music under Anup Bhattacharya a few months before the Liberation War. His gurus are his brother Sarwar Jahan, Abdul Jabbar Khan and Haripada Das. He started to perform



Rafiq and Abida the globe trotting singers

on the radio in Rajshahi. Says Rafiq, 'I never had to face an audition. The other singers always spoke highly of me.'

In May 1971, Rafiq joined the *Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* when he was a teenager. He recalled, 'A cultural group was formed with the Bangalee refugees, with eminent artistes of today. Kaderi Kibria, Probol Chowdhury, Sarwar Jahan, Rezwanul Haque, Uma Khan, Kolyani Ghosh and Shaheen Samad- are the names which I can recall.' There he performed many songs tuned by Apel Mahmud and Shujeyo Shyam. The recordings used to take place at a small studio in Bagan Place of Kolkata and was broadcast from a liberated zone.

There, Rafiq met the legendary Tagore singer Kanika a Bondyapadhyaya. She asked Rafiq

to sing a song and he rendered one of Atul Proshad's song *Tumi Gao Tumi Gao*. She was impressed and agreed to teach him some other songs which Rafiq remembers with gratitude. She also told Rafiq to carry on with his style of singing.

However, Rafiq worked as a cultural activist there for eight months. He said in a nostalgic tone, 'We stayed there in a three storied building and had to sleep on the floor. It was winter and we had no blankets till the Red Cross donated some later. It was truly hard for us but we had no regrets. How could we complain? The freedom fighters were struggling against the Pakistani army in the battlefield and were even ready to sacrifice their lives!'

'I was eager to go to the war and felt sorry that I could not do anything for my country. But my friends con-

soled me by saying that inspiring our people through our spirited songs was a big contribution to the war as well.'

After the war, Rafiq attended a music conference in Dhaka Stadium in the early 1970s where he met Abida for the first time. Legendary artistes of India like Shyamal Mitra, Manobendra Mukhopadhyay, Dwejern Mukhopadhyay, Protima Mukhopadhyay, Suchitra Mitra and Ali Hossain Khan also attended the conference. Famous singers of Bangladesh like Mahmudin Nabi and Khondokar Faruq also performed. Rafiq's performance was appreciated by the music domain and he considered this performance as a breakthrough in his career.

'We first met in a *Pahela Baishak*, we performed our first duet in *Pahela Baishak* and coincidentally we got married in another *Pahela Baishak*,' said Abida. They got a modelling offer and they took it. But unfortunately the product was banned after a short while.

According to Abida although they come from the same professional background they do not encounter any problems. She said, 'We have competition, not professional jealousy.' And about criticism Abida says, 'Rafiq is very constructive in his criticisms, as he is well acquainted with the basic elements of music. After any performance I usually go straight to Rafiq for the criticism, because I know he won't flatter me. He will speak the truth about my performance even if I do the worst.'

Rafiq echoes the same sentiment, 'Abida and I have absolutely a very healthy competition. We criticise each other's performance and I know her shortfalls. She also knows mine. She is comfortable with singing any type of songs, which is her advantage and quality as well.'

## Theatre

## Drama festival arranged by BSA

The reaction of the theatre leaders.

ERSHAD KAMOL

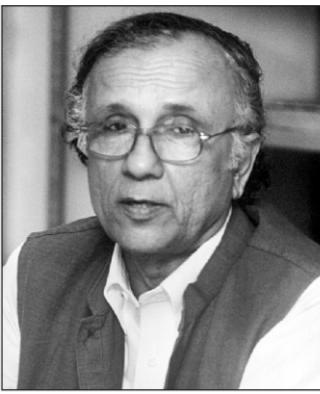
**T**HE drama and film department of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) arranged a weeklong drama festival at the National Theatre Stage from April 4 to April 11. Eight theatrical groups from eight districts-Norail, Thakurgaon, Chapia Nawabganj, Noakhali, Chittagong, Gazipur, Potaikhali and Lakshmipur-staged one play each in the festival entitled *Shopatah Bayeepe Natyautsov-2004*.

The aim of this drama festival is to decentralise theatre practice from Dhaka to all parts of the country. BSA has been holding this type of festival since 1981 to decrease the gap of the quality of the productions between the renowned theatrical groups and those from the district level. And I think we are successful in doing that,' said SM Mohsin, Director of Drama and Film Department of BSA.

However, theatre leaders criticise this objective. As Ramendu Majumdar, the President of International Theatre Institute (ITI) Bangladesh Branch said, 'It is a fact that BSA is giving scope to some of the regional groups to stage shows in Dhaka. However, I doubt how effective this would be. I think, they should jointly work with Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGT). Moreover, they should do something to enrich the mainstream theatre. First of all they should patronise the mainstream theatre, as theatre practice in Bangladesh is not yet popular enough. Then they should play an active and effective role at the district level. Without the involvement of the mainstream theatre activists, the BSA officials would not be able to do any thing productive other than wasting money.'

Mamunur Rashid, the President of BGT, also has a grouse. In his words, 'Our organisation has got regional branches at the district and division levels. I do not understand how BSA can arrange a drama festival without our involvement. In their current festival they have invited those theatre groups which are not very active most of the time. Most of those groups are not even our regional level members. I do not understand much about BSA's way of selecting groups for the festival.'

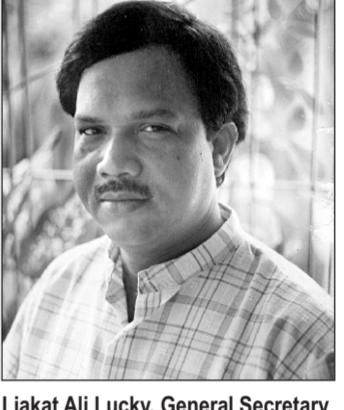
I think, if BSA really wants to do something for theatre in our country, they should work in a joint venture



Ramendu Majumdar, (L) President, International Theatre Institute (ITI) Bangladesh and Mamunur Rashid, President of BGT

with BGT. Moreover, they should immediately open the National Theatre Stage for performances.'

Ataur Rahman, the General



Ataur Rahman, the General Secretary of BGT

throughout the country.

'Moreover, the government should provide bigger budgets for art and culture and should involve the artists in the projects to run it smoothly. In this case political victimisation of artists should be eliminated.'

Liaquat Ali Lucky, the General Secretary of BGT said, 'Usually the audience expect to watch quality productions in a festival arranged by a government organisation like BSA. In my opinion, the festival was not fruitful at all. BGT has got nearly about 300 theatre group members all over the country. If BSA wants to improve the standard of the production of the theatrical groups from district level, they could have invited BGT member groups. At least, BGT ensures the minimum standard of its members. Ignoring these groups is wrong. I fail to understand BSA's motivation behind this festival.'

'Moreover, I know that BSA also arranges workshops on drama. Their role is mysterious in that case also. I think it is simply a wastage of money. In my position as the General Secretary of BGT, I told them to change their procedure, but they have not taken any step yet. I believe that on the National Theatre Stage at BSA, only those groups which stage quality plays have the right to display theatres. It is really pathetic that the groups, which are not active the year round, are staging plays at the National Theatre Stage while the mainstream theatre groups in the country are ignored.'



Anisul Islam Hero, an internationally acclaimed dancer of Bangladesh, has been invited to perform in fund raising programmes arranged by anti-HIV/AIDS organisation Vision (Lahore), says a press release. He will perform dances to spread awareness about AIDS among people in three solo recitals in Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi from April 15 to 25. He will also conduct a workshop with some Pakistani dancers. Recently Hero has been awarded with the Uro-Binodan Bichitra 2003 Award in the dance category.

## Stardom

## Madonna provokes Irish ire with Sunday concert



**D**UBLIN (Reuters) - Pop diva Madonna came under fire from Christians in Ireland on Friday after it was confirmed she would play her first ever Irish concert on a Sunday.

Madonna is due to play Slane Castle, 30 miles north of Dublin, on Sunday, August 29, the castle's owner Lord Henry Mount Charles confirmed.

He denied that Madonna, who has developed an interest in Jewish mysticism recently, had refused to play on Saturday because it is the Jewish Sabbath.

'It is the only date and day feasible,' he said.

But Joe Deegan, Slane's parish priest, said the decision was insensitive in a country where 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic.

'The Lord's Day for a lot of people around this part of the world is Sunday and it seems a bit inconsiderate and insensitive that our religious beliefs are not taken into account,' he told RTE state radio on Friday.

The last time Slane Castle hosted a major concert on a Sunday - in 1984 when Bob Dylan played -- it sparked riots. 'I knew people would stir up memories of 1984,' Lord Mount Charles said.

This year Bob Dylan is playing in Galway on Sunday, June 27. So if he can play there on a Sunday, I am puzzled why there is opposition to Madonna playing Slane on a Sunday.

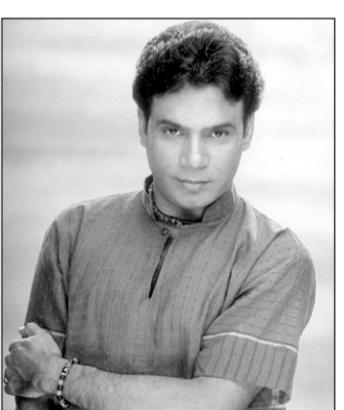
## Strategy



Indian actor Govinda gestures as he addresses journalists at a press conference in Bombay, 25 March, after the Congress announced his candidature for the key north Bombay constituency in the forthcoming national elections. Govinda is the latest and the biggest Bollywood catch joining politics ahead of the elections and will take on the country's petroleum minister Ram Naik, a five times winner from north Bombay.

## Cultural exchange

## Hero to perform in Pakistan



A picture shows precious ornaments and gilded sarcophagi from King Tutankhamun's tomb which will go on show in the Swiss city of Basel, marking the return of the treasures of ancient Egypt's pharaoh to Europe for the first time in 20 years.

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

## News Bulletin

**BTW**  
News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am.12:10 pm. 2:00 pm. 3:00 pm. 4:00 pm. 7:00 pm.

News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 1:00 pm.5:00 pm. 8:00 pm.

News (English) at 3:00 pm. 10:00 pm. Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm.

**CHANNEL-i**  
Breakfast News 7:15 am. 9:00 am. News (Bangla) at 7:15 pm, 9:00, 10:30, 12:15 am.

Telecast of BTW News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

Latest News (Bangla) at 9 a.m.10:00 am. 11:00 am. 2:00 pm. 3:00 pm. 4:00 pm.6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

**ntv**  
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am. 12:00 am. 5:00 pm. 6:15 pm. 9:30 pm. News (Bangla) 7:30 am. 2:00 pm. 7:30 pm. 10:30 pm.

Telecast of BTW News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

**TARA BANGLA**  
NewsHeadlines(Bangla) at 5:30 pm. 7:30 pm.

Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm. 11:30 pm.

Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

**BBC WORLD**  
Every hour on the hour

## CHANNEL-i

09:45 Tritiyo Matra  
12:00 Chithi Pelam  
12:30 Drama Serial: Amar

Ebong Cinemar Gaan  
Katha Likhun  
01:00 Sangbadpatrey  
Bangladesh and public

02:00 Bangla Film:

Minuyadando (Rubel, Kavita)

04:30 Toyota Wild Life

05:00 Sa Re Ma Ga Ma

05:45 FCT Business Talk