

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural programme

April 22
Cultural organisation, Kranti organised an award giving and cultural programme at the Goethe Institut (House-10, Road-9, Dhamondi) today at 6 pm. Artiste Mahmud Selim will be awarded with the Jahangir alam Memorial Award in the programme.

April 22

On the occasion of the Bangla New Year Bangladesh Loka Sangeet Parishad (Bangladesh Folk Music Council) has organised its regular monthly programme at the Biswa Shabtiya Kendra auditorium at 5 pm.

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 04-24

On the occasion of its fifth anniversary, the Bengal Foundation is holding a solo exhibition by artist Jean Domett. The show will remain open for all from 12 pm to 8 pm everyday.

Film show

April 05-26
The Indian High Commission will screen films *Bobby*, *Hungama* and *Aankhen* on April 19, 20 and 21 as part of its regular bi-weekly film show programme. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, Gulshan-2. Time: 6 pm.

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 and two traditional bamboo artisans. The display remains open from 10 am to 7 pm daily.

Music

April 30
The Indian High Commission in Dhaka, in conjunction with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, will present a light classical music programme by Penaz Masani at 7 pm at the Osmani Memorial Hall, Dhaka.

Water world



PHOTO: AFP

Former mermaid Dottie Meares (L), age 73 who worked in 1957-61, and Bev Sutton who worked in 1969-72 perform during their monthly alumni performance *Tails of Yester Year* at Weeki Wachee Springs on recently, at the water park located 60 miles north of St. Petersburg, Florida. The mermaids breath compressed air from a hose during their 30 minute show.

Theatre workshop

'My Unknown Enemy' -- more than theatre

An international theatre workshop held at Goethe Institut

FAYZA HAQ

ALEXANDER Stillmark, a visiting theatre director from Bonn, speaking about the workshop, *My Unknown Enemy* that he had conducted recently at the Goethe Institut (GI), said, 'This meeting is that of theatre professionals from Nepal, India and Pakistan. We didn't know each other before--we got to know each other in nine days before the stage performance at GI. This is the fifth time that I've come to Bangladesh; I have good friends at the International Theatre Institute (ITI) and my impressions of Bangladesh are not so poisoned as that of two years back (I'm referring here to the Dhaka traffic jams); of course, I enjoyed the eastern hospitality that I encountered at the friends' places, where I stayed, and had several tête-à-têtes, which were simply overwhelming and beyond words. I loved the food, music and camaraderie that had ensued. Every visit to Bangladesh has been a big adventure; I saw new things, met new people, and remarked at how developed the theatre scene was at Dhaka. In our time of mass communication, the most important thing is the personal contact between people and countries. The workshop had been like a family within less than a week.'

Ujjal Bhattacharjee, Editor, Deutsche Welle (Hindi Dept.), Bonn, who helped Stillmark conduct the workshop, said: 'This is my first visit to Bangladesh although my roots trace back to Faridpur, 250 years back, during the Battle of Plassey. My entry into theatre is as a translator of literature, including plays and poems of Hiener Muller, the most important Germany playwright after Bertolt Brecht. I've done a couple of workshops; this time there is no special translation project in this particular workshop, *My Unknown Enemy*; but this time the theatre people with different lingual background have got together; as a journalist I can comprehend people with different backgrounds of the subcontinent. The political backgrounds of the workshop participants are important due to the concept of the workshop.'

'Here participants have come from countries, which have got certain animosity between each other; they met at Dhaka, a neutral spot. If Indians go to Pakistan, Pakistanis become the hosts and vice versa; both sides don't have the same opportunity to react with the same element of aggressiveness, let us say, to bring out the aggressiveness that ensued from the same starting position. On mutual grounds all have the same privileges: this was the basic concept of this theatre workshop.'

'They have done, for instance as the Palestinians, Israelis and other people from Middle East origin held workshops when they met earlier in Cyprus. Last year, the workshop on Hiener Muller had actors, directors and theatre critics. This isn't easy as the protagonist becomes extremely complex, but somehow the effort worked.'

Asked to speak on the interaction between the participants of the workshop at GI, Bhattacharjee said, 'It was really very good. I have

experience of meeting Pakistani counterparts, writers like Intizar Hussain, artists like Iqbal Banu and film stars like Resham. But theatre people, when they meet and work on a theme, search and trace the aspects of enmity between different countries, with their own experiences. It is sometimes not enough to say that 'we're brothers'; let's find out what are the aspects and elements of this enmity.'

One has to search for the prejudices within oneself. One tries to find these out against one's social and intellectual backgrounds. One brings them out and shares them with each other. Theatre is creation, despite different prejudices, emotions etc. The play *Waiting for Godot* presented here, is like a pile of mud, where with all the varied emotions one makes the journey through life.'

Dwelling on why the particular play had been chosen, Bhattacharjee said, *Waiting for Godot* emerged against the European background of World War II, where there was no hope and people were expecting for a change for the better. They didn't know what this change was or how it would come. People were waiting, but they didn't know for whom.

The questions were secondary while the waiting was the primary element of their existence. The question is whether we are now in the same situation in the zones of conflict and problems today. We don't know what we are waiting for again, nevertheless, we are waiting for something that is liberating. The play shows the tension in a state. It shows the absurdity in which there

is a definite logic and in that way the play is very realistic—one finds various elements in *Waiting for Godot*. Samuel Beckett's famous play, in my opinion, becomes more relevant in a place like South Asia than that in Europe.'

Nasiruddin Yousuff, who organised the workshop said, 'I didn't do this alone—Bangladesh International Theatre Institute Centre helped me; the idea of this workshop came into my mind when I met Stillmark at Athens in 2002, when I was the president of CICD (Culture Identity and Development Committee of ITI) and agreed to his plan of a workshop at Dhaka. I had the help of the CICD of various countries. We found the idea of the workshop interesting as it included people from three countries—India, Pakistan and Nepal—where tension prevails; they have come to neutral Bangladesh. The characters come and react to each other ad lib.'

Talking about whether he had faced any problems, Yousuff said, 'The workshop projected the fact that there is boundless affection for each individual, no matter what his origin, once one came to Bangladesh. It proved that the average individual has no intrinsic hatred for each other.'

Atau Rahman of the ITI, Bangladesh and Ramendu Majumdar, both well known theatre personalities, present at GI that evening, lauded the play, *Waiting for Godot*. They had high praise for the deep-seated socio-political thought behind the play, as well as the efforts of the director and the participants of the workshop.

Book launch

Bangladesh National Culture and Heritage launched

ERSHAD KAMOL

THE Centre for Social Science and Public Policy Research of Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), a leading private university, has published an introductory book—*Bangladesh National Culture and Heritage*. Chief guest Justice Habibur Rahman, former Chief Justice and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government, launched the book, distributed by Pathok Shorbesh, recently.

Professor Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor, IUB, was in the chair while Abul Ahsan, Executive Director, Centre for Social Science and Public Policy, IUB was the host.

Professor AF Salahuddin Ahmed, one of the editors of *Bangladesh National Culture and Heritage*, introduced the book to the audience. He said that 25 articles have been included in the book.

Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui,

the former Vice Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University, and Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, Department of English, Dhaka University were the reviewers of the book.

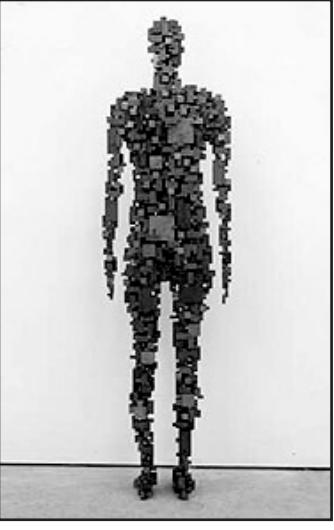
Professor Siddiqui said, 'I congratulate a private university like Independent University for putting together this book. However, because of political, social and religious impact sometimes it is difficult to point out the facts of history. The weakest part of the book is the section on religion. In the topic we see that the writer has evaluated Christianity. However, the impact of Christianity on our culture remains unfocused. Moreover, in the discussion on Islam, some concepts of the Muslim philosophers have been mentioned which are not practised in our country. I suggest the inclusion of a selected chronology of history of Bangladesh.'

Professor Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, in his concluding remarks said: 'We not only tried to focus on the socio-cultural heritage of Bangladesh but also tried to introduce the eminent authors to the young generation of the country.'

3D drawing



SOURCE: BBC ONLINE



UK artist Antony Gormley has created a 3D 'drawing in space' for his latest installation at a London art gallery. Gormley, famous internationally for his *Field* series of sculptures, is the man behind *Clearing*—a seven-kilometre raw metal rod which fills the space of the White Cube gallery. Arcing from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, it becomes a complex matrix apparently without beginning or end, encouraging the viewer to move through its structure. As part of the exhibition, Gormley has placed three body forms built from individual cubes of steel inside the gallery space. The figures are seen crouching, lying and standing, placed in a way that invites the viewer to negotiate a space between them. Gormley has referred to his work as 'an attempt to materialise uncertainty'. The installation at White Cube, London, runs from 21 April to 29 May.

Celebration

Scholastica holds its annual function

THE junior and middle sections of Schoastica school held their annual function for this year on April 16 and 17 at the STM Hall at Uttara. For the first time in the history of the school, children ranging from age groups of 3 to 11 performed on the same stage, says a press release.

The programme started with the performances by the children of Playgroup to KG II. They staged colourful productions of *Tatty Ghora*, *Humpty Dumpty*, *Noton Noton*, *Buck Bakum*, *Wee Willie Winkle* and *Diddle Diddle*. Their rendition of the famous song *Amader deshta swapnopuri* created a dream-come-true world of magic and merriment on the stage.

The Middle section began their performance with a musical excerpt from *Mary Poppins* followed by Rabindranath Tagore's *Hing Ting Chhot*. A ballet dance titled *Baby Beluga* and items like *Olympic Games*, *Chhonde Taale* Bangladesh earned huge applause from the audience. At the end of the programme, all children came on stage holding candles and pledging a promise of unity with all children of the world through the song *We are the world/We are the children*.

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Students rendering the famous song *Amader deshta swapnopuri* creating a dream-come-true world of magic and merriment on stage

PHOTO: AFP

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