

CULTURAL FEAST

**Ekushey Boi Mela**

Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Bangla Academy premises
Date: February 1-28
Month-long book fair to be inaugurated today at 2:30pm

National Street Theatre Festival

Organisers: Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation & Bengal Foundation
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar
Date: February 2-7
Time: 4:00pm

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: In Quest of Truth and Beauty
Artist: Samarjit Roy Choudhury
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Bengal Shilpalaya, House no-275/F, Road no-27 (Old), Dhammoli
Date: January 28-February 10
Time: 12:00pm-8:00pm

Folk Festival 2007

Organiser: Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation
Venue: Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation, Sonargaon
Date: February 3-17

Group Art Show

Title: Appointment 2007
Venue: Shilpgram, Road 3, House 26
Date: February 5-18
Time: 10:00am-1:00pm & 5:00pm-9:00pm

Theatre

'Cyclewala': In search of the elusive truth

ERSHAD KAMOL

MANY of us are acquainted with world classics such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, where the master playwrights have sought the meaning of life through an arduous journey. But few know about leading contemporary Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar's allegorical play *The Cyclist*, which unravels the exploitation of power and latent violence in human relationships, seeking always a well-deliberated resolution.

Natychakra staged the premiere show of their 49th production, *Cyclewala*, a translation of *The Cyclist* at the Experimental Theatre Stage on February 3.

Vijay Tendulkar's narrative is a skilfully crafted, uninterrupted piece about the adventure of life through a cyclist's journey. But the play is more than a mere journey of a cyclist rather a metaphysical journey -- a journey of the mind in search of the elusive truth. And the complex theme has been tackled with a simple form and language -- an episodic structure and naturalistic dialogue by the experimental dramatist Tendulkar.

There is no specific geographical location in which the play is set, but the work depicts a place from which the protagonist is trying to get away. He dreams of distant lands, oceans and mountains, wanting to see exotic places, meet interesting people. Similarly the names of the characters are also metaphorical like

A scene from *Cyclewala*

PHOTO: ISHTIAQUE BIN QASHEM

'Main Character', 'Ma', 'Baba', 'Lion', 'Terrorist', 'Ghost' and others, which indicates that the play is beyond any cultural and political boundaries rather it has a universal theme. It unravels man's dehumanisation through a series of encounters, which though often extravagantly comic, tend to become illogical and bizarre as the viewer moves deeper into the play.

Director Irfan Parveen Lopa has used masks for all the supernatural characters. Her handling of the 'psychological exploration of the Main Character', is effective only in a few scenes such as the Mermaid's attempt to seduce the Main Character and the confrontation between the Pedestrian and Main Character and encounter scene of Main Character and the Terrorist. But, the directorial compositions in the remainder of the play sometimes appear to be akin to children's fantasy, especially in the sequences where the Main Character meets Lord of Earth and Sun, Ghost and Lion.

As the bulk of the play is in the form of a narrative, it is really difficult for any actor to perform in the role of Main Character. In each of the sequences the character needs to react to different aesthetic sentiments such as 'wonder', 'joy', 'ambiguity', 'sadness' and others. Junaid Eusuf as the Main Character has an energetic presence. However, he needs to develop his potential to articulate the aesthetic sentiments. In her short presence, Ashura Akbar Rima as Mermaid was noticeable. Khondoker Fazlur Karim as Baba was also impressive.

Dancer on the rise**Tête-à-tête with Nisa**

KAVITA CHARANJI

At the mere age of 20, Sabrina Shafi Nisa is a name to watch for. The comedienne dancer combines her passion for dance with acting on TV and modeling. Asked which medium she roots for, she unequivocally says her forte is dance -- Bharatnatyam, contemporary and folk. "Dance speaks a universal language and I find it a great way to express my emotions," she says.

Currently a third year honour's student of English at Siddheshwari Girls' College, Nisa embarked on the world of dance at the tender age of four at Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts. Encouraged by her mother Julia, she discovered an innate interest in the medium. Currently a student of dance under the tutelage of Bharatnatyam and modern dancer Anisul Islam Her, director of the Sri Sri Cultural centre, dance has taken her to distant climes such

as Spain, Turkey, Myanmar, Malaysia, India and Vietnam. Apart from Hero, she has also trained with Kabirul Islam Ratan (folk and contemporary dance) and Minu Haque (Odissi).

Several plaudits have come her way: the most recent being the Jatio Shikha Barsho Puroshkar gold medal (2002) and champion in the Goalini Binodon Bichitra Beauty Contest (2004).

Outside the dance firmament, the small screen also attracts Nisa. She is a regular anchor for a weekly programme *Cine Tune* on Channel 1. The programme traces the history of Bangladeshi film songs. In the ranks of TV dramas, she counts as her favourite *Ghore Daranar Shopno* (directed by Taher Shipon) aired on ntv. This social drama pits her with well-known actor Asaduzzaman Noor (enacting the role of her father), who she says was a pleasure to work with. Another TV drama she cites is *Meghe Boleche*

Jabo Jabo, aired on ntv every Thursday and Friday at 8:30pm.

Among her recent milestones is game show on Channel 1 called *Citycell Let's Move* in which she won the first prize of a car. Other dancers who participated in the show were Munmun Ahmed (Kathak), Tamanna Rahman (Manipuri), Dipa Khondoker (folk and creative), Shahidul Islam Babu (contemporary), among others.

On the modeling front, she made waves with ads for Lux and Bangla Link. But no, unlike many of her peers, dance is not a launching pad for a career in films or electronic media. Says an unequivocal Nisa, "For me dance is an end in itself."

As for the future, Nisa maintains a positive approach about the development of dance in Bangladesh. On whether dance will become her career, she says, "Time will tell."



Sabrina Shafi Nisa

Oscars up for grabs

Not just are Oscar films selling more DVDs, now even the big prizes are up for grabs. And they're marked down to just US \$8.99 each.

This replica is available at any shop in Hollywood Blvd, LA near the Kodak Theatre. Most of the nominees will, however, be hoping for more than just a copy of the trophy.

The 79th Annual Academy Awards will take place on February 25.

Source: Internet

Jennifer Hudson: "I was abused, brainwashed by 'American Idol'"

Newly minted movie star Jennifer Hudson is biting the hand that fed her -- charging she was "abused" and "brainwashed" by *American Idol*.

"On *American Idol*, you go through this mental thing; you've got to get yourself back together," she says in the March issue of *Essence* magazine, according to an excerpt published by *People*.

"You've been abused, mistreated and brainwashed to believe whatever they want you to think."

Those are strong words from Hudson, who owes her big break to *Idol*, on which she appeared as a contestant in 2004.

She's now a favourite to win an Oscar after being nominated as Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Dreamgirls*.

Hudson, 25, also tells *Essence* that *Idol* unfairly branded her.

"You become a character -- I became the girl in the turkey wrapping," she says, alluding to an unflattering outfit she wore on an *Idol* episode. "I just knew I had to sing my way out of it," she says.

Hudson was voted off the third season of *Idol*, then brought back in a wild card round and eventually made it through to the finals. Fantasia Barrino ended up winning that season.

In the *Essence* interview, Hudson also comments on her alleged feud with *Dreamgirls* co-star Beyoncé Knowles.

"We clicked from day one," she says.

Source: Internet

Jennifer Hudson during a performance in the third season of *American Idol***Ustad Sunil Kumar Dhar****Fostering the tradition of classical music**

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Ustad Sunil Kumar Dhar, 74, is a classical music exponent living in greater Mymensingh. For his contribution to classical music over the last 60 years, Dhar was accorded a reception recently by Mymensingh Ramakrishna Ashram, marking the 145th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda at its auditorium.

A discussion was held with Swami Sarbeswara Nanda, principal of local Ramakrishna Ashram in the chair. "Sunil Dhar has reached a reputable position through his devotion to classical music," was the consensus of the speakers.

Born on Chaitra 14, in the Bengali year 1340 (1933) at the village Tarati in Muktagacha upazila, the son of late Dr Akshay Kumar Dhar and Surashibala Dhar, Dhar started taking music lessons at the age of six. "I started training under my uncle late Kumud Kumar Dhar," said Dhar.

After matriculation he immersed himself in learning music and settled in Mymensingh town in 1962.

Later Dhar trained under late Bijoy Krishna Bhattacharya, a noted classical musician in the region. He also took *taalim* (lessons) in *Thumri* from Ustad Bipin Das, a prominent classical artiste



Ustad Sunil Kumar Dhar with his surmandal

and sitar player. He also had the opportunity to train under classical maestro Ustad Alauddin Khan when he visited the palace of Muktagacha zamindars in 1952. Dhar enriched his classical performances under the tutelage of Jagadananda Barua on *Dhrupad* and *Dhamar*. Jagadananda was one of the pioneers of Bangladesh Dhruba Parishad.

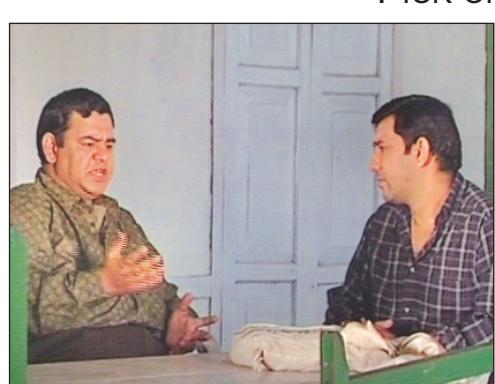
Dhar was given the Sangeet Bhashkar title by Druba Parishad and a gold medal from Pakistan Art Council in 1958. He was a regular artiste of Bangladesh Betar from 1959 to 1965.

Founder principal of the local Nazrul Academy since 1966 and president of Dhruba Parishad Mymensingh unit, Dhar was also associated with a variety of cultural organisations such as local Shilpakala Academy and Muktagacha Sangeet Vidyalaya, among others.

Dhar has also groomed several notable music talents such as Parveen Sultana of India, and has performed with eminent artistes from both Bangladesh and India, including Abbas Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Alim, Sohrab Hossain, Khadem Hossain Khan, Mir Kashem Khan, and more.

Commenting on the current state of classical music in the country, Dhar grieves: "We have failed to create a sizeable audience for classical music."

Source: Internet

TV GUIDE**PICK OF THE DAY**

Kath Koyilar Chhobi

On ATN Bangla at 08:00pm

Drama Serial

Cast: Tauquir Ahmed, Bipasha Hayat



Frasier

On Star World at 10:00pm

TV Series

Cast: Kelsey Grammer, John Mahoney

STAR WORLD

09:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show

10:30 The Apprentice

11:30 The Office

12:00 Two And A Half Men

12:30 Third Watch

01:30 Criminal Minds

02:30 Oprah Winfrey Show

03:30 The Bold And The Beautiful

04:00 General Hospital

05:00 Table For Three

06:00 Arrested Development

06:30 The Simpsons

07:00 Ultimate Enemies

07:30 Friends

08:00 Seinfeld

08:30 My Wife And Kids

09:00 Everybody Loves Raymond

09:30 The King Of Queen

10:00 Frasier

11:30 Table For Three

12:00 Grand Prix (Auto Racing)

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

09:30 Ultimate Enemies

10:45 Telemall

11:00 Bhagavashali Ratna

11:15 Hyenas Queen

12:30 Giant Panda

01:30 Science Safari

02:30 Monkey Business

03:00 Mona and Colobus Monkeys

03:30 Ultimate Enemies

04:30 Crocs and Shocks

05:00 Nat Geo Genius

05:30 Big Bang

06:00 Swimming With Sea Snakes

06:30 Ultimate Enemies

07:00 Politics

08:30 Crash On The Mountain

09:30 The Hindenburg

10:30 Car Chases

11:30 Coldest Blooded

12:00 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

09:30 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

10:30 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

11:30 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

12:30 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

11:30 Sportscenter Asia (Sport News)

1