

CULTURAL FEAST

National Theatre Festival

**Organiser:** Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation  
In association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
**Time:** 7pm  
**Venue:** National Theatre Stage  
**March 15**  
Jahangirnagar University  
Nimajon  
**March 16**  
Subochon Natya Sangshad  
Rupoboti  
**March 17**  
Desh Natak  
Jonome Jonmantor

**Venue:** Experimental Theatre Hall  
**March 15**  
Govindagonj Theatre  
Shondor Alir Pala  
**March 16**  
Theatre (Tophkana)  
Shonar Boron Koiniya  
**March 17**  
Theatre (Arambag)  
Bolid

The schedule is subject to change

**Play:** Fairy is a Reality: Aladdin  
**Troupe:** Friday theatre Group, Alliance Francaise de Dacca  
**Venue:** Auditorium of the Goethe-Institut Bangladesh  
**Date:** March 15 & 16  
**Time:** 7:00pm

Exhibition on Urban Conservation/Reservation

**Title:** Old But New But Old  
**Organiser:** British Council & North South University  
**Venue:** British Council, 5 Fuller Road, Dhaka  
**Date:** March 15-31  
**Time:** 10am-6pm daily, except Fridays

Erratum

In the March 12 issue of our Culture page the photographs of *Sattandha* and *Cyclewala* have been inadvertently misplaced. We regret the error.

Justice for Nurjahan

Photography exhibition at Drik Gallery

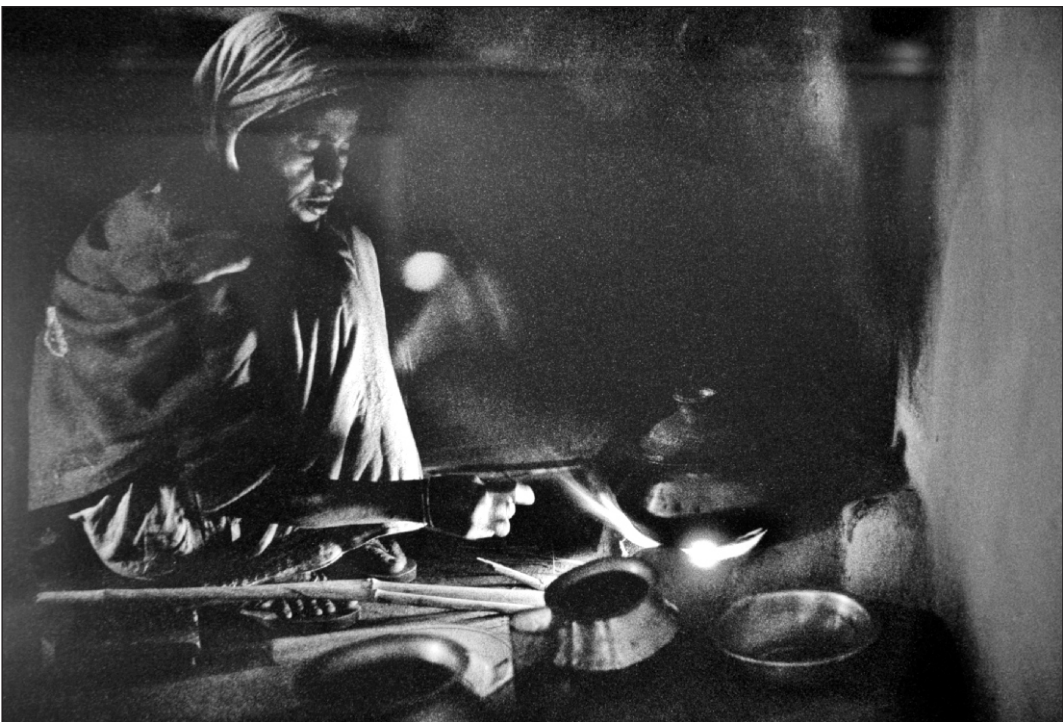
KARIM WAHEED

"JUST give me my daughter back. That's all I ask..." reads a caption accompanying the grainy, black and white image of a feeble elderly man; rage and despair in his eyes.

The riveting photograph is part of the ongoing exhibition at Drik Gallery. Titled *Justice for Nurjahan*, the exhibition opened on March 12 and features photographs by Shahidul Alam and text by Rahnuma Ahmed.

Buried waist-deep in the ground, Nurjahan -- a woman in her twenties -- awaited her punishment. Hundred and one pebbles were to be thrown at her. As she waited, a member of the *shalish* (a rural court for informal adjudication of disputes both civil and criminal, by local influential individuals) approached her and reprimanded her for being an adulteress. She was told that her existence was a shameful one and death should be preferable to that. The next day (January 10, 1993) Nurjahan -- 7th among 9 daughters of dirt-poor parents living in Chattokchara village, Maulvi Bazar district -- was found dead. She had poisoned herself.

Rewind: Like many women from rural impoverished families, Nurjahan Begum returned to her parents' after her husband abandoned her. She was married off five years ago. Her parents arranged another marriage for her, but



Nurjahan's pots and pans are still used by her mother

according to Muslim law, it was necessary to ascertain whether her first marriage had been properly dissolved. Nurjahan's father consulted the village *imam* (religious leader) Maulana Mannan, who said she could get married. However,

once the marriage took place, the *imam* annulled his decision and declared that the marriage was illegal. A *shalish* was convened and it found Nujahan guilty of adultery. The verdict: 101 pebbles should be thrown at Nurjahan and her second husband.

Thanks to the efficient journalistic role played by one of the dailies in Sylhet, the whole nation came to know of the harrowing tale that matches barbaric practices from medieval times. A campaign demanding criminal investigation into the circumstances of death was launched. Mass support turned it into a landmark case.

Internationally acclaimed photographer Shahidul Alam is known for his mastery over the use of light and shadows. Dramatic elements are accentuated in the black and white images.

In one photograph, Maulana Mannan and his 8 accomplices (members of the *shalish*) are seen in the dock in Maulvi Bazar Court; their faces seem devoid of remorse, or any human emotion for that matter. Another image shows Mannan in a cell, looking straight into the camera.

Scribbles all over the wall give the image a surreal touch.

Wife of one of the accused is seen waiting outside courtroom. Vague outline of her face through a *burqa* is visible. A poster on the wall urges everyone to join a long march demanding the reconstruction of Babri Masjid. Nurjahan's mother is seen cooking in a photograph; flames elucidate her face. The family still uses pots and pans Nurjahan left behind -- her only possessions.

Nurjahan of Maulvi Bazar, Firoza of Satkhira, Kadbanu of Rangpur and several others like them -- all punished by their local *shalish* -- have unknowingly become heroes. Their stories have ignited campaigns and movements against traditions that still support men abandoning, judging and penalising women at their convenience.

The exhibition ends on March 22.



National Theatre Festival '07

'Dudhkumarar Pala': a Sarathi Natya Sampradaya production

Indigenous performing art form *palagaan* (narrative folk ballad) is a well-used form in the contemporary urban theatre. Using the ballad form, which comprises dance-drama-dialogue, Sarathi Natya Sampradaya staged a fairytale titled *Dudhkumarar Pala* at the National Theatre Stage.

The difference between the presentation of the theatre troupe and that of the folk artistes is that in Sarathi Natya Sampradaya production of *Dudhkumarar Pala* one character is performed by one artiste. And only to introduce the story and to transform from one sequence to another a dialogue between the *gayen* (lead singer) and *dohar* (supporting singer) has been used. On the other hand the *gayen* performs most of the characters as well as renders the narratives; and the *dohar*, instrumentalists and choristers appear only to accompany the *gayen* in a *palagaan* presented by the rural artistes.

Written and directed by Pintu Saha, *Dudhkumarar Pala* relates the story of the childless King Dhoneswar who is blessed by goddess Kali with a child. However, the goddess goes on to prophesy that the child will face terrible ordeals at the age of 20.

The warning rings out true.



Actors of Sarathi Natya Sampradaya stage *Dudhkumarar Pala*

When the child, Dudhkumar, becomes a 20-year old youth, he falls in love with Kanchanmala, the princess of another kingdom. When Dudhkumar goes there to marry her, he encounters numerous obstacles.

Though the presentation of the fairytale is interesting, the scenes are not smoothly transformed. Some of the actors such as Masud Karim as King Dhoneswar, Paritosh Kumar Barun as Dohar

performed well, but the rest of the artistes were not up to the mark. As a result the performance lost its momentum several times during the show.

As part of the ongoing National Theatre Festival arranged by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Sarathi Natya Sampradaya from Rangpur staged *Dudhkumarar Pala* on March 13.

'Bibhajon' staged



A scene from *Bibhajon*

On the same evening Habiganj district-based theatre troupe Jibon Sanket staged *Bibhajon* at the Experimental Theatre Stage.

Set against the backdrop of a village between 1947-71, *Bibhajon* features how bonds between individuals, who have lived peacefully in the region for hundreds of years, are torn apart by communal conflicts between Hindus and Muslims.

Focusing on the communal conflict, Ruma's play raises some eternal questions: What is more important to individuals -- religion or humanism? Should relationships between human beings be divided by the doctrines of religions?

Sudip Chakraborty is the director of the play.

By Ershad Kamol

'Oz-er Jadukar': A timeless tale revisited

MAINUL HASAN

Chorobeti Children's Theatre School (CCTS) staged *Oz-er Jadukar* (*The Wizard of Oz*), recently. A timeless classic by L Frank Baum, the central theme is the adven-



Young actors perform in *Oz-er Jadukar*

tures of a little girl named Dorothy and her pet dog Toto. The story begins with a sudden tornado, which transports the duo off to an unknown land. Far from home, the young girl becomes desperate to go back. When all seems lost, the good witch of North comes to her aid. As a first step, she shows her a pair of silver shoes and tells her to wear them. Also the witch tells she that if she can find Oz, a powerful wizard, then he might be able to help her.

Young Dorothy sets out in a quest to find Oz which takes her on a wondrous journey through the mythical land. On her way she encounters a scarecrow, a tin man and a lion. The foursome team up -- each with an individual journey to make. The play was directed by Kazi Toufique Islam Emon and translated by Nasiful Walid.

Before the staging of *Oz-er Jadukar*, a short discussion and certificate giving session of the first batch students of (CCTS) was held. Actor Pijush Bandopadhyay and Jhuna Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, were guests at the session.

Cultural programme at Scholastica



Students of Scholastica in one of the plays

featured young actors eye-catching costumes, performing their parts superbly.

The last item, titled *Journey through Time*, was an apt name for the depiction of man's journey from the prehistoric times to the birth of Bangladesh.

The middle section of Scholastica School held their annual function recently at the school's senior section in Uttara, says a press release.

The show began with the staging of Tagore's well-known poem *Kanai Master*.

The second item was the all-time favourite *Cinderella*. This classic fairytale

Iranians outraged over hit movie '300'

AP, Tehran

The hit American movie *300* has angered Iranians who say the Greeks vs. Persians action flick insults their ancient culture and provokes animosity against Iran.

The movie, which raked in US \$70 million in its opening weekend, is based on a comic-book fantasy version of the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, in which a force of 300 Spartans held off a massive Persian army at a mountain pass in Greece for three days.

Even some American reviewers noted the political overtones of the West-against-Iran story line and the way Persians are depicted as decadent, sexually flamboyant and evil in contrast to the noble Greeks.

In Iran, the movie hasn't opened and probably never will, given the government's restrictions on Western films, though one paper said bootleg DVDs were already available.

Javad Shamghadri, cultural adviser to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said the United States tries to "humiliate" Iran in order to reverse historical reality and "compensate for its wrongdoings in order to provoke American soldiers and warmongers" against Iran.

But aside from politics, the film was seen as an attack

on Persian history, a source of pride for Iranians across the political spectrum, including critics of the current Islamic regime.

The movie comes at a time of increased tensions between the United States and Iran over the Persian nation's nuclear program and the Iraq war.



Gerard Butler (L) as King Leonidas and Rodrigo Santoro as King Xerxes in *300*

TV GUIDE

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

News Bulletin

**BTV**  
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. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).  
**CHANNEL-i**  
News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15 am.  
**ATN BANGLA**  
News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm.  
News (English) 8:20am, 7:00pm.  
Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 a.m, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.  
**ntv**  
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm.  
News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm.

**CHANNEL 1**  
News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 6:30pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm, 12:30am  
**BANGLAVISION**  
News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 2:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:30pm.  
News Headlines (Bangla) at 9:00pm  
News Headlines (English) at 9:05pm  
**RTV**  
News (Bangla) at 7:00am, 3:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:00pm.  
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:30am

BTV

11:15 Cookery Show  
11:40 Angona  
12:05 Mao O Shishur Kotha  
12:30 Swapno Shonar Gaon  
01:00 Shukhi Poribar  
02:15 Children's Drama  
02:40 Esho Gaan Shikhi  
03:05 Cartoon  
04:00 Esho Computer Shikhi  
04:30 Bansuri  
05:05 Documentary Programme  
05:30 Nobo Diganto  
06:40 Jiboner Alo  
07:00 Shadinota Amar Shadinota  
07:20 Shomoyer Shanglap  
08:15 ICC World Cup 2007: Zimbabwe Vs Ireland

CHANNEL i

09:30 Shanghbad Potre Bangladesh  
09:45 Public Reaction  
09:50 Grameen Phone  
10:00 Tritiyomatra  
12:30 Citicell Tarokakothon  
01:05 Ebong Cinemara Gaan  
01:30 Shanghbadpotre Bangladesh  
01:45 Public Reaction  
02:40 Tritiyo Matray  
03:05 Hridoye Mati O Manusher  
04:05 Teletalk Bishwa Cup

Special  
04:35 Amader Gaan  
04:50 Sa Re Ga Ma  
05:30 Special Programme  
06:00 Aktel sms Doradori  
06:20 Amar Chhobi  
07:50 Special Programme  
08:20 Drama Serial: Ferari  
09:35 Ekhone Shomoy  
10:00 Drama Serial: Nishidho Bonobhumi  
12:00 Grammenphone  
Ajker Shangbadpotro

ntv

06:20 Apnar Jigyasha  
06:50 Gaaner Shomoy  
07:30 Drama Serial: Ranger Manush  
08:15 Drama Serial: Megh Bolechhey Jabo Jabo  
08:50 Telefilm: Kobi  
12:10 Kichhu Kotha Kichhu Gaan

Channel 1

08:40 Shuprovat Bangladesh  
09:30 Chokh Mele Dekhi  
10:00 Shulela Lagan  
10:30 Bangla Feature Film  
02:00 Show Case  
03:30 Drama Serial: Ghughur Basha  
04:30 Baker Pathay  
05:15 Gollachhut  
06:00 Saaj Bela  
06:45 Mukti Judho  
07:00 Olpo Sholpo Golpo  
08:15 Drama Serial: Dokhinayon Society  
09:00 Drama Serial: Nokol



ICC World Cup 2007  
On BTV at 8:15pm  
Zimbabwe Vs Ireland  
Live from Jamaica

09:30 Poshak  
The One  
11:00 Gaaner Kotha Kothar Gaan  
**BANGLAVISION**  
09:30 Drama Serial: Swapno Chura  
Deshar Pathay  
10:10 Chaitali Jochhonay  
Eka Meyeti  
02:40 Drama Serial: Krishnopokho  
Music Moments  
04:15 Drama Serial: Dokhinayon  
Ichhey Ghuri  
05:00

PICK OF THE DAY



Ekhone Shomoy  
On Channel i 9:35pm  
Talk show featuring Asaduzzaman Nur, Sadya Afreen Mallick, Kanak Champa and Mahmuduzzaman Babu

01:30 Kay  
Kumkum - Pyara Sa  
Bandhan  
02:00 Bhabhi  
02:30 Kesar  
03:00 Saarthi  
03:30 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi  
04:00 Kayamath  
04:30 Karam Apnaa Apnaa  
08:00 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby  
08:30 Karam Apnaa Apnaa  
09:00 Kasauti Zindagi Kay  
09:30 Kaun Banega  
Crorepati- Sri  
10:30 Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii  
11:00 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi  
11:30 Kayamath  
12:00 Paraya Dhan  
**STAR MOVIES**  
09:30 Hard Target  
01:15 King Kong Lives  
01:00 Mighty Joe Young  
03:00 Cape Fear  
05:10 Fantastic Four  
07:00 Crash  
08:45 Dirty Deeds  
10:15 Creep  
**STAR WORLD**  
09:00 The Simpsons  
09:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show  
10:30 American Idol  
12:30 Heroes

CHANNEL

08:30 Wild Discovery  
09:30 I Shouldn't Be Alive  
10:30 African Adventures  
11:00 Stuntbags  
11:30 Dangerman Adventures  
With Geoff Mackley  
12:30 Feast India  
01:00 Finest Hotels In The World  
01:30 Wild Discovery  
01:30 Detective Stories  
03:30 Animal Camera  
04:00 Zach's Ultimate Guide  
04:30 Wild Discovery  
05:30 Journey Of Life  
06:30 Stunt Junkies  
07:00 Stuntbags  
07:30 Wild Discovery  
08:30 Planet Earth  
09:30 Meerkat Manor  
10:00 Animal Camera  
10:30 I Videogame  
11:30 A Haunting

AXN

08:30 Amazon  
09:30 Pensacola (Season 3)  
10:30 Numb3rs (Season 2)  
11:30 Ultimate Guinness  
World Records  
12:00 Maximum Exposure (Season 1)  
01:00 Ultimate Guinness  
World Records  
02:00 Numb3rs (Season 1)  
04:00 Maximum Exposure (Season 1)  
05:00 Ultimate Guinness  
World Records  
05:30 Andromeda (Season 5)  
06:30 Amazon  
07:30 Numb3rs (Season 2)  
08:30 Maximum Exposure (Season 1)  
09:30 Ripley's Believe It Or Not! (Season 2)  
10:30 Alias (Season 5)  
12:30 Ripley's Believe It Or Not!

DISCOVERY

10:30 American Idol  
12:30 Heroes

CHANNEL

08:30 Wild Discovery  
09:30 I Shouldn't Be Alive  
10:30 African Adventures  
11:00 Stuntbags  
11:30 Dangerman Adventures  
With Geoff Mackley  
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10:00 Animal Camera  
10:30 I Videogame  
11:30 A Haunting  
**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**  
08:30 White Shark  
09:30 Realm Of Great White Bear  
10:30 Global Sky Shop  
10:45 Bhagyashali Ratna  
11:00 Telemall  
11:30 Hollywood Science  
12:30 Hong Kong's Big Bet  
01:30 Leopards Of Bollywood  
02:30 Tasmania  
03:30 Realm Of Great White Bear  
04:30 Radar Crows  
05:00 Nat Geo Genius  
05:30 Big Bang  
06:00 Rattlesnake Road Trip  
06:30 Realm Of Great White Bear

CHANNEL

07:30 Assault On The Megahard  
08:30 Megafactories  
09:30 Frontline Of Construction  
10:30 Nat Geo Wild  
11:30 Lions Behaving Badly  
**ESPN**  
09:00 Taking Guard - West Indies Spec  
09:30 2006 State Farm U.S. Figure Skat  
10:30 Toyota Football Up Close  
11:00 Bangladesh Tour Of Zimbabwe  
12:30 Castle Test Series  
02:30 Atlantic Coast Conference Basket  
04:30 The Prince Of Kolkata  
05:00 Football Focus With John Dykes  
06:30 Taking Guard - West Indies Spec  
06:30 X Games 11 All Access Preview  
07:30 Goals!  
08:00 India?S Best With Sunil Gavaskar  
09:30 Planet Speed  
2006/2007  
10:00 Nba Action  
10:30 Sportscenter India  
11:00 Sportscenter Asia  
11:30 Le Tour De Langkawi 2007  
**STAR SPORTS**  
09:30 Hot Water 2006/07  
10:30 Fa Cup 2006/07  
12:30 Tci Classic  
03:30 International Motorsport News 20  
04:30 Tna Xplosion  
05:30 Caribbean Kings  
06:30 Tna Xplosion