

## CULTURAL FEAST

## Cartoon Exhibition

Title: Cartoon Against Corruption  
Organiser: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)  
Venue: Dr. K. G. Hall, House 56, Road 15A (New), Dhamondi  
Date: December 7-11  
Time: 3pm-8pm

## Art Exhibition

Title: Guenica: History of a Painting  
Organiser: Department of Spanish, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka  
Venue: Zainul Gallery 2, Institute of Fine Art, University of Dhaka  
Date: December 3-9  
Time: 12am-7pm

## Solo Art Exhibition

Title: The Story of a Deceased Man  
Artist: Mahbubur Rahman  
Venue: Galleri Kaya, House 20, Road 16, Sector 4, Utara  
Date: December 7-18  
Time: 11am-8pm

## Dhaka Book Fair 2007

Organised by: National Book Centre  
Venue: National Parade Square, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar  
Date: December 1-16

## Art Exhibition

Title: Nitun Kundu: The Creative Mind  
Artist: Nitun Kundu  
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Bengal Shilpalaya, H 275/F, Road 27 (old), Dhamondi  
Date: December 3-17  
Time: 12pm-8pm

## Exhibition

Title: Jhara Shishir Gaan  
Venue: Noya Upahar, 50, Aziz cooperative super market, 2nd floor, Shahbagh  
Date: December 1-10

## Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Entity-Sketches of Heritage  
Artist: Sajid Bin Doza Bonny  
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dacca, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhamondi  
Date: December 3-16  
Time: 9am-12pm & 3pm-8pm except Saturday (5pm-8pm)

## Solo Painting

Artist: Shyamal Roy Chowdhury  
Venue: Art & Soul Gallery, Road 36, House 15, Gulshan  
Date: November 30-December 16  
Time: 11am-8pm

## JUNG:De

An Interactive Exhibition on German Youth Culture  
Venue: Goethe-Institut, Bangladesh, House 10, Road 9, Dhamondi  
Date: December 6-12  
December 8  
Concert by the band 'BLACK'  
Doors open at 5:30, Concert starts: 6:00 pm  
(Tickets: Tk 50, all proceeds of the ticket sale will go to Sidr victims)

December 10-11  
5:00 pm onwards  
Film Screening: Youth in German Cinema (open to all)

Drama Exhibition Hours-  
Sun-Thursday: 10 am-8 pm, Saturday: 3pm, onwards  
(Closed on Friday)  
At least 115 theatres had been running in five northern districts of

# Wither contemporary art in Bangladesh?

In conversation with Nisar Hussain, Towfigur Rahman and Saidul Haque

## FAYZA HAQ

DOES Bangladeshi contemporary art really reflect "sweetness and light", as Matthew Arnold claimed the essence of culture to be? It is believed that a lot of it is not from the bottom of the heart, and does not have a "soul pitch". It often aims at quick sale and is sometimes even gimmicky. Three leading artists of repute, Nisar Hussain, Towfigur Rahman and Saidul Haque Juis talk about this subject over cups of tea at a residence in Dhamondi. They discuss the Bangladeshi art scene from their angles in as much an unbiased manner as possible.

Nisar Hussain says, "One wonders what percentage of contemporary art is creative practice and how much of it is market-oriented. This is the common scenario all over the world. Most artists work to meet their financial needs. Creative practice is a personal matter. The true artist will not care so much for fame or financial gains during his journey through life. He will seek the truth rather than exposure.

"Some of Picasso's work, e.g. is termed as not so successful; but they contain the artist's honesty and involvement with the quest for truth. They reflect the depth of his creative drive. People listen to leading musicians but the real essence is sometimes lost on some. Similarly great art is not necessarily readily appreciated."



Nisar Hussain



Towfigur Rahman



Saidul Haque

Nisar Hussain says that a work of art maybe created with chemicals and that the onlooker might feel that the end result is something complex and well worth wondering about. To create attractive visual art is not difficult, he comments. Artists are striving to be trendy. Just as perfection is not easy for the artist so selecting high art is difficult for the connoisseur, he concludes.

People are being drawn towards commercial art, says Towfigur Rahman. There is something lacking even in the creative artist, he says. Those who go in for quick popularity are not being true to the visual language of art, he adds. "Contemporary art, in my opinion, is not yet fully established, looking at it objectively. It is not clear that even dedicated and motivated artists have been able to go into the

depths of the truth, while presenting paintings or sculpture. Even from the global perspective, struggles are inevitable. It is in cases like the works of Zainul Abedin, Quamrul Hassan and SM Sultan that we get total dedication and products of a great measure of inspiration," he says.

"As we move on to abstraction, the struggle and depth of feeling and endeavour are sometimes somewhat missing. However, those who are simply selling their artworks are not to be ignored as their products too are artworks even though their concepts are nothing to really write home about. Their creations are simply like a facile colourful wall," Towfigur Rahman concludes.

Speaking in the same vein, Saidul Haque Juis says, "What applies to our country goes also for the rest of

the world." Gallery art, museum art, 'contract art' and souvenir art which expatriates crave after -- are variations of art, he says. In Bangladesh, he feels, souvenir artists sell in art galleries. Even in neighbouring Kolkata, he says, there is not such not such a confusion. Today, in Bangladesh, artwork that can decorate the homes find highest importance. Again, when the Shilpkala Academy came up, he says, folk art was promoted by those like Quamrul Hassan. SM Sultan worked from a village. Later, when the galleries mushroomed, the activities of the Shilpkala Academy saw a nose-dive while private galleries boomed. This ended in more confusion in the Bangladeshi art world, as I see it."

The discussion was thought provoking and at times iconoclastic.

## Cinema hall trade in disarray up North

Thirty cinema theatres shut down in last five years

## KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

More than 30 movie theatres in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, Jaipurhat, Nilphamari and Gaibandha have been closed down during the last five years and the rest follow suit as the cinema theatres are failing to draw audiences. This is due to absence of quality reels, copying of Indian films, high VAT and adding obscene footages, according to sources. The government is losing revenue from the trade as well.

According to the report of tax officials, the entertainment taxes of cinema halls have gone down by at least 40 percent.

Hall operators and owners said that the shortage of quality reels, which deter in only smaller number of audiences, along with rampant piracy, adding obscene footages with the homemade reels, high VAT (55% depending on their sale), high municipality taxes and maintenance costs of these halls forced to shutdown the halls as they failed to show quality films at their respective halls and loosing audiences, according to cinema hall owners sources.

At least 115 theatres had been running in five northern districts of

which 30 have been shut down during last five years. The rest of 85 theatres are limping with old machineries and 10 more are expected to be shut down this year.

According to the District Information Office officials in Dhrupur, five out of 25 theatres have shutdown. In Thakurgaon four out of 14, in Panchagarh three out of 14, in Nilphamari three out of 17 and in Gaibandha seven of 30 cinema

theatres remained closed for last five years.

While talking with *The Daily Star*, the cinema hall traders point out that the cinema hall trading in the region, which once entertained at least 80% people of the region, is now limping due to shortage of quality reels and government concept of high entertainment charge (55% depending on their sales) forcing them to add obscene reels with homemade cinema to

increase their earning these days. Most elites and cultural personnel of these districts suggested implementing the existing laws increase monitoring on the hall operators. Besides they sought better cooperation of the Film Censor Board.

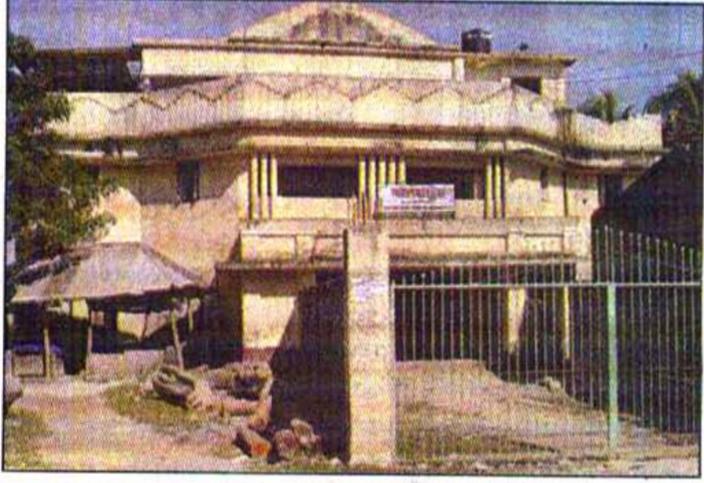
It is also learnt that many halls

have closed down since the last two to three years in the region but at least 50 per cent video traders and two cable operators registered in these districts within the last five years.

The government should take steps to promote the tourism and entertainment industry across the region by slashing the entertainment tax on the industry. Meanwhile, film producers should come up to produce number of good reels. This in turn will generate the income, added Md. Parvez, owner of Modern Cinema Hall in Dinajpur.

Now the grim scene of this industry discouraging new investors of the region though four cinema halls have been built in Ghalbanda in the last one year.

Another cinema hall operator in Thakurgaon said that he would shutdown his hall by the end of December this year due to the incurring losses.



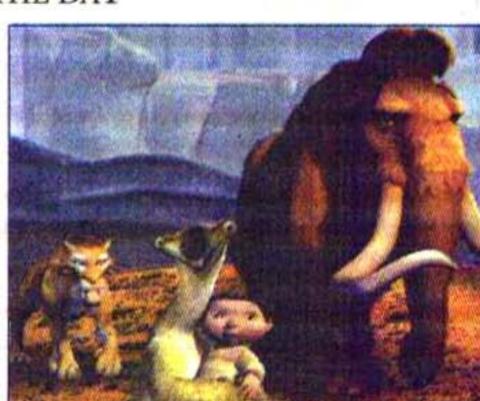
One of the 30 theatres in North Bengal that has been closed

## ON AIR

## PICK OF THE DAY



Phirey Dekha  
On Channel i at 10:00 pm  
Drama Serial  
Cast: Litu Anam, Ishita



Ice Age  
On Star Movies at 07:00 pm  
Genre: Animation  
Cast: Ray Romano, John Leguizamo

## Tête-à-tête with pop crooner

"It was for the love of the audience that I came back": Mehreen

## NADIA SARWAT

Mehreen became a female idol in the neo-pop genre in Bangladesh after her debut album *Anaari* (2000) was released. Her voice and singing style came like a breath of fresh air to the pop music lovers who were craving for this revival.

Simultaneously a host, news presenter and occasionally a ramp model, Mehreen was absent from the scenario for some time as she was going through the most special experience of her life, motherhood. However, she made a brilliant comeback with the video album *Tomar Jonyo*, released in the *Eid-ul-Fitr*. One of the songs, titled *Gonontro* at once caught the viewer's attraction. Recently this versatile talented artist shares her feelings with *The Daily Star*.

"*Gonontro*, came totally from instinct. I think it's a kind of response to show that we, the common people are not dumb; each of us has the social eye indeed," says Mehreen.

The concept of Music video is now an established one and Mehreen's new video album is a conscious effort to apply this concept in a thoroughly professional approach.

"I think people can connect with a song more if it is also presented visually. In the western countries, music video became an integrated part of a song since the early 80s. But, in our country, rarely any big budget music videos are made. *Tomar Jonyo* is a big budget album released by Impress Audio vision in which we tried to be perfect starting from the concept to the recording, location, shooting and all. I think every video of the album will be worthwhile."

Commenting on the contemporary music industry of Bangladesh, she said, "Now there is a trend to do lots of experimental works and many of them are brilliant indeed. There is newness in the entire industry, just like the *Boishakhi Jhor*. But a mutually respectable atmosphere, a symbiotic blend between the old and the new can help our music industry far more effectively."

About the recent tendency to do fusion folks, Mehreen explained, "Personally, I never dared to do what is termed as hardcore folk. For I consider myself as a city girl. I should not wear the clothes of a woman



Mehreen  
from the country. I really think it's important to be someone from that setting to feel the spirit and produce it in the song."

She learned Tagore songs, Nazrul songs, and folk songs, mystic and modern music. She had learnt from *Ustaad* Pulin Dey and Ferdousi Rahman. "To train your voice is something from which you can discover that you can do a lot of things with your voice. That's what I am always trying to do."

Mehreen conveys her gratitude and thanks to the audience who have been so supportive so far. "It's their love that I came back in the world of singing again. Now I feel more responsibility to give something better to my audience," she concludes.

## Mega Serial "Ak Jonomey" on ATN Bangla tonight

## CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Directed by Abdulla Al Maman, the 250th episode of Mega serial *Ak Jonomey* will be aired on ATN Bangla at 9:20pm tonight.

The plot of the serial follows the life of Rakib Choudhury, a famous cultural personality. Despite his fame, Choudhury is not contented with his personal life. He is a widower and his two sons are strangled in different problems as well. Ruby is Choudhury's favourite and successful student for whom he has an infatuation. At the end of the story, Rakib Choudhury is haunted by insufferable loneliness.

Cast of the mega serial includes Ferdousi Majumdar, Tarin, Chumki, Joya, Jitu Ahsan, Sabbir, Abdul Kader, Jahid Hossain Shovon, Jamal Uddin Hossain, Shireen Bakul, and others.



A scene from the serial

## Drama serial "Bachelor Dampoti" ends tonight

## CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama serial *Bachelor Dampoti*'s last episode will be aired on Banglavision at 9:30 pm tonight. Written and directed by Murad Parvez, the serial deals with funny side of family life.

After retirement Rashedul Haque settles with his extended family. As no bachelor was allowed, a young man and a woman in disguise of a couple rent the second floor of his house. They seem to survive all the hassles and surveillances of the landlord. But the situation become difficult as tension develops within the couple in disguise.

Tauquir Ahmed, Mir Sabbir, Ahsan Habib Nasim, Rishi Solaiman, Bijori Barkatullah, Tanvin Sweety, Sharmin Shila, Tania Hamid and Sohana Saba are the main casts of the serial.



Tauquir Ahmed and Rishi Solaiman in Bachelor Dampoti

## STAR WORLD

11:30	Sonpari	07:30	Tina Xplosion
12:00	Karishma Kaa	08:30	Kyle Xy
12:25	Karishma	09:30	Ugly Betty
12:30	Bolly V	10:30	The Black Donnellys
12:55	Bolly V	11:30	Shocking Behavior
01:00	Prithviraj Chauhan	12:30	Caught On Tape
01:55	Bolly V	12:30	Kyle Xy
02:00	V Trailers - Star Plus	09:30	National
02:25	Bolly V	10:30	GEOGRAPHIC
02:30	Annu Ki Ho	11:30	Sharks At Risk
03:00	Gayeewaah Bhai	10:30	Python Attack
03:30	Bidaai	11:30	Deadliest Snakes
04:00	V Trailers - Star Plus	12:30	Spacemen
04:25	Bolly V	01:30	Naked Science
05:30	Kunwara	02:30	Mad Labs
06:30	Nach Bally 3	03:30	I Didn't Know That
06:30	Pritiviraj Chauhan	04:30	Ana, Bill, Banjo
10:00	Baa Bahoo Aur Baby	05:30	Big Bang
10:30	Star V Chhote	06:00	Sabla Island
10:30	Ustaad	06:30	Situation Critical
12:00	Santaan	07:30	Planet Carnivores
12:30			