

# When the Christmas spirit beckons with cakes and cookies

PAYZA HAQ

**W**HO doesn't respond to the tunes of "Silent night, holy light" and "Rudolf the red nosed reindeer"? Bangladesh, always a friendly place for people of all denominations, celebrates Christmas with due fervour. Eid and Victory Day have just passed by, and New Year is knocking at the door. It's time for chocolates, cakes, cookies, uninhibited laughter and camaraderie with Christmas pies and pot roast.

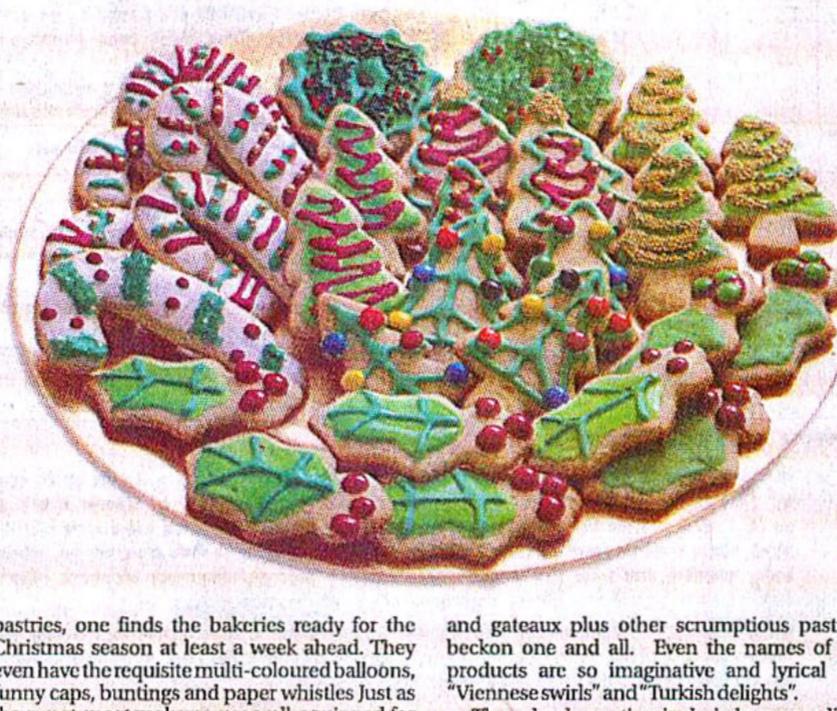
With music of the carolers in the backdrop and the tapping of the feet to music, people will consume hot chocolate and eggnog with glee. The impact of the British influence cannot be harmful at this juncture, when the season is a globally accepted one -- as far as China and

Finland.

Cards and gifts have been exchanged with the Christmas spirit -- of the past, present and future. The home and hearth, with three generations of merry-makers will partake of the fruitcake along with glazed pears and oranges with their inviting white icings.

With the "Ho-ho-ho" of Christmas cheer, and the tinkling piano in the living room, there is the partaking of meals -- as always before in history at peace time and even in times of desperation and chaos. Yes, the cyclone has come and gone, but the feeling of joy and contentment of the season is shared. The blessed and fortunate will share their meals with those out in the cold, the less fortunate ones.

Visiting some of the outlets of cakes and



pastries, one finds the bakeries ready for the Christmas season at least a week ahead. They even have the requisite multi-coloured balloons, funny caps, bunting and paper whistles. Just as the sweet-meat makers were well-equipped for the recent Durga Puja and Eid, so are the bakeries, and just not the five star hotels -- which are winking with their fairy lights and the Christmas fare.

Talking to the employees of outlets like Mr. Baker, Cooper's and King's Confectionery, based in the heart of Dhaka, and examining their displays behind the neat and well-lit showcases, one sees and learns of the cakes of modest sizes and various shapes that make the mouth water and tempt one to search one's purse for the necessary cost for the young nephews, nieces and friends' and neighbours' children. As from the pages of Dickens's "Christmas Carol" or Trollope's "Vanity Fare" the plum puddings

and gateaux plus other scrumptious pastries beckon one and all. Even the names of the products are so imaginative and lyrical like "Viennese swirls" and "Turkish delights".

The cake decoration include brown realistic logs with curling icing around them, cheeky reindeer, egret snowmen, complete with carrot noses and eyes, Santa Claus with his bulging bag of goodies, leprechauns with their conical hats and green doublets. Sometimes they even appear like the cake homes of "Hansel and Gretel" from Grimm's fairy tales of yore. The biscuit parcels are cute and tempting too, and they come in both sweet and savoury packs. Father Christmas comes in the form of hard chocolate slices.

One doesn't have to be in Europe or the US to feel the Christmas spirit. The Dhaka ambience at the confectioneries can create the right mood just as well.

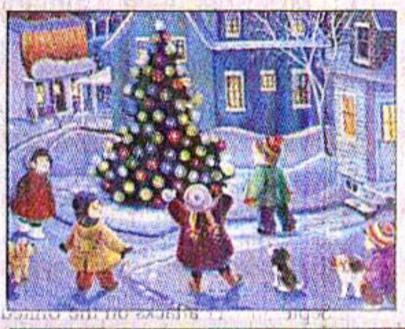
## Tagore's "Chokher Bali" on Channel 1 tonight



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

To celebrate Christmas Day, ATN Bangla will air a special programme for children titled *Boro Din Keno Boro* at 11:30 am, today. The programme will feature dance, songs and conversation with children. Liton Adhikary Rintu has directed the programme.

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## TV play "Dadima O Kichhu Shalik" on Channel-i

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

TV play *Dadima O Kichhu Shalik*, featuring Ferdousi Majumdar, Humayun Farid and Mita Chowdhury will be aired this evening at 7:50 pm.

The play follows an elderly woman who is visiting her son's family during Eid. The children question their parents' decision to let the grandmother live in an old home. *Dadi Ma o Kichhu Shalik* is written by Masum Reza and directed by Arif Khan.



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Channel 1 will air a special tele-film *Chokher Bali* at 11:15 pm tonight. Ahmed Shahabuddin has written the screenplay and Aranya Anwar has adapted it from Rabindranath Tagore's novel.

Before she could experience marital bliss, Binodini becomes a widow. The young widow goes to live with Mahendra's mother and adolescent wife. Mahendra and Binodini have a history. The former once turned down a marriage

proposal from the latter's family. Binodini becomes friends with Ashalata, Mahendra's naive wife. Trouble brews when Mahendra realizes that he is infatuated with Binodini, an educated, freethinking woman. The web gets more tangled when Mahendra's best friend Bihari gets involved as well. Relationships develop and crumble and lives change forever. But can one change the norms of society and time?

Mahfuz Ahmed, Tarin and Chandni play lead roles.

## Musical programme *Ontorotoro Aaj Gaan-er Bhuban* on ntv

As part of the Eid-special programmes, ntv will telecast a musical show today, featuring the divas Sabina Yasmin and Runa Laila. Titled *Ontorotoro Aaj Gaan-er Bhuban*, the programme features solo and duet performances by the two icons. Directed by Arif Khan the programme will be aired at 3:50 pm.

# ON AIR



**Shesh Bikeley**  
On BanglaVision at 08:15 pm  
Single Episode TV play  
Cast: Tauquir Ahmed, Aupi Karim

**Shei To Elo Phirey**  
On ntv at 11:15 pm  
Single Episode TV play  
Cast: Purnima, Shubho

## PICK OF THE DAY

### CHANNEL 1

### STAR MOVIES

### STAR PLUS

### STAR WORLD

### HISTORY CHANNEL

### ON AIR

## Protest against War Criminals through poems

Pijush Bandyopadhyay's album of recitation launched

### CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Renowned cultural personality Pijush Bandyopadhyay recently launched his recitation album titled *Tui Razakar*, a collection of poems expressing wrath against the war criminals. The album launch took place at the Liberation War Museum. The artiste dedicated the album to the Sector Commanders of the Liberation War.

Air Vice Marshal (retd) and Deputy Chief of Staff, Bangladesh Liberation Forces, A.K. Khondkar Bir Uttam; former Army Chief, Lt

General (retd) Harun-ur-Rashid; General Secretary of Sammilito Sanskritik Jote, Golam Kuddus; trustee of Liberation War Museum, Akku Chowdhury; Commander of Sector-5, Lt General (retd) Mir Shawak Ali Bir Uttam, psc; Commander of Sector-3, General (retd) K.M. Shafulkar Bir Uttam, psc and Commander of Sector-4, Major General (retd) C.R. Dutta Bir Uttam and others were present at the event.

"The nation now demands the trial of the war criminals. I believe Pijush Bandyopadhyay's album

will further strengthen this call by inspiring people to protest against the war criminals. He sets an example for the cultural activists, indeed," A.K. Khondkar said. Others spoke in the same vein.

"As a freedom fighter, cultural activist and citizen of this country, I have the responsibility to educate this generation on the accurate history of our Liberation War. *Tui Razakar* is an effort towards that. I dedicate this album to the Sector Commanders, the valiant leaders of our Liberation War," said Pijush Bandyopadhyay.



PHOTO: STAR

Pijush Bandyopadhyay (R) with guests at the album launch

## Exhibition Silent Witness

### NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

Unassuming young artist, Shyamal Roy Chowdhury's first solo exhibition ended recently at the Art & Soul Gallery. Growing up amidst violence in Dhaka's Shyampur neighbourhood, Shyamal's exposure to art was extremely limited. A most resonant childhood memory was a bedtime story told by his father, of a fat man fighting ghosts, an image he tried visualising and committing to paper.

Realising his limited academic potential, Shyamal turned to art early on during his school years. He painted pharmacy delivery vehicles and tried his hand at wedding *alpona* to earn pocket money for art supplies. Noticing his commitment, his mother enrolled him at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts. Here, Shyamal shone and was the recipient of many awards. He went on to display his work at the 1994 National Exhibition aged 18, two years short of the participation age, a tough first call, he admitted. Soon after, Shyamal moved on to the Narayanganj Charukala to further his artistic education, where he graduated First Class First in 2003.

Apart from conventional painting, Shyamal undertook all the terracotta artwork for the temple built at the Ramakrishna Mission in Old Dhaka in 2004, being especially pleased with the fibreglass Nataraj on the front facade.

In 2005, Shyamal received a scholarship from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to read for a Masters in Fine Arts, which he recently completed from Kolkata's Rabindra Bharati University. He would welcome a systemic change, as many face problems during their post graduate education, where experimentation is an integral part of the learning curve. To this end, he too, initially encountered difficulties vis-à-vis his conceptual Masters work. His mentors, artist Jogen Chowdhury and Professor Sovon Som advised him to seek inspiration from Kolkata's galleries, but Shyamal was ultimately influenced by a multi-styles

and concepts workshop he attended in Delhi.

During his Masters, Shyamal began experimenting with a doll motif in his paintings. His object was to reduce realism, removing elements of the doll's anatomy by increasing colour and texture. "I found that the doll was disturbing the canvas and tried to break free from the old school, old techniques. The eye is like a camera aperture, an image he tried visualising and committing to paper.

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