

Adivasi Cultural Festival

Organiser: Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD)
Venue: Plaza, National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
Date: March 13-15
Time: 10:00-07:30 pm



Solo Exhibition

Title: Rhythm in Nature
Artist: Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan
Venue: Galleri Kaya, H 20, R 16, S 4, Uttara
Date: March 7-21
Time: 11am-8pm



Documentary Screening and discussion

Title: Stories of Change (Premier show)
Organiser: Pathways of Women's Empowerment
Discussants: Hamida Hossain, Samia Zaman and Tareque Masud
Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, H 510, R 7, Dhanmondi
Date: March 14, **Time:** 5pm



Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Ifat 2008
Artist: Ifat Ara Dewan
Venue: Shilpangan, H 26, Road 3, Dhanmondi
Date: March 8-22
Time: 10am-1pm and 5pm-8pm



Second Manabadhikar Natya Utsab begins



Performances at the theatre festival feature issues related to human rights

JAMIL MAHMUD

This year the United Nations is observing the 60th anniversary of

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On the occasion, 'Manabadhikar Natya Parishad' (MNP) in collaboration with 'Ain O Shalish Kendra' (ASK)

arranged the three-day long 2nd Manabadhikar Natya Utsab at Rabindra Sarobar on March 9. Twenty member theatre troupes of MNP from all over the country

are participating at the festival. The festival began in the morning with a colourful procession, which started from the Central Shaheed Minar and

ended in front of the National Museum.

The inaugural programme was held at Rabindra Sarobar at noon.

Executive Director of ASK, Sultana Kamal, presided over the programme. In her speech, Sultana Kamal emphasised on the proper implementation of human rights in the country. She said, "We can generate awareness on human rights in a broader way through cultural activities."

Renowned theatre personality Nasiruddin Yousuff inaugurated the festival. In his speech Yousuff said, "We have to ensure human rights for all, starting with women and the indigenous communities." Among others, President of Bangladesh Pathanatok Parishad Mannan Hira also spoke at the event.

On the opening day, six theatre troupes including MNP, Sirajganj, MNP, Joypurhat, MNP, Naogaon; BITA, Chittagong; ADD, Dhaka and Opera Natoker Dol, Dhaka staged their productions. The troupes' performances featured issues related to human rights, the current political situation, price hike of essentials and more.

Apart from the performances, discussion on each production was held. As part of this year's festival, the organisers will accolade theatre personality Mamunur Rashid, veteran journalist Kamal Lohani and veteran women's rights activist Hena Das.

Francophonie celebrations in Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

Ambassadors and representatives of the Francophonie countries speak at the inaugural programme

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

La Francophonie, founded in 1970 in Niger, is a large network of 68 members and participating governments that view French culture and language as an important part of their identity. It is a community of people who speak or use French. In Bangladesh, a considerable number of people speak or use French to varying degrees.

Every year, around this time, this community reflects on La Francophonie and works to promote French as an international language. Starting from March 9 in Dhaka, the High Commission of Canada, Embassies of France, Egypt, Morocco, Switzerland and Vietnam along with the Alliance Française are organising a week of celebration.

Speaking on the occasion, at the Alliance Française Café, Charley Causseret, the French Ambassador said "Francophonie is not only the sharing of the same language. All the francophone countries have a

shared history. This history left them an inheritance that they are keen on defending including the 1789 Revolution's ideals and in particular the aspiration for more equality, liberty and fraternity.

"The fact that the boundaries of Francophonie are still expanding and including countries that do not actually use French on an everyday basis confirm that, beyond the French language itself, Francophonie represents the sharing of the same values."

Barbara Richardson, the Canadian High Commissioner said, "This anniversary is an opportunity for us to celebrate our attachment not only to the French language and the rich and diverse Francophonie culture, but also to the values of peace, democracy and respect for human rights."

"The richness of achievements based on the values championed by La Francophonie can serve as inspiration to all its members. All of Francophonie's success in this regard will strengthen its influence in international forums."

The other speakers were Nguyen Van, Ambassador of Vietnam; Elisabeth Malinen, deputy head of the Swiss Embassy, Karim Hegazy, deputy chief of the Embassy of Egypt and Driss Hachag, the first secretary of the Embassy of Morocco.

As a part of the programme, there will be a French film festival at the Gallery of Alliance Française, from March 9-15. A French photographer will exhibit his works "Spirit of the City" at the Café of Alliance Française during the festival. A theatre festival will begin on March 13 at the Shilpakala Academy.

The French theatre festival will include Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, Molière's *George Dandin*, Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and more. The movies from 22 countries to be screened at the film festival arranged by Alliance Française and Zahir Raihan Film Society will include *The Rocket*, *The Scent of the Green Papaya*, *La Vie en Rose*, *Rosetta*, *West Beyrouth*, *Sarraounia*, *Rice People*, *Identity Cards*, *The Polygamous Wazzou* and *The Heir*.

Heritage

Shivratri Festival in Joypurhat

KONGKON KARMAKER, Back from Joypurhat

The two day-long Shivratri Festival at the Baro Shivalay Temple in Joypurhat ended recently. One of the traditional Hindu festivals, the celebrations began on March 6 and drew thousands of devotees.

Nitai Pada Das, deputy commissioner of Joypurhat along with his wife, formally inaugurated the 1000-year old festival as the chief guest by making an offering, which included milk and flowers, to the idol of Lord Shiva.

According to the organisers, the programme has become an annual feature at the temple. Thousands of devotees from places such as Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Barisal, Bhola and Patuakhali congregate for the festival. Even devotees from neighbouring countries -- India, Nepal and Bhutan -- participate in the two day-long programme. To ensure the devotees' security, the local administration along with other law enforcement agencies patrol the area.

During the festival, the temple area turns white with the pouring of huge quantities of milk.

According to local sources, the tradition of celebrating Shivratri began in Joypurhat about 1200 years ago. The Baro Shivalay Temple is surrounded by 11 other small temples. The temples are located at the Belma village under Joypurhat Sadar upazila, about 4 kms from Joypurhat town.

The road to the temple is however in a shabby state and some devotees were injured as several accidents occurred during the festival.

The temple was built in the 7th century with a brilliant display of terracotta, according to a Department of Archaeology



The terracotta decorations and brickwork on the temple have been repeatedly whitewashed over the years (top), celebration at the Shivratri festival (bottom)

source. However the high salinity in the clay and poor maintenance caused the decay of the ornamental plaques and the embellishments of this ancient temple.

The temple has lost much of its charm as the Archaeology Department turned a blind eye. The situation became worse as the locals painted over the beautiful brickwork.

According to the locals, thieves have stolen many of the ornamental terracotta plaques from the walls. Fearing further thefts, the local maintenance committee has built concrete walls around the temple.

It is widely believed that it is possible to restore the glory of the ancient terracotta plaques of the multiple temples if adequate funds are allocated.



TV Play

"Eet Kaather Khancha": A close look at relationships

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Eet Kaather Khancha, a new drama serial, is set to air on ntv, starting from tonight at 8:15pm. The serial is written and directed by Shihab Shaheen.

The story sets off with three couples moving into their new homes. A middle-aged couple moves in their new apartment in an affluent area. A newly married couple who have eloped, takes refuge in a hotel in a district town.

A young man starts living with his wife in a rented flat in Dhaka almost over a year after their marriage. In some other part of the city, a girl and a boy cross paths and eventually fall for each other. At some point, all these lives personify a "caged existence" and the story develops further.

The cast includes Tarin, Azad Abul Kalam, Apurbo, Tisha, Eresh Zaker, Tushar Khan and others.



Tarin in a scene from *Eet Kaather Khancha*

Madonna inducted in "Rock N Roll" Hall of Fame

AP, New York

When Madonna was writhing around onstage in a wedding gown to *Like a Virgin* years ago, the last place many would expect to see her was in something called the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Time has a way of changing things. On Monday, Madonna came to the stage of the Waldorf-Astoria to accept enshrinement. Classmate John Mellencamp, who also churned out hit after hit in the 1980s, joined her.

The Dave Clark Five, whose lead singer Mike Smith died of pneumonia on February 28, are being inducted as well as Philly soul legends Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, Canadian songwriter Leonard Cohen, surf rockers the Ventures and blues harmonica ace Little Walter.

But Madonna? She's the pre-eminent pop star of her generation, who stayed a step ahead of trends while adding in shock value to keep herself in the news. Along the way she's made sturdy, state-of-the-art pop such as *Material Girl*, *Crazy For You*, *Papa Don't Preach*, *Cherish*, *Like a Prayer*, *Vogue* and *Ray of Light*.

Yet "if you think of rock 'n' roll,



Madonna is not the first name that comes to mind," said Steve Morse, long-time *Boston Globe* music critic who was a member of the hall of fame's nominating committee for seven years.

He considers her selection, particularly in her first year of eligibility, an embarrassment.

Her music was never played on rock 'n' roll radio, he said. Some veteran rock artists like Deep Purple, the J. Geils Band, Steve Miller and Alice Cooper are still waiting for induction. Morse long and unsuccessfully argued on behalf of the late Gram Parsons.

With rock's founding fathers already in the hall, the museum has broadened its meaning of rock 'n' roll to include rap and pop artists. Grandmaster Flash last year became the first hip-hop artist to make it.

Madonna was inducted by Justin Timberlake. And unlike many contemporary artists -- Madonna's new album, *Hard Candy*, is dropping April 29 -- she did not perform. Instead, she chose Iggy Pop, the ultimate crawl-around-on-glass punk rocker who shares her Michigan ancestry, to salute her work.

Tom Hanks inducted the Dave Clark Five, the '60s British pop band behind the hit *Glad All Over*.