

12th Anniversary and Independence Day Programme

Organiser: Liberation War Museum
Venue: Liberation War Museum, 5, Shagun Bagicha
Date: March 22-28
Time: 5pm onwards



Weeklong Jatra Utsab

Organiser: Department of Theatre and Film, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA)
Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA
Date: March 18-24
Time: 6:30pm everyday



Group Art Exhibition

Title: 65th grand group art exhibition of reputed Bangladeshi Artists
Organiser: Saju Art Gallery
Venue: Saju Art Gallery, F/40-41, D.C.C. north Super market, 2nd circle, Gulshan.
Date: March 22-April 23
Time: Saturday to Thursday 10am to 8 pm.



Children's Art Exhibition

Organiser: M. Nurul Kader Foundation
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, R 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: March 22-26
Time: 12pm-8pm



Liberation War Museum celebrates 12th anniversary

Upholding the history of 1971

NADIA SARWAT

The Liberation War Museum celebrated its 12th anniversary on March 22. Like previous years, the museum has organised weeklong special programmes on the occasion of Independence Day as well. A book fair featuring publications on the Liberation War was also inaugurated at the museum premises. Lt. Col. (Retd) Debendra Sthanpati, one of the Indian instructors at the Murti training camp in 1971, was invited to deliver the memorial speech on the occasion.

The event began with Dr. Sarwar Ali presenting the 12th anniversary special yearly report on behalf of the trustee board of Liberation War Museum. "With the support of countless people all over the country who contribute generously to our collection and activities, Liberation War Museum has become the largest source of the '71 documents and memorabilia," said Dr. Sarwar Ali. He also informed the audience on the achievements of and obstacles faced by the museum in the past years.

Till December 2007, the total collection of the museum numbers at 14932, including 3439 photographs, 2055 important documents, 7748 newspaper clippings and 1690 memorabilia. However, only 1300 can be displayed now, as there is a lack of space in the museum.

Starting in 1996 as an effort to preserve the history of the sacrifice, sufferings and courage of the people during 1971, Liberation War Museum has gone beyond the conventional idea of a museum through its extended activities to generate interest in the history of the war amongst the masses. Dr. Sarwar Ali, Aly Zaker, Rabiul Husain, Ziauddin Tariq Ali, Sara Zaker, Asaduzzaman Noor, Mofidul Haque and Akku Chowdhury are the founder trustees of the museum.

Major General (Retd) Sayeed Ahmed Birpratik, one of the 61 young men to receive training at



Artists of Nriyadhara perform at the programme

the first Bangladesh War Course at the Murti Camp, presented a brief biography of Sthanpati. Ahmed shared his experience of hardship and valour during the training under Sthanpati, the only Bengali instructor at the camp in the hilly location of West Bengal.

In his memorial speech, Sthanpati expressed his contentment to be able to visit the independent Bangladesh after so many years. "I always wanted to know about my former students, none of them intended to take up the role of a military personnel under normal circumstances, and yet didn't hesitate to fight for the sake of their motherland. Meeting Mofidul Haque (a trustee of the museum) in 2006 and being invited to this event have been memorable," he said.

Dance organisation Nriyadhara performed at the

event. Rupali Modok, Mir Arifur Rahman and Sulata Rani Sharma, students of Baharpur High School, Rajbari, read out eyewitness accounts of the war next. The children collected the accounts under the outreach programme for the school students conducted by the museum.

The evening ended with performances by Bipul Bhattacharya, Namita Ghosh and Kalyani Ghosh -- artists of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Namita Ghosh, the first female artist of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra rendered *Aji Bangladesh khudhar agun* and *Banglar Hindu, Banglar Muslim*. Kalyani Ghosh sang the familiar *Gano Sangeet Nongor tolo tolo* and *Shono ekti Mujibor-er thekey* at the event.

The Independence Day special programmes will continue till March 28 at the museum.



Akku Chowdhury (L), one of the trustees of the museum presents a crest to Debendra Sthanpati

Old Dhaka gets its own cultural venue at long last

Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra inaugurated



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Jhuna Chowdhury, Col. Ashfaque Islam, M Alauddin, Kohinur Akhtar Shuchonda, Sadeq Hossain Khoka and Rashed Khan Menon at the inauguration

ERSHAD KAMOL

At long last a venue in Old Dhaka where cultural programmes can be held, has opened. Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra, the new four-storey cultural centre at Loharpur, Sutrapur built by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), was inaugurated on March 22. Mayor of DCC, Sadeq Hossain Khoka, inaugurated the centre. Political and cultural leaders of the country attended the inaugural programme.

Executive Officer of Zone 1, DCC, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered the welcome speech. Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka was the chief guest at the programme. President of Bangladesh Workers Party (BWP) Rashed Khan Menon; Politburo Member of BWP Haider Akbar Khan Rono; General Secretary of Shamyabadi Dal, Dilip Barua; Zahir Raihan's widow Kohinur Akhtar Shuchonda; Secretary General of Group Theatre Federation Jhuna Chowdhury and Chief Engineer of DCC Colonel Ashfaque Islam were the other discussants at the programme. The discussion was presided over by M Alauddin, Chief Executive Officer

of DCC.

Discussants at the programme highly appreciated DCC, in particular the Mayor, for taking such initiative. They hoped that the newly built Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra would boost the cultural activities in Old Dhaka that has long been overlooked.

The speakers thanked DCC for naming the centre after the eminent filmmaker-litterateur Zahir Raihan -- who went missing just after the Liberation War -- and urged for research on him.

The discussion was followed by a cultural programme. Artists of DCC-operated cultural schools, employees of the organisation and leading cultural troupes such as Nriyadhara, Akriti Academy and Dhruvotani performed dance and music at the programme.

The event began with a chorus rendition by the employees of DCC. After the chorus, Shilpi Biswas rendered popular *Adhunik Gaan*.

Students of DCC-operated schools presented two dance compositions with folk songs *Shadher lau* and *Bansher jhare*. Reeta Bhaduri presented a Hason Rajar Gaan titled *Nesha lagilo re* and employee of DCC, Khagendra

Sarkar presented a Lalon Geeti *Korimana kam chhare na*.

Artists of Dhruvotani presented two Tagore songs -- *Shonkchero bisholota* and *Ogo dokhin haowa*. Directed by Kobi Rahman, artists of Akriti presented two dance compositions. A *Kathak* based dance piece was performed with the song *Aha Chandrabeni ke jay*. The other dance piece was presented with the song *Tahe chhilom-e*.

Artists of Nriyadhara were the last to perform at the programme. They presented five dance compositions. The first performance directed by Deepa Khondokar was presented with a Tagore song *Aji Bangladesh hridoy hote*. The artists also presented a Manipuri dance piece directed by Tamanna Rahman, a folk dance directed by Minu Haque and a Kathak dance piece directed by Munmun Ahmed. The event wrapped up with presentation of another folk dance composition directed by Deepa Khondokar.

A nine-day theatre festival jointly organised by DCC and Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation began yesterday at Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra.

Reader's Opinion

Hindi TV soaps: Affront to common sense?

FARIDA REZA

Prior to the invention of washing machines, Monday was a dreaded day for housewives in the west. Clothes worn throughout the week had to be washed -- a truly tedious chore. On the contrary, womenfolk in Bangladesh welcome the start of the week -- it's back to a more orderly existence, women old and young -- running to the kitchen to cook up dishes recommended by Siddiqua Kabir or Sanjiv Kapoor.

So sit back, relax and get set for the entertainment that your dearest friends have in store for you. Yes, you got it right -- I'm referring to the array of Hindi serials on the various Indian TV channels.

My favourite of these is Zee TV -- the hallowed hours and week-days generate a purpose in life. Who can ignore the effervescence, the affluence and the sparkle of the daily Hindi soaps? Or the "costumes" and fabulous decor (though uber-garish at times)? In fact the 'Zee' costumes are much coveted by the "fashion conscious".

Soap operas, like food or medicines, have become an integral part of life for many -- though some of the episodes tax even the most vivid imagination. Can women, for instance, emerge from bed at the dead of night -- impeccably turned out in zari-laden saris or sequined silk kurtas, with not a hair out of place or any crease in their attire?



Amnesia seems to be a favourite theme in many of these serials. The protagonists sometimes encounter severe accidents and are pronounced dead -- only to miraculously reappear after a few episodes. Tedium then is the consequence of these serials which drag on and on even when a conclusion seems in sight. But such is the loyalty of the viewers to many of these soaps that they don't switch to other channels. Mondays truly are great to begin the TV week -- despite the hints that have to be dropped on unwell-

come guests. And of course, the traffic jams are blessed for acting as a buffer to deter their visits.

And now to a more serious issue. We get a different picture of secular India in the Hindi soaps. Gods and goddesses seem ubiquitous in every household and even public places -- there are altars at hospitals, laboratories, bedrooms, virtually on any and every empty space. A temple is always within convenient distance. Each serial has its favourite deity. A deep, deep prayer to Shambunath, Ganesh or Krishna decides the turn of events. So per-

manent is Pavlov's conditioning that one day I found myself humming "Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh deva..."; repetition does enhance learning.

In contrast to Hindi channels, West Bengal does not follow the same trend, nor does Bangladesh. Why mix religion with entertainment? We, despite our tendency to add religious sprinklings to all dishes, are still free from this bias. Bangladeshi channels do not manifest *jainamaz* at every catastrophe, nor is a *tasbeeh* brought out every 10 minutes to prove the

devout individual's faith.

Believe me, we viewers are not a dumb lot. Most of us do not enjoy *The Three Stooges* kind of slapstick humour. We can absorb the philosophy, the sarcasm and wit of Charlie Chaplin. Then why this need, this avid hankering to watch these serials year after year? Majorly because they take the average lonely, troubled and stressed TV viewer to a world of fantasy, creating a gossamer-like effect, providing scope for empathy, making life liveable for a few hours. Their very subtleties are hilarious enough to provide food for laughter which is a cost-free medicine prescribed by the doctor, but hard to find in these days of quick changing life threatening events, stressful living and the uphill efforts to achieve more.

Reports of cyclones, suicide bombers, earthquake victims, prices of even green chillies shooting up to TK 200 per kg are pushed into oblivion. Here the wings of fantasy unfurl in ecstasy and logic becomes a captive in the entrails of reality. Thus this analgesic should not be looked down upon by the judicious viewers who do not prefer watching these serials.

Octogenarians, along with the younger generation, indulge in this harmless addiction. Why look down upon them? Live and let live should be the order of the day.

The writer is an educationist and social worker

"Muktijuddher Gaurabgatha" on Channel- i

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Channel i has recently started airing a documentary on the Liberation War titled *Muktijuddher Gaurabgatha*.

The show is hosted by Hasina Ahmed Shoma and jointly directed by Tuku Majnu Sarwar Bari and Sumon Ahmed. The show features the lives and achievements of the seven *Bir Sreshthas* of the country.

The programme is aired on the first and third Wednesday at 7:50 pm.



Musical soiree in Sirajganj

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, Sirajganj

Sirajganj Zilla Silpakala Academy (SZSA) arranged a musical soiree at the Bhasani Auditorium in the town last Thursday in an effort to promote the institution and its artists.

Surjo Bari, a popular local singer, performed songs related to different themes, including love, nature and country.

The list of songs included *Teer hara ei dheu-er sagor pari debo re*, *Eto sur aar eto gaan*, *Surer bhubone aami ajo pothochari*, *Koto je tomake besechhi bhalo*, *Muchhe jaoa dinguli amaye je pichhu daakey*, were noteworthy.

Mohammad Ashraf Ali, deputy commissioner in Sirajganj and president of Sirajganj Zilla Silpakala Academy inaugurated the programme. Abdul Wahed, NDC and secretary of SZSA; Jannat

Ara Henry, joint secretary of SZSA and Alamgir Rahman, superintendent of police in Sirajganj were special guests. About 2,000 enthusiastic viewers flocked to the soiree.

In the course of the inauguration, deputy commissioner Ashraf Ali said that SZSA would continue hosting such programmes to whet the public appetite for wholesome interesting entertainment.