

Film Screening

Film: Tajuddin Ahmed: The Unsung Hero
Venue: Bangladesh Film Centre, 160, Lake Circus (4th floor), Kalabagan
Date: March 29
Time: 3pm, 5pm and 7pm



Mahanagar Natyotshab '08

Play: Bhaddomok
Troupe: Natyachakra
Venue: Zahir Raihan Shanskrit Kendra, Loharpul, Shutrapur
Date: March 29 at 7 pm
Organiser: DCC and BGF



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 8pm.



Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Landscape
Artist: Isme Azam
Venue: Gallery Zoom of Alliance Francaise De Dacca, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: March 28-April 10
Time: 9am -12 am Saturday and 6 pm-8pm Sunday to Friday



Ripples in a western pond

Ambassador Stefan Frowein speaks on the upcoming Bangladeshi exhibition in Brussels



Artworks by Shambhu Acharya (left) and Sheikh Afzal are part of the Bangladeshi exhibition to be held in Brussels

NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

Come April, over sixty paintings by thirty-one renowned Bangladeshi artists will go on show in Brussels, in the heart of Europe. Credit goes to the efforts of the EC Delegation to Bangladesh, in conjunction with the



Stefan Frowein, the EC Ambassador to Bangladesh

Bengal Gallery.

In Stefan Frowein's (EC Ambassador to Bangladesh) view, "Cultural cooperation between partners is crucial in creating confidence and trust. Opening oneself to the mutual exchange of cultural wealth leads to building common interests."

Within the framework of the EC/ Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement, (guidelines fixing the way in which partners work), is the Joint Commission held every second year, alternating between Dhaka and Brussels. In the alternate years, there are discussions on trade, governance and health, but "not enough is being done in the cultural arena. Bangladesh is not just about cyclones and floods," according to the Ambassador.

Ambassador Frowein admires Bangladeshi art and believes that there is much to offer in this field. He welcomes ideas promoting the symbiotic flow of views on cultural capacities, particularly those with an artistic angle. This very special art exhibition of a representative selection of contemporary artists is being held under the auspices of the Joint Commission. Stefan Frowein was impressed with "the great variety of styles and competences. Such an exchange is at eye level, both parties having something to offer, there are no false distinctions."

Lengthy and complicated EC procedures

meant that the event could not be financed by the Delegation itself. Instead the Indian airline, Jet Airways agreed to transport the paintings to Brussels, which coincidentally, is their hub. Courier company, Homebound is attending to the complex paperwork and ensuring safe transit of the pictures to Zia Airport.

"We were extremely relieved to have obtained the certificate of no-objection from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs," admits Ambassador Frowein. He personally strongly supports the presence of Director General, Luva Nahid Chowdhury, who will represent the Bengal Gallery in Brussels.

Matters at the European end, including substantial press coverage, are in the hands of the EC and the Bangladeshi Embassy in Brussels. Ambassador Frowein is pleased that the venue is the Berlaymont, the Commission's flagship building. "The location is a prominent space within the Berlaymont, which hosts regular exhibitions, but this is the first time the Joint Commission undertakes such a unique cultural event. Approximately one thousand people pass through the Berlaymont foyer daily, so there is a chance for many to see the paintings."

Posters providing general information on Bangladesh will also be displayed, providing patrons some background knowledge.

Commissioner for External Relations, Dr Benita Ferrero-Waldner will inaugurate the

week-long exhibition on April 3. Bangladeshi Foreign Adviser, Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Ambassador Frowein will be among the special guests. The Bangladesh Embassy has organised a cultural programme on the occasion, confirmed the EC Delegation's Cultural Officer, Jonatan Henriksson. For legal reasons, the EC may not sell the paintings, but this will not detract from this one-time opportunity to display Bangladesh's cultural prowess.

Post-exhibition, Ambassador Frowein has plans to display the paintings at the EC's Europe Day celebrations in Dhaka in May.

"This was the missing link, and given the vibrant cultural scene, a small step taken to boost art. It was such a natural thing to do, that all parties concerned are very pleased. One becomes an ambassador for Bangladesh in Brussels, providing HQ with news. I am more than happy to be biased on the cultural side," says Ambassador Frowein. He believes that artists are much respected in Bangladeshi society and part of his role is to help enhance their reputation in Europe, for them to have access to the international exposure they deserve. It seems that fruitful ideas catch on fast; it is heartening to learn that the Brussels venture spurred the ongoing joint Bangladeshi exhibition in New York.

The writer is a freelance contributor

Independence Day celebration at Shilpakala Academy

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A discussion and cultural programme was arranged by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on the occasion of the 37th Independence Day. The event was held at the National Music and Dance Centre of the academy.

Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury was the chief guest at the programme. Quamrul Hassan, director general of BSA presided over the event. The first part of the programme involved a discussion on the Liberation War, its after effects and what independence truly means.

Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Quamrul Hassan, Professor Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University and Samar Pal, director general of National Museum spoke at the event.

In his speech, Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said, "Although we have attained independence, we are yet to be 'free'. Our nation is still grappling with corruption and we all need to come forward and take a stand against it."

In between the speeches, poets



Artistes of BSA rendering a patriotic song at the programme

Latif Rahman, Belal Chowdhury, Md. Sadi, Zahidul Haque; Shafi Kamal, Zahid Haider; Mohsin Hussain; Rahim Shah; Shah Matin Tipu and Harisul Haque recited poems on the Liberation War and independence.

The second half of the programme featured music. Artists of BSA started off with a chorus. Artists of Shapta Sur presented a spirited rendition of *Purbo digontey shurjo utechhey*.

On the same day, another programme was held at the National Theatre Stage, BSA. The programme featured recitations of poems and a presentation of the dance-drama *Battle of Bangladesh* by the Bangladesh Ballet Troupe.

Discussion and cultural programme at IER, Dhaka University

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the Independence Day, Institute of Education and Research (IER), Dhaka University arranged a discussion and cultural programme at the department on March 27. The students of IER staged the Munier Chowdhury play *Kabor* at the programme.

Human Rights activist Khushi Kabir was the chief guest at the

curricular Activities Committee; Abdul Malek, assistant professor and Professor Salma Akhter were present as special guests.

"If we go through the history we will find that the Liberation War is significant not only to us but it also sets a rare example for the entire world," said Dr. M Wahiduzzaman.

Khushi Kabir said in her speech, "What makes the Liberation War remarkable is the participation of the masses. Directly or indirectly, people from all spheres contrib-

Muttaki announced the plan to construct a memorial -- in association with the Institute of Fine Arts -- honouring Professor Faizul Mahi who was arrested by the Pakistani army on December 14, 1971.

The cultural programme began with Sajia Hossain Proiti rendering the patriotic song *Ekti Bangladesh*. Abu Nayeem Mohammad Salahuddin, lecturer, IER recited Rudra Mahammad Shahidullah's poem *Batashey Lasher Gondho*. A chorus rendition of the song *Takdum takdum bajey Bangladesh dhol* and other performances by the students followed.

After a short break for the evening prayer, the play *Kabor* was staged. This frequently-staged play written by Munier Chowdhury -- one of the most talented playwrights in the country who was abducted in 1971 -- was the highlight of the event.

The play depicts a grave where the martyrs of the Language Movement were secretly buried by the collaborators of the Pakistani government. In the surrealistic play, the martyrs rise from their graves, refusing to be buried anymore.

The cast included Happy, Zihad, Sourav, Otoshi, Ananya, Disha and others. Rahamani and Fardin directed the play. Ariful Haque Kabir, lecturer, IER was the co-ordinator and host of the event.



Students of IER, DU during a group recitation

discussion. Professor Dr. Iqbal Aziz Muttaki, director of IER, presided over the programme. Dr. M Wahiduzzaman, assistant professor, IER and chairman of Co-

ordinated to the struggle of freedom." Kabir also addressed the need to initiate the trial of the war criminals.

In his speech, Dr Iqbal Aziz

Window to the world

Travelling film festival for children held in Khagrachhari

The first International Children's Film Festival was held in Dhaka in January 2008 with an objective to open up a new world of cinema to

the children of Bangladesh and to give them an exposure to the cultures and traditions of different countries. The festival was organ-

ised by the Children's Film Society Bangladesh. After getting an impressive positive response from the young audience, a decision was

taken to organise a "Travelling Film Festival for Children". The event titled "Travelling Children's Film festival for a Beautiful Tomorrow" was held in Khagrachhari from March 19 to 21, according to a press release.

The presence of children from the local indigenous communities was notable at the festival that was held at the Ethnic Cultural Institution in Khagrachhari. Children came from far-flung areas to attend the festival and enjoyed films from Iran, Germany, Japan, Brazil and Malaysia. Language did not seem to be an impediment in enjoying the films; the children clapped and laughed together at the shows.

This young audience stayed long hours at the event and showed much enthusiasm in the films screened. For most of these children, this was the first such event they had attended but they behaved as if they are familiar with the format and discipline. Adults at the festival also showed interest in the movies. When the auditorium was full to its capacity, the parents waited outside and encouraged their children to watch the films.

DC of Khagrachhari, Shahadat Hossain; Principal of Khagrachhari Government Collage, Bodhisotto

Dewan and Shushomoy Chakma, deputy director of Ethnic Cultural Institution, Khagrachhari were present at the inaugural programme and encouraged the children by staying with them until the end of the day.

At the end of first day's show, Sheikh Sazid, coordinator of the Children's Film Society arranged a programme review session with the volunteers to share the views on the event. Some suggested taking initiatives to encourage more female viewers. They decided to inform the local schools on the festival.

The initiatives taken by the young volunteers resulted in an increase in the number of the audience in the next two days. On the third day the organisers had to repeat shows, as there were more movie enthusiasts than the venue could accommodate at a time.

The audience and volunteers appreciated the initiative and expressed their eagerness to play a more active role in generating interest in films. Quality films from all over the world not only entertain children but also help them in developing a broader perspective of life.

The festival was sponsored by Advance Development Technology.



The festival pulled in a sizeable enthusiastic audience



Artistes perform a group dance at the programme titled *Wahidul Haque Smaranik Milanotshab* organised by the cultural organisation Kanthashilan. The two-day long programme was held at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library recently. The programme featured dance, recitation, songs and more performed by artistes of Kanthashilan, Chhayanat, Udichi and others.