

WHAT'S
ON THIS
WEEK

Musical Soiree

Artistes: Nargis Chowdhury, Bulbul Islam and Fahim Hossain Chowdhury
Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Padatik Sangeet Sangsad
Venue: National Music and Dance Centre, BSA, Date: April 4, Time: 7:15pm

Tele-press Video
Film Festival '08

Venue: British Council Auditorium, 5 Fuller Road
Date: April 4, 09:30 am
Garam Bhat Olhoba
Nichhak Bhuter Golpo
11:15 am X Factor, 02:00 pm Minister, 03:00pm Spartacus '71, 04:15pm

Boishakhi Surela
Utsab

Organiser: Sowbiz Entertainment
Venue: Kalabagan Play Ground
Date: April 13-15

Dhaka Padatik
Natya Utsab '08

Organiser: Dhaka Padatik
Venue: National Theatre Stage, BSA
April 4,
Play: Konjush,
Troupe: Loko Natyadal (Siddheswari)
Time: 5:30pm



Charukala gearing up for Pahela Baishakh



Shora and paintings by the students on sale at IFA premises

KARIM WAHEED

Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bengali New Year, the largest secular celebration in the country is at the door. Preparations are on. The parade -- decked with vivid, flamboyant masks and life-size replicas of birds, animals and other motifs -- brought out by the students and teachers of Institute of Fine Arts (IFA), Dhaka University is one of the biggest attractions of Pahela Baishakh.

Planning for the parade begins around a month before the event; enthusiastic workers slog at it for two weeks. IFA AKA 'Charukala' buzzes with activity during this period. The preparations often continue right into early morning, Pahela Baishakh.

The replicas of different shapes and designs take longer to make than the masks. First the frame is

made with bamboo; often straw is used to stuff the structure. Paper is then pasted on the frame, separate parts (wings, tails for example) are attached. The replicas are then painted or coloured papers are used. As of yesterday (April 3), work on the replicas has not begun.

Masks, made with paper and papier-mâché, are other attractions. Bright colours are used to finish off the masks. Tigers, lions, rabbits and more -- the masks are a visual delight. The masks are partly done; within the next two/three days they will be painted over by the IFA students.

There is however, the issue of funds. A parade of this magnitude costs a pretty penny. Having a corporate giant sponsor this parade would be the easy way out but the IFA students feel that this would make them obligated to the patrons, thus constraining their

artistic liberty. The collective sentiment is that the parade is part of the mass Baishakhi celebration and should not be commercialised.

The way students generate funds for the event is quite inspiring. They sell beautiful shora (clay pots with illustration on top) and paintings at the IFA premises for about two weeks prior to Pahela Baishakh.

The shoras featuring rural motifs, human and animals faces are sold at a price range of Tk 150-1500 -- a bargain for art enthusiasts. Paintings by the students start from Tk 300. The subjects are varied.

Purchasing a work of art from this sale would not only satiate one's aesthetic senses but also support one of the biggest celebrations on Pahela Baishakh -- a carnival for everyone.

Anushilon Theatre Festival begins
Generating a message against oppression

ERSHAD KAMOL

A four-day long theatre festival highlighting a message against oppression began on April 2 at the Experimental Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). Anushilon Natya Dal has arranged the festival to celebrate its 30th anniversary.

Anushilon Natya Dal is a Rajshahi University campus based theatre troupe, and it has earned accolades for its quality productions. A member troupe of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGTF), Anushilon has participated at theatre festivals arranged by the Bangladesh Centre of International Theatre Institute and BGTF.

The inaugural programme was rather unconventional. There was no formal discussion. The programme began with a dance presented by members of ethnic communities like Santal and

Malpahari, who are actors of Anushilon. Theatre personalities Ramendu Majumder, Mamunur Rashid, Ataur Rahman, M. Hamid, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Mannan Heera and others greeted Anushilon on the occasion of its 30th anniversary.

Apart from Anushilon's production *Bhumi Kanya*, three Dhaka based theatre troupes will stage their plays at the festival. Other participating troupes Aranyak Natya Dal, Desh Natok and Palakar will stage *Raarang*, *Birsa Kabya* and *Mangula* respectively.

Chief of Anushilon Natya Dal, Malay Bhowmik informed, "All of the four experimental theatre productions included at the festival feature the marginalised's struggle for survival. It's not possible to organise an event like this in Rajshahi due to technical limitations."

On the opening day Anushilon staged *Bhumi Kanya*, written and directed by Malay Bhowmik. The play is set against the backdrop of

the 'Nachol Rebellion', led by Ila Mitra in the 1940s and '50s. Interestingly Ila Mitra, popularly known as 'Nachol-er Rani' has not been portrayed in the play. Rather, through some imaginary characters the ideology of the 'Tebhaga Movement' also known as 'Nachol Rebellion' has been presented. Farmers from different ethnic groups of North Bengal rebelled against the feudal lords for the rights to the profits from the harvest.

Director Malay Bhowmik has used a few traditional art forms of Bengali and Santal communities of North Bengal in the theatre production. However, the style of presentation in *Bhumi Kanya* is influenced by that of *Raarang*, an Aranyak Natya Dal production. The latter features the Santal resistance against the dominating Bengali community in the post-Nachol Rebellion era.

Actors of Anushilon Natya Dal in *Bhumi Kanya*

Celebrating the power of recitation

12th anniversary of Swarakalpan Abritti Chakra

NADIA SARWAT

With a four-day festival that began on April 2 at the Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Public Library, recitation organisation Swarakalpan Abritti Chakra is celebrating its 12th anniversary. Human rights activist and advocate Sultana Kamal inaugurated the event. Eminent cultural personality Asaduzzaman Noor, president of Bangladesh Abritti Shommonoy Parishad was the chief guest at the programme. Recitation artiste Ahkamullah, general secretary of Bangladesh Abritti Shommonoy Parishad was the special guest.

Swarakalpan started their

journey on February 9, 1996. The organisation aims to popularise a closer-to-life style of recitation.

Being a cultural organisation, Swarakalpan never turned away from socio-political issues. *Razakar-er Namta*, is their most successful production featuring poems that express detestation for the collaborators of the Pakistani Army during the Liberation War. Swarakalpan has also awarded eminent recitation artistes, organisations and productions. This year's *Swarakalpan Abritti Shommononona Padak* will be announced on the last day of the festival.

Ashish Koraya, general secretary of Swarakalpan delivered the welcome speech at the event.

A one-minute silence was observed in honour of the late Tagore exponent Wahidul Haque; playwright Selim Al Deen; Language Movement veteran and poet Mahbul Alam Chowdhury; singer Sanjib Chowdhury and the Sidr victims.

"Behind every anniversary of any cultural organisation, there are stories of struggle and Swarakalpan's case is no different. The ideals Swarakalpan holds close are related to the collective goal of this country," Ahkamullah said in his speech.

Asaduzzaman Noor said in his speech "Organisations like Swarakalpan are an inspiration. Personal insights are involved in recitation. That very insight makes

a person able to speak out for humanism, democracy and secularism."

"Once upon a time, cultural activities were an integral part of our lives without which we couldn't even think of growing as a human being. But now, it has become a distant and imposed thing. My regards to Swarakalpan for trying hard to change this scenario," Sultana Kamal said.

The guests formally announced the inauguration by lighting candles at the event.

The second session of the evening featured group presentations by children of several recitation organisations. Children of Swarakalpan performed their production *Doshita Beral*, directed by Mustafiz Ripon. Nongor Khelaghar Ashor presented *Bhasa O Swadhinata*, a collection of poems on the Language Movement and Liberation War. Noted recitation artiste Hasan Arif directed the presentation. Directed by Pragna Laboni, Mukhtakantha Abritti Academy (children's section) presented their production *Ho Jo Bo Ro Lo* next.

Shishu Tirtha of Kanthasheelan presented *Abol Tabol* and Kendriyo Kochi Kanchar Mela performed *Hingshuti* by Sukumar Roy.

On April 3, Abritti Academy staged their award winning production *Surja Dighal Bari*, adapted from the classic novel by Abu Ishak.

Today, this year's *Swarakalpan Shommononona Padak* will be announced. Mustafa Monwar will be the chief guest at the event while Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra's Ashraf Alam and recitation artiste Hasan Arif will be present as special guests.



Recitation by children on the opening day of the festival

Dhaka Padatik Theatre Festival begins

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

With the beat of *dhol* played by Dashorath Da, along with dance, the activists of Dhaka Padatik celebrated the group's 28th anniversary. On the occasion a ten-day long festival titled Dhaka Padatik Atlas Natyotshob '08 was inaugurated by eminent playwright Syed Shamsul Haq on April 2 at the National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA).

Formed in the '80s Dhaka Padatik has so far staged 23 full-fledged theatre productions and 10 street theatre productions.

Theatre personalities Ramendu Majumder, M. Hamid, Nasiruddin Yousuff and others spoke at the inauguration programme. The discussion was presided over by Golam Kuddus, president of Dhaka Padatik.

Discussants at the programme highly appreciated Dhaka Padatik for producing remarkable theatre performances such as *Bishad Sindhu*. The discussants also highlighted some problems that the theater activists are currently facing.

The discussion was followed by the staging of *Jalodah*, written by Harunur Rashid and directed by Nader Chowdhury.



Ramendu Majumder speaks at the inaugural programme

Twenty upcoming dancers performed on the second day (April 2) of the talent hunt programme organised by the Department of Dance and Music, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). The programme ended yesterday. The event started at 6:30 pm with a discussion. Noted dancers Shukla Sarkar and Munmun Ahmed spoke at the discussion.

The first dancer to perform was Ishtaq Ikhtiar Ananya from Khulna. Ananya presented a folk dance. Farzana Akhter Laboni from Dhaka performed Bharatnatyam. Other artistes at the programme included Mahub Shahriar from Dhaka; Rokaiya Hossain from Kushtia, Elma Marak from Dhaka, Shobhon Saha Shobuj from Jhenaidah, Mahub Hassan Shohag from Bogra, Ridoy Khan from Manikganj, Upoma Anindita from Dhaka and Rupa Majumder from Barisal.

Minu Haque, Rahiza Khanom Jhunu and Deepa Khandokar were the judges at the event.

