

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Terracotta Exhibition

Title: Burnt Clay Exhibition '08
Artist: Tayabuzzaman Topu
Venue: Shilpo Charcha Studio, H 2, R 7, Block C, Section 6, Mirpur
Date: April 21-30
Time: 10am-8pm



Group Exhibition of Crafts

Medium: Woodcarving, Batik and Applique
Venue: Zainul Gallery 11, Institute of Fine Arts, DU
Date: April 17-23
Time: 11am-7.00 pm



Inter University Drama Festival '08

Organiser: IUB Theatre and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Venue: National Theatre Stage, GSA
Time: 6.30pm
April 23
Play: Padma Parer Manush
Troupe: Primeasia University



Art Exhibition

Title: Union of Uniqueness
Exposition
Artists: Javed Jalli and Avijit Mukherjee (India)
Venue: Art Club Bangladesh, Suit-3/B, H 4, R 104, Gulshan
Date: April 21-May 7
Time: 11am-7pm



"Mohiniattam": Gait of the enchantress

Lecture and demonstration at Chhayanat



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Dance performance by Pallavi Krishnan (left), the danseuse demonstrates Mohiniattam mudras through students

NADIA SARWAT

Pallavi Krishnan, the leading exponent of Mohiniattam, one of the oldest existing Indian dance forms, conducted a lecture at Chhayanat on April 21. In the presence of an enthusiastic audience at the Rameshchandra Dutta Memorial Auditorium, Chhayanat Sanskriti Bhavan, the artiste went over the history, basic features and other aspects of Mohiniattam with some demonstrations.

Mohiniattam is said to be the most lyrical among the classical dance forms. The mudras are

gentle, rhythmic and graceful. The name of the dance form itself is suggestive of its captivating power -- Mohini means enchantress and Attam means dance. It is then the "dance of the enchantress". However, Mohiniattam could not achieve the mass popularity it deserves for a long time. Recently, the dance form has attained attention from artistes and dance enthusiasts after much research has been done on Mohiniattam, emphasising on the aesthetics and ethnic influence.

A Biology graduate (from the Bardhaman University, India) Pallavi Krishnan had extensive

training in Bharatnatyam and Kathakali dance. Krishnan is also an alumna of both Vishwa Bharati University and Kerala Kalamandalam. Since she had been introduced to Mohiniattam, the dance form has become her passion. She studied the dance form in Kerala, where it originated. Krishnan also received special training on Mohiniattam from Guru Bharati Shibaji. At present, Krishnan is the most sought after Mohiniattam dancer.

Invited by the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh, Krishnan is currently conducting a workshop on Mohiniattam. Some

selected students of Bharatnatyam, Kathakali and Odissi are taking part in the workshop.

While speaking on the history and evolution of the dance form, Krishnan said "Previously known as Ashtapadiattam and then Dasiattam, Mohiniattam is often associated with the devdasi tradition. The tradition of Mohiniattam can be traced back to the 16th-17th century, a period generally considered as the golden era of arts and literature in the history of Kerala. The earliest written reference to Mohiniattam is found in the commentary on the Vyavaharamala, a Sanskrit text written by Mazhamangalam Namboodiri during the 16th century.

"It was practiced by the women of the matriarchal families of Kerala, thus was subjected to the resentment of the male dominated society. The matriarchal structure itself was on the decline, so the dance form did not flourish as others such as Bharatnatyam or Odissi."

Krishnan also shared her experiences of training under different gurus.

Laksmi, Ira and Tathoi, three students of Chhayanat who are taking part in the workshop, dem-

onstrated some basic mudras of Mohiniattam. Starting with the Pranam, the three students demonstrated mudras like Mey Sadakam (exercise), Chubdu Sadakam (footsteps), Taganam and others.

Krishnan then presented a complete performance. She performed an Ashtapadi (temple doors in Kerala are opened with this performance). The dance depicts Radha, along with her sakhi, wandering in the woods and coming across Krishna playing flute. The tradition focuses on the reaction of Radha -- her passion and excitement, seeing Krishna, through graceful movements and facial expressions.

Explaining the fusion and experimental works on Mohiniattam while preserving its originality, Krishnan also rendered a performance with the Rabindra Sangeet Sakhi oi bujhi banshi bajey.

The three-hour session ended with an open discussion. Celebrated Bangladeshi dancers Shibli Mohammad, Shamim Ara Nipa and Kajol Ibrahim appreciated the demonstration by Krishnan.

"Satyajit Ebong Satyajit" on Ekushey TV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray's death anniversary, Ekushey TV will air a special documentary, *Satyajit Ebong Satyajit* today at 5:15 pm.

Satyajit Ray took Bengali cinema to a whole new level through his works. His films have earned him several international awards, including an Oscar for lifetime achievement. The show will feature noted Indian actor Soumitra Chatterjee, who has worked in most of Ray's films, and Bangladeshi photographer Sayeeda Khanam, who has done a series of photographs on Ray, reminiscing on the master filmmaker.

The show is produced by Masudul Hasan Rony and hosted by Umme Wara Mishu.



Actor Soumitra Chatterjee (right) speaks to the host of the programme

Mahua Utsab at Jahangirnagar University

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

'Mahua Utsab' which was initiated by the late Selim Al Deen was celebrated at the Jahangirnagar University (JU) on April 20. The department of Drama and Dramatics, JU organised the festival in cooperation with Prothom Alo Bondhu Shabbha.

JU Vice Chancellor Dr. Mohammad Muniruzzaman inaugurated the festival near the

Shaheed Minar on JU campus. Poet Mohammad Rafiq, Nasiruddin Yousuff, president of the Sammilito Sanskritik Jote; Proctor Dr. Syed M Kamrul Ahsan; Dr. Afsar Ahmed, Dr. Lutfur Rahman and associate Professor Rashid Harun spoke on the occasion.

Sanowar Hossein, chairman of the Drama and Dramatics Department, JU presided over the programme. The daylong programme included reading

from Selim Al Deen's works, musical performance and discussion on the significance of flora and trees in our culture.

Mahua flowers and the tree hold a special place in the local indigenous traditions. Adivasis use the flowers to make a special drink. Parts of the Mahua tree are used for medicinal purposes.

Selim Al Deen started the celebration on JU campus to generate interest in the indigenous culture.

In Focus

Sheter Bangla Temple: Over 200-year old terracotta work in ruins



Intricate terracotta work on the temple walls are in ruins, some pieces are missing

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, from Handial

The Sheter Bangla Temple in Handial village, Pabna, features some of the oldest existing terracotta works in the country. Overlooked by the authorities, this temple with intricate terracotta decorations is now on the verge of dilapidation.

Located near the mango garden in Handial village, the temple was commissioned by the local zamindar Mukunda Lal

Shah in 1779.

The once thriving temple that saw throngs of devotees has now been abandoned. Different parts of the edifice have developed cracks and it can collapse any time.

The Archeological Department (AD) has put up a sign that says the temple is under the department's supervision. However, as of now, no initiative to restore the temple has been taken.

Meanwhile, miscreants have been

stealing the terracotta pieces and bricks from the temple. Locals also complain that the temple has become a haven for gamblers and drugabusers.

A caretaker has been employed by the Archeological Department (AD) to look after the temple but he is rarely seen at the premises, according to villagers.

Concerned locals and Hindu devotees believe that it is possible to restore the glory and splendor of the temple, if the Archeological Department takes neces-

sary initiatives.

An employee of the Archeological Department, who wishes to remain anonymous, told *The Daily Star* that, without required funds, the department can do very little to implement the restoration. Hopefully the authorities and solvent citizens would come forward to the cause of preserving this temple that is a part of the local heritage.



Discussants speak at the Mahua Utsab

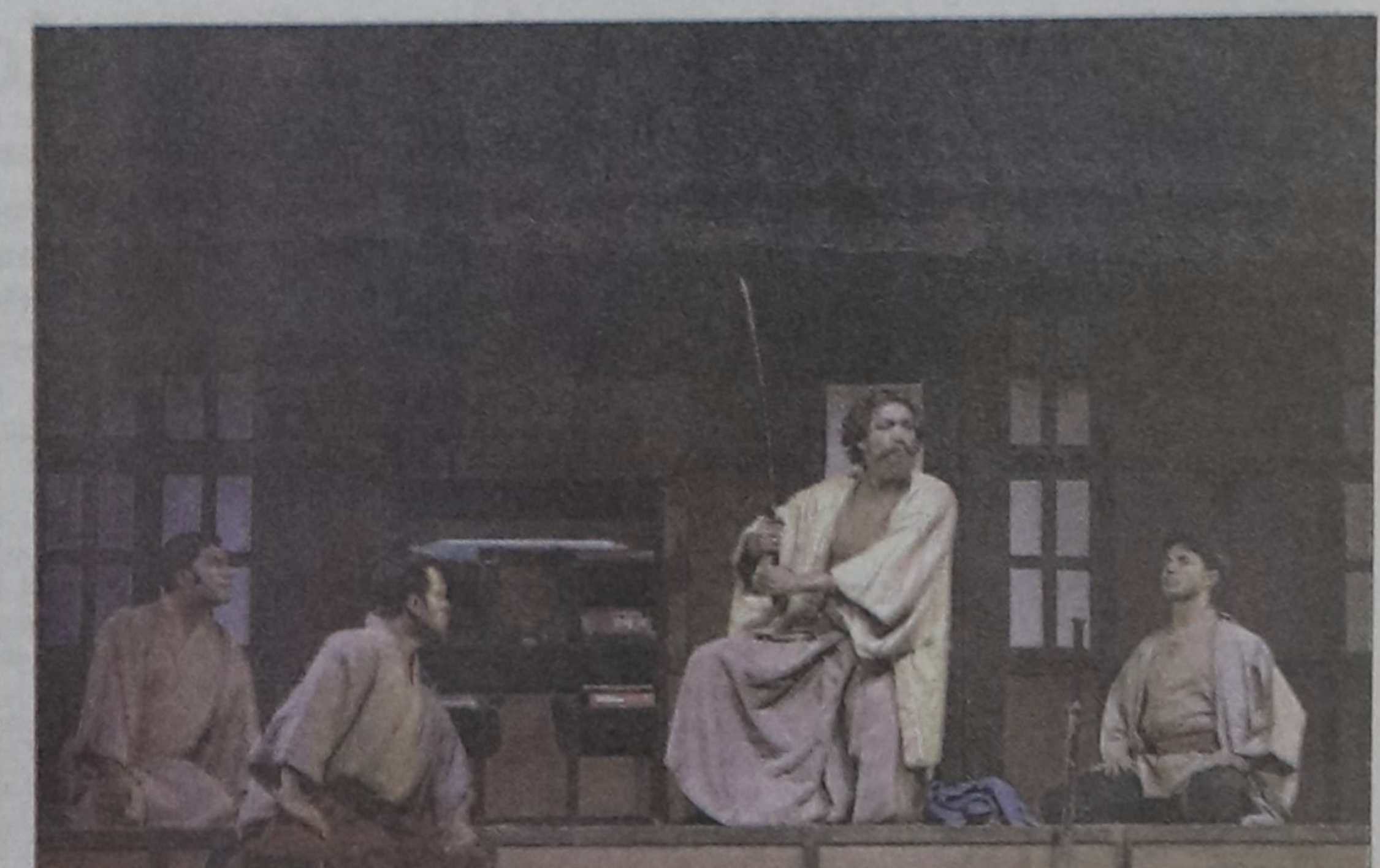


PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Eksho Bosta Chaal, a Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy production, was staged at the National Theatre Stage on April 21. Abdus Selim has translated *Eksho Bosta Chaal* from the Japanese original -- a play by Yuzo Yamamoto. Directed by Golam Sarwar, optimistically *Eksho Bosta Chaal* concludes with the fact that human beings can keep a dream alive even under the harshest of circumstances.