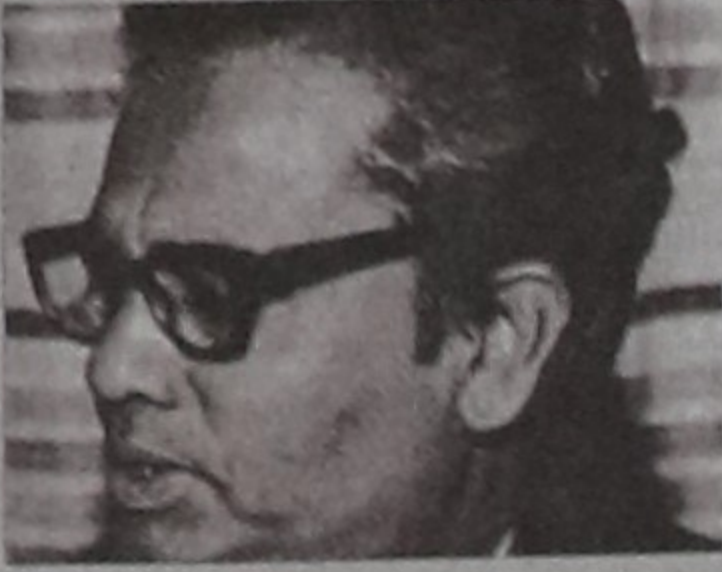


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Discussion and Theatre
On Shaheed Munir Chowdhury
Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Play: Kabor
Troupe: Bangaranga Natyadal
Date: April 24
Time: 6pm



Satyajit Ray Retrospective
Organiser: Indian Cultural Centre
Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, H 25, R 96, Gulshan 2
April 24 Goopi Gain Bagha Bain
April 25 Hirak Rajar Deshe
Time: 6 pm everyday



Art Exhibition
Title: Return to the roots
Artists: 7 Bengali artists from India
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, R 27 (Old), Dhanmondi
Date: April 25-May 9
Time: 12pm-8pm



Asian Flip Flop Jazz Concert

Troupe: Jazzy Chopsticks
Venue: Auditorium, Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, R 9, Dhanmondi
Date: April 24
Time: 7:30pm
Tickets available at the Café Tin Drum, GI



Int'l Dance Day celebration

Young dancers of Dhaka division perform at Shilpakala Academy



Competitors perform (clockwise) Bharatnatyam, Manipuri, Kathak and Odissi dance

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) and Bangladesh Nrityashilpi Sangstha are jointly celebrating the International Dance Day this year. A nationwide month-long dance competition has been arranged on the occasion, which will end with a three-day festival starting from April 27. As part of

the competition, the artistes of Dhaka division performed at BSA yesterday. Around 50 young dancers rendered classical (Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Manipuri and Odissi), folk and creative dance performances. The competition was held at two venues -- the auditorium and rehearsal room of Music and Dance Centre, BSA. Director General of BSA, Bhuiya

Shafiqul Islam; Ashraf Mosaddek, secretary and Sunil Chandra Das, director of National Music and Dance Centre spoke on the occasion. Veteran dance artistes Shoma Mumtaz and Rahiza Khanam Jhunu also spoke at the programme. The panel of judges includes eminent dancers of the country including Shamim Ara Nipa, Shibli Mohammad, Munmun Ahmed,

Hasan Imam, Shukla Sarkar, Minu Haque, Anisul Islam Hiru, Tamanna Rahman and Sohel Rahman. The final will be held on April 27. The director general of BSA had a meeting with a representative of UNESCO, as UNESCO has expressed interest in funding BSA's International Dance Day celebration.

PHOTO: MUMIT M

Artistes delegation to visit Pakistan

A twenty member cultural delegation of dancers, musicians and singers of Bangladesh led by Mr. M.A. Mannan Hawladar, Director, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, visited Pakistan High Commission Dhaka, on April 22. The delegation met the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Alamgir Babar, says a press release. The delegates are scheduled to visit Pakistan next month where they will perform at a cultural programme in Karachi.

Disney launches nature film label

The Disney Company has unveiled a new specialist film unit dedicated to producing wildlife and environmental documentaries for the big screen. 'Disneynature' will launch next year with the US release of *Earth*, a film version of the BBC's Planet Earth TV series. The label, which will release one film each year, will be run by France-based executive Jean-Francois Camilleri. "Nature invents the most beautiful stories," he said.

"Our role will be to tell them with passion and enthusiasm." Camilleri played a key role in the development of French nature film *March of the Penguins*, which went on to win an Academy Award for best documentary. Narrated by Star Wars actor James Earl Jones, *Earth* will be released in the US on April 22 next year. Alastair Fothergill, who produced *Planet Earth* for the BBC and The Discovery Chan-

nel, is working on new films about chimpanzees and "big cats" for the Disneynature label. Other projects in development include documentaries about flamingoes, orangutans and the world's oceans. Dick Cook, chairman of the Walt Disney Studios, said the label's goal was "to offer event films that will appeal to everyone who is captivated by the grandeur of nature". Source: Internet

Musical rendezvous in Chittagong

Artistes perform songs of five poets

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

The amity between Bangladesh and India was strengthened with a new dimension through the much-hyped reintroduction of the train communication, aptly named as 'Moitree Express', on Pahela Baishakh this year.

The Moitree Express is not only a source of nostalgia but also a chance for the two neighbouring countries to build bridges, generate new hopes and aspirations.

Despite some tensions along the borders, the cultural tie has always been strong between West Bengal and Bangladesh. The fraternity of cultural activists, poets, singers, writers, actors and other artistes from both Bangladesh and West Bengal remain a powerful force.

Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Rajnikant, Atul Prasad and Dwijendra Lal Roy are the five great Bengali poets who are revered by people on both sides. Their songs and poetry have made a major impact on the mindset of Bengalis in every sphere of life, study and works.

The newly formed Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh-India Friendship Society organised a musical soiree at the auditorium of Theatre Institute, Chattagram (TIC) recently. In the spotlight were the selected songs of the great pentad in observance of Pahela Baishakh. Artistes Mita Haque, Khairul Anam Shakil, Ilora Ahmed Shukla, Aniruddha Sen Gupta, Srabani Barua and ATM Jahangir rendered the classic Bangla songs at the programme.

Mita Haque was full of praise for this initiative. She began her rendition with a Tagore song *Jagately anando joggey amaar nimontron*. Two beautiful and memorable songs of Atul Prasad -- *Ami rakhtey jodi apon ghorey* and *Ami bandhinu tomar tirey* -- came next. Mita's last rendition was *Aji eshechhi eshechhi* of D.L. Roy. The artiste left the stage, humbly declining an encore.

Two Chittagong-based artistes,



PHOTO: STAR

Artiste Ilora Ahmed Shukla (top) and Mita Haque sing at the programme



Aniruddha Sen Gupta and Srabani Barua rendered songs of the pentad poets. The renditions -- *Tumi nirmal koro mongal korey* by Aniruddha and *Aji natun rataney* by Srabani -- left a lasting impression. Then came Ilora with *Tumi daogo dao morey* of Atul Prasad,

followed by two songs of Atul Prasad and D.L. Roy.

Jahangir in turn successfully overcame the initial difficulty in acoustics and presented five superb songs. Of these, a rendition of D.L. Roy's *Murali kande Radhe Radhe bole* remained etched in

the memory. The show concluded with a performance by Khairul Anam Shakil. Taking off with the Nazrul Sangeet *Nohey nohey priyo e noi ankhi jol*, Shakil went on to render three ghazals. Of them the audience was particularly responsive to *Keu bhole na keu bhole*. The curtains came down with Shakil's rendition of *Padmar dheurey*.

Assistant High Commissioner of India, Subrata Bhattacharya lauded the organisers for the initiative, which would go a long way in fostering an enduring, bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and India.

"The introduction of Moitree Express is a significant development.

Continued cultural exchange will further bolster the tie between the two neighbours," he added.

President of the Society and noted scientist Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam expressed his appreciation to the audience.

The writer is the Bureau Chief, The Daily Star Chittagong.

Satyajit Ray: Remembering the doyen

Talking about the great late Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray, his famous Japanese counterpart Akira Kurosawa said, "The quiet but deep observation, understanding and love of the human race, which are characteristic of all his films, have impressed me greatly...I feel that he is a 'giant' of the movie industry."

These words have an undeniable ring of truth as one looks back at Ray's life (May 2, 1921-April 23, 1992) and film career. Go back to 1955 and his first film *Pather Panchali* (Song of the road) the first of a trilogy, followed by *Aparajito* (The unvanquished) and *Apur Sansar* (The world of Apu). These films have a touch of his unique blend of intellect and emotion. Who can forget the stark lives of Apu and his family? The son of a poor Brahmin poet and priest, Apu witnesses the struggle for existence of his family against the milieu of a famine and his own growing up years.

Around the same time, Ray made two other landmark films: *Devi* (The goddess) and *Jalsaghar* (The music room).

Ray's later films touched more contemporary themes. In these ranks were *Nayak* in 1966,

Pratidwandi in 1970, *Seemabaddha* in 1971, *Jana Aranya* in 1975 and *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* (The chess players) in 1977. The last film was based on a short story by renowned Hindi writer Premchand and brought him to the notice of the mainstream Indian filmmaking audience.

Other films included *Teen Kanya* (1961), *Charulata* (1964), *Ashani Sanket* (1973), *Ghar-e-Bair-e* (1984) and *Ganashatru* (1989). His last film was *Agantuk* (1991).

As Ray went from strength to strength, he was feted overseas with awards at Venice, Cannes, Locarno and Berlin. In 1992 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award "in recognition of his rare mastery of the art of motion pictures and for his profound humanitarian outlook, which as had an indelible influence on filmmakers and audiences throughout the world." This is not an overstatement -- Ray's films were watched in film schools and avidly studied by upcoming filmmakers. Prominent Indian directors such as Kumar Shahani, Mani Kaul, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Shyam Bengal drew inspiration from Ray.

Other honours that came Ray's way were Legion d'Honneur, France and Bharatratna.

Despite his considerable talent,



Ray in his studio (top), Sharmila Tagore in *Devi*

Ray was never far from controversy. In Bengal, particularly Kolkata (Calcutta), where Marxism was the order of the day, he was labelled as a representative of bourgeois culture. Even his friend Chidananda Dasgupta wrote that Ray did not accurately capture the political milieu of the turbulent 1960s and 1970s. In Dasgupta's words, the latter failed to show a greater concern for "the Calcutta of the burning trains, communal riots, refugees, unemployment, rising prices and food shortages..." Today such criticisms seem far off

the mark. Says an internet article, "It is now easier to recognise Ray's films as politically nuanced and Ray never made the mistake of embracing unabashedly, the nationalist interpretation of Indian history. Ray tackled the difficult subject of the Bengal famine of 1943, for instance, with great sensitivity."

The master director continues to remain the most talented Bengali filmmaker. His films captured rural as well as urban Bengali lifestyle in its truest form.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent