

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Image
Artist: Mohammad Fokhrul Islam
Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: May 2-15
Time: 9:00am - 12:00 pm & 5:00pm - 8:00pm
On Saturdays 5:00pm - 8:00pm



Photography Exhibition

Title: Partnership in Practice
Venue: Drik Gallery, House 58, Road 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: May 01-10
Time: 3pm-8pm



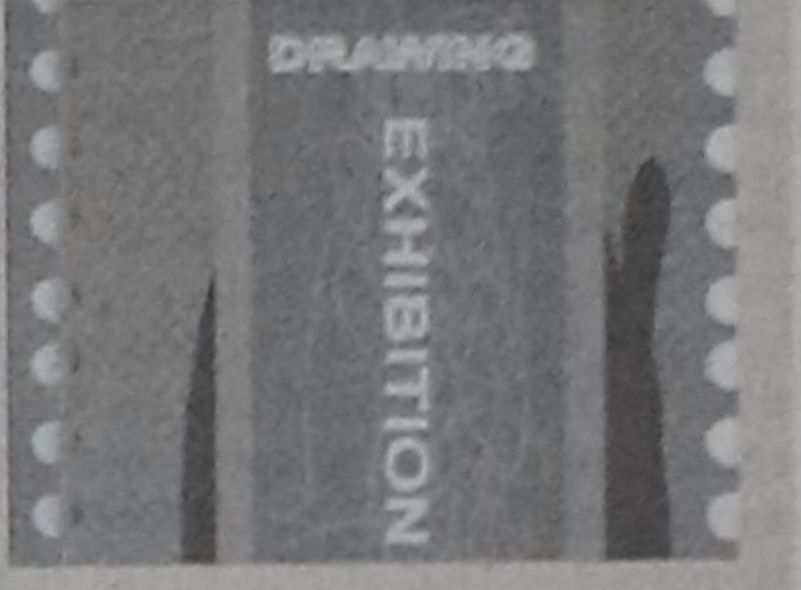
Art Exhibition

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



Drawing Exhibition

Organiser: Institute of Fine Arts
Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University
Date: May 4-10
Time: 11am-8pm



TV Southasia takes off

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

"We are South Asians. We're proud to tell the world. We're singing in one voice now. It's time for us to be heard."

An appropriate introduction to TV South Asia, "the first ever electronic media collaboration" which was launched recently at a glittering ceremony in Mumbai.

Explaining the raison d'être for the channel, eminent Indian poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar said that TV Southasia will provide a common platform for the South Asian nations in a scenario where the countries share a common culture, civilisation and history. A firm believer in a shrinking world, he said the channel would go a long way in providing a unique identity to the South Asians across the globe.

Another notable at the function was classical Hindustani vocalist Pandit Jasraj. Meanwhile, the channel's executive editor Rubana Haq enumerated the history of the channel.

The channel's origin goes back to April last year when five broadcasters from the region pitched forces to

rediscover and reinforce a South Asian identity based on a shared heritage. The players are the Indian Taranez channel -- the first 24x7 news channel in Bengali, which offered it facilities to uplink the channel, Channel 1 from Bangladesh, Aaj TV from Pakistan, Image Channel from Nepal and News First Online from Sri Lanka. In the words of chairperson of Taranez Ratikanta Basu, the move was initiated to bring the South Asian nations together and promote trade and tourism through collaborative measures.

Amplifying on the mandate of TV Southasia, a press release says, "The objective is to focus on harmony, secularism and peace which will be conveyed through programmes like talk shows, vox pop, music, quiz, tele-films, features, documentaries, interviews; shows on lifestyle, cuisine, architecture, fashion and reviews from the region on commerce, trade and cinema. TV Southasia also stands for its commitment to its project SHAPE, which stands for what Southasia needs at this hour: Skill, Health, Awareness, Poverty alleviation and Education."

A family of bauls at an urban outlet



Mohammed Abdul Alim Bayati (C) with his daughter Musammat Rozina Akhter (L) and son Lokman Hakim at Jatra

NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

To catch this multi-talented baul trio in action, visit the Banani handicrafts shop, Jatra on Thursday and Friday evenings. The family head, Mohammed Abdul Alim Bayati is accompanied by his teenage children, son Lokman Hakim and daughter Musammat Rozina Akhter. Descending from four generations of bauls (his father and grandfather were skilled *ektara* players) Alim grew up in Kalipur village, in the Sunamganj district. As a teenager, he was blinded by a bout of small pox, but, undaunted, continued his religious education at the local madrasa. Alim's curiosity was whetted by the background strains from the radio, and during the holidays, he learned *Nabatatwa*

Gaan (religious songs), and to play the two-stringed *dotara* and *shoraj*.

Initially practising with his guru Abdul Monab for three years, Alim then trained under Sylhet Radio Centre music director, Rakkhal Chakrabarti. Soon, he mastered seventeen types of mostly indigenous instruments, including the *dhol*, *tabla*, flute, violin and mandolin. Rather fascinatingly, he learned *jibra*, the art of making music with his tongue! Studying during the day and travelling through villages by night, performing *Baithaki Gaan* (where village folk gather for a chat and some entertainment), Alim became an expert at *Palta-palti Gaan* and *Sawaal Jawaab*, duets with other bawatis, using clever repartee.

Sadly, Alim's bucolic existence

came to an end when his music faced opposition from local religious leaders, forcing him to move to Dhaka nearly twenty years ago. Singing in the streets of Kamrangichar and Labagh in old Dhaka, he soon learned the ropes, performing at concerts organised by university students at New Market. His talents recognised, he's even sung with his children, his wife Khadija on the cymbals, at Dhaka University's Teacher Student Centre.

Breakthroughs were swift to come Alim's way in the new millennium. BTV's Mofizul Laltu recruited the family to perform for its *Samahar* programme. The playwright/actor Ashish Khandaker organised a private, rooftop performance in Dhanmondi. "Many foreigners were part of the audience; it was a

fantastic experience," Alim chuckled. More scintillating experiences were to be had during shows at Alliance Francaise and Drik Gallery, gradually bringing the singing family into the public eye.

By a stroke of luck, Alim was introduced to Bangladeshi film director, Tareque Masud, resulting in a musical contribution to the film *Matir Moina*. His son, Lokman's versatility (he's played the *doogdoogi* since childhood), was featured in the 2001 short film, *Lokman-er Shopno Bastobota*. A competition winner, the film was aired on TV, and at some of Dhaka's cultural centres. It followed Lokman's daily rituals, poignantly bringing out his hopes and dreams. Another film, *Lokman-er Asha*, was also shown at the Goethe Institut.

Their travels have taken them across the breadth of the country, and to neighbouring India a few years ago. Being seasoned performers at weddings, birthdays, picnics and private concerts, they would welcome more opportunities to display their talents. Unfortunately, their aspirations to compile a music album are bound by financial constraints at present. A number of foreign embassies have also organised shows, enabling their art form to be appreciated by a much wider audience, which is "like a dream come true," says Alim, reflecting on a grand event at the American Embassy earlier this year.

Alim was introduced to Jatra's proprietor, Anusheh Anadil by her father in 2002. Alim's tunes enchanted her. Since then, the shop has reverberated to the mesmerising beat of this uniquely musical family.

The writer is a freelance contributor

Sharmin Lucky on Radio Foorti



Sharmin Lucky

PHOTO COURTESY, ASHISH SENGUPTA

Fans can now listen to popular TV show host Sharmin Lucky on radio as well. Lucky is hosting a show called *My Time with Sharmin Lucky* on Radio Foorti.

The programme is specifically planned for the female audience and features tips on beauty, cooking, health, relationship and

more. Specialists from the concerned areas will also attend the show.

The one-hour show will be aired live from Sunday to Wednesday at 2pm every week. Audience can participate in the show through text messages.



The inauguration of Music Planet School was held recently at Spectra Convention Centre, says a press release. Turkish Ambassador Farit Ergin attended as chief guest while singer-musician Naquib Khan was the special guest at the event. Among others, Saifuddin Saki, director of the School; Faruque Wahid, adviser and Omar Khaled Rumi, vocalist and guitarist of the Band Bangladesh spoke at the inauguration. A cultural programme featuring performances by students of the school followed



Indigenous artistes of Mariamnagar Dharmapalli in Jhenaighati, Sherpur perform their traditional dance at a cultural programme held recently

Drama serial "Ak-e Shunyo Dosh" on Ekushey TV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The second episode of the new drama serial *Ak-e Shunyo Dosh* will be aired tonight on Ekushey TV at 8:15 pm. Written by Ishaq Khan and directed by Kaisar Ahmed, the serial follows the life of an imbecile named Lebu.

One day, Lebu's unemployed nephew Rahim comes to his house. Lebu gets furious because Rahim cannot manage to find a job even after his graduation. Lebu chases his nephew away. However, the

notorious Rahim hides in the village. The serial moves forward with funny incidences involving the uncle-nephew duo.

Actor-director Tauquir Ahmed plays Lebu in the serial. "The character is quite funny; I believe this serial will entertain the audience," said Tauquir. The cast also includes Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Dolly Zahur, Anisur Rahman Milon, Shams Sumon, Ishita, Richi Solaiman, Farzana Chhoobi and others. The serial is aired on every Monday and Tuesday.



Tauquir Ahmed (L) and Anisur Rahman Milon in *Ak-e Shunyo Dosh*

Kylie to receive French honour

Pop star Kylie Minogue says she is "deeply honoured" to receive a top French honour.

The star will be made a knight in the Order of Arts and Letters for her "contribution to the enrichment of French culture".

The 39-year-old said: "French culture has influenced me greatly and I have always had colossal respect for the arts and people of France."

She will be honoured at a ceremony in Paris today (May 5).

The singer, who is due to kick off her world tour the following night at the Paris Bercy arena, said: "I am deeply honoured to be recognised in this way."

Christine Albanel, the French minister of culture and communications, will present Minogue with the award.

Previous recipients of the award include Bob Dylan, Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman.

The Order of Arts and Letters was established to recognise artists and writers who have contributed significantly to the arts in France and throughout the world.

In January it was announced Minogue will receive Germany's top showbiz honour, the Golden Camera.

Source: Internet

"Rang Rasiya": Ketan Mehta's latest art house project



Nandana Sen (C) in a scene from the film

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Every time acclaimed film director Ketan Mehta comes out with a new film, lovers of meaningful cinema are agog. And it is no exception this time as his latest work *Rang Rasiya* (Colours of Passion), based on the life and times of eminent 19th century painter of Kerala, Raja Ravi Varma, is ready for commercial release next month.

Besides being a chronicle of the life and times of the painter, the film revolves around Raja Ravi Varma (played by Randeep Hooda) and his muse Sugandha (played by Nandana Sen, daughter of Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen).

Although *Rang Rasiya* is a period film, Mehta says it has a contemporary relevance, the reason for which he made the movie.

So impressed was Mehta by the

contribution of Varma to modern Indian art that the director did not deter from making the period film despite the box-office disaster of his previous historical movie *Mangal Pandey: The Rising*, a story of the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, starring Aamir Khan in title role, three years ago.

But then Mehta was never driven by box office demands. In fact, he says he would return to period film making again as he plans to make a biopic on the Rani of Jhansi, Laxmi Bai.

Interestingly, the film Mehta made before *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* was another period piece, *Sardar* based on the life of Vallabhbhai Patel, the charismatic politician from the director's home state Gujarat.

It remains to be seen if Mehta once again runs into a standoff with the censor board over certain

scenes in *Rang Rasiya* as was the case with his 1992 movie *Maya Memsahab*, starring Shahrukh Khan and the director's wife, actress Deepa Sahi. Some of the scenes of the earlier film were cut by the censor board.

Mehta says he was introduced to Varma's works when he was a student of The Film and Television Training Institute of India in Pune but it was only a decade ago that he had first thought of making a film on the painter based on a novel by Marathi writer Ranjit Desai.

Rang Rasiya has been shot in Kerala, Mumbai, Varanasi and Jaipur.

Mehta instantly earned critical acclaim ever since he came on the scene with his first film *Bhaumi Bhavai* in 1980. His next two films *Holi* (1984) and *Mirch Masala* (1984) cemented his place among reputed makers of parallel cinema.