

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tagore Birth Anniversary

Organiser: Nandan
Venue: Chhayana Sanskritbhaban, House-72, Road-15 A, Dhanmondi
Date: May 10
Time: 6:45 pm



Ibsen-Strindberg-Selim Al-Deen Literary Evening

Organiser: Bengali-Nordic Literary Society
Venue: Goethe-Institut Auditorium, H 10, R 9, Dhanmondi
Date: May 11, Time: 5:30pm



Art Exhibition

Title: Symphony In Drawing
Artist: Ranjit Das
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H 26, R 3, Dhanmondi
Date: May 14-28
Time: 10am-1pm and 5pm-8pm



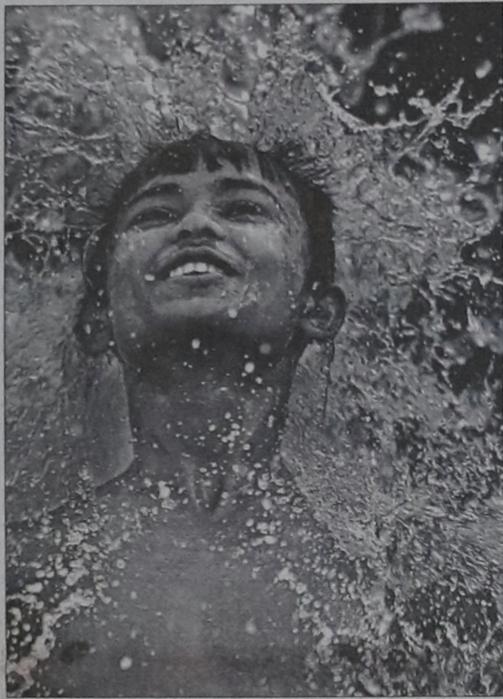
Solo Ceramic Exhibition

Title: Innovative Beauty in Ceramics
Artist: Afroja Chowdhury Happy
Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, DU
Date: May 10-16
Time: 12pm-8pm



Changes from within

Omi's photos highlighting people's participation in water management



Photographs by Saiful Huq Omi

KARIM WAHEED

"Could you please bring a cup of tea for the guest?" -- This was the starting point of a conversation photographer Saiful Huq Omi recorded. Omi was interviewing Nazmun Nahar Mukul, president of a Water Management Association in Patuakhali. The request does not sound unusual, yet in our country -- particularly in rural areas -- we do not hear a wife asking her husband to make tea that often. This was a sign of change, the photographer observed. A change from within.

Thanks to programmes -- undertaken by Integrated Planning for Sustainable Water Management (IPSWAM) and Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP) -- involving people at the grass roots level, the landless and the marginalised, a gradual

change is noticeable in the rural areas.

Omi decided to record this change. For the project he went to Khulna, Patuakhali and Noakhali; it took a month -- around 10 days in each area. Photos taken by him highlights different aspects of change, the most profound being gender equation.

These photographs are on display at the exhibition, "Partnership in Practice". The exhibition at Drik Gallery opened by Bea ten Tusscher, the Dutch Ambassador, on May 1 ends today.

The IPSWAM programme is undertaken by the Ministry of Water Resources, Bangladesh Government in cooperation with the Dutch Government. It is implemented by the Third Planning Directorate (DP-III) of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), with assistance of the consultants Arcadis-Euroconsult

of the Netherlands and Socioconsult of Bangladesh.

All photos at the exhibition are black and white. According to Omi, "Black and white is my preferred medium. I feel that colour is sometimes overpowering and it becomes the subject itself."

The project was funded by Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh through IPSWAM. Omi has contributed a major share of his remuneration to IPSWAM.

The exhibition will likely go to UK and Netherlands soon.

Asked what inspired him to take on this project, Omi says his friend Andrew Jenkins, team leader of IPSWAM, often talked about the social changes in the areas he worked.

"When I was working in these areas, I noticed that the villagers treat the field workers like family members. I met women who don't think they are less capable

than men, and more importantly the men have started to feel the same. This journey has induced an enormous sense of respect in me for the hardworking government officials labouring day in day out to improve the lives of the dirt poor.

"I met field workers who wake up with the sun, travel miles -- from one village to another, talk to people, try to understand their problems and at the end of the day help them realise their own strength -- the strength to solve their problems and change their future," Omi says.

Photograph of a labourer, with his spade, ready to strike is quite dramatic. The sky with an abundance of dark clouds in the background looks ominous but the worker sports a faint smile.

Another photo frames a middle-aged man seemingly content with his pigeon. An image shows dusk

settling down on Boyar Char; man or cattle -- time for everyone to return home.

But all is not hunky dory. Photographs also bring in despair and calamity in the making. A photo shows erosion in Caring Char. Every year river erosion leaves thousands homeless.

Jossna Ara Begum's story is not unfamiliar. She had everything -- a husband and arable land. One night the river swallowed all -- the house, land and their belongings. Jossna's husband left home to find work and never returned. When she looks at her starving children, Jossna wants to kill herself.

Despite all the adversities and all the trauma, people in these remote regions have not lost hope. And so, they march on, thanks to the help these development projects are providing. A change is underway.

An inseparable bond with Rabindra Sangeet

In conversation with seasoned artiste Shahjahan Hafiz

NADIA SARWAT

Shahjahan Hafiz was a familiar name in the cultural arena of Dhaka in the '50s. Basically a Rabindra Sangeet singer, Hafiz was popular in the student community for his spirited performances at campus-based cultural programmes. However, his musical pursuits were limited due to his busy career as a doctor in the defence service. On the occasion of Tagore's birth anniversary, *The Daily Star* spoke with the seasoned artiste on a range of issues.

The beginning
Hafiz says, "I was brought up in Bhairab Bazar; it was a remote place then. Very few had the opportunity to be involved in cultural activities like singing, especially those from Muslim families. Since childhood, I had an inclination towards music. My liberal father understood my passion and encouraged it. But it was impossible to find a suitable school or receive necessary training in the area; even cultural programmes were rare. The gramophone was the only way I could satiate my appetite for music."

As he has a keen sense of music, which he thinks he inherited from his parents, Hafiz learnt many Tagore songs just by listening to the records.

The music scene in the '50s
According to Hafiz, in the '50s, Tagore songs were popularised by legendary artistes like Pankaj Mallik and Hemanta Mukherjee.

Says Hafiz, "From the very beginning, the sublime, melodious and profound music of Tagore attracted me. When I was in the college, I used to sing at cultural programmes. I even sang at some political meetings as well. Then I came to Dhaka and enrolled in the medical college. I don't remember the year, but it was the Rabindra Jayanti for which some of the DMC students, including me, approached eminent Tagore singer and composer Abdul Ahad."

The breakthrough
"After hearing my voice," says Hafiz, "Ahad asked me to meet him later, first at Radio Pakistan, where he used to work. Then it was at Nazimuddin Road, and here I got my first taste of the grammatical and theoretical aspects of music. With intense care, Abdul Ahad trained me as an accomplished singer and I started singing on the radio."

Hafiz was enlisted in the radio as a Grade A singer, but more importantly than that, he was a brilliant performer at the live music programmes. Right after the Partition (1947), there was a dearth of quality singers as many acclaimed Hindu artistes had moved to India. Hafiz was among the singers who tried to fill that vacuum. But his thriving career soon came to an end, as he had to focus on his profession as a doctor. However, he did not cut off his ties with music completely and continued singing at cultural programmes within his official community. In 1993, he appeared in a BTV programme directed by poet Abu Hena Mustafa

Kamal along with noted artistes Kalim Sharafi and Saiful Islam.

Hafiz today
After his retirement in 1998, Hafiz again became a regular on radio and TV. Now 79, Hafiz has devoted his energies to keeping alive the spirit of Tagore among the new generation.

State of Rabindra Sangeet today
"Tagore is an integral part of our life," says Hafiz. "Apart from celebrating the birth or death anniversary of the bard, we remember Tagore on other occasions such as Pahela Baishakh, which ushers in the New Year."

"Several organisations in Bangladesh are playing a constructive role in upholding the creativity and spirit of Tagore. I think this generation has a greater opportunity to access his works. They can receive training from skilled teachers at home and at Shantiniketan. My generation didn't have all these opportunities."

Hafiz encourages the young artistes' individual interpretation of Tagore songs. "Unless they deconstruct the subtlety and originality of the songs, why should we object? However, the music composer should clearly understand the extent to which he/she should incorporate new instruments to the arrangement."

Among the contemporary Tagore artistes, Hafiz admires Rezwana Chowdhury Bonny, Mita Haque, Sadi Mohammad, Mahiuzzaman Chowdhury and Aditi Mohsin.



Shahjahan Hafiz (C) singing at an informal get-together in Libya in the '80s

Telefilm "Shesh Rakkha" on Channel i

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Telefilm *Shesh Rakkha* will be aired today at 2:30 pm on Channel-i. The Tagore classic has been adapted by Lucky Enam, who has directed the telefilm as well.

Nibaran and Shibcharan are friends. Shibcharan wants to fortify the friendship by having his

son Godai marry Nibaran's daughter Indumati. Komol is an orphan who lives with Nibaran's family. Chandra is a young advocate who is friends with Godai. Indumati and Komol are quite close with Chandra's wife. Binod, another friend of Godai hears Komol singing at Chandra's home. Without even seeing her, Binod decides to marry Komol and the

marriage takes place eventually.

Meanwhile confusions emerge and affect the budding relationship between Godai and Indumati. All confusions are resolved in the end.

Tamalika Karmakar, Litu Anam, Shahrar Nazim Joy, Hridi Haque, Saju Khadem, Diba Nargis, Dr. Enamul Haque and others play the central roles in the telefilm.



(From left) Litu Anam, Hridi Haque and Tamalika Karmakar in the telefilm

"Terminator 4" starts filming despite Hollywood strike fears

He'll be back -- Hollywood strike or no strike!

Cameras began rolling this week on the latest *Terminator* movie -- estimated to cost about \$150 million -- for what many Hollywood watchers say is a late start given concerns that labour tensions could lead to an actors strike by July.

Terminator Salvation: The Future Begins, began shooting recently in New Mexico, bucking a trend in which studios have mostly avoided launching new productions they cannot be sure of completing before the Screen Actors Guild contract expires on June 30, a date being treated as a fact strike deadline.

SAG and Hollywood's major studios hit a stalemate last Tuesday after three weeks of talks, stoking fears of renewed Hollywood labour unrest after a 100-day screenwriters strike that ended in February.

Union leaders say they still hope to reach a deal without resorting to a walkout, and SAG has yet to even seek authorization from its 120,000 members to call a strike.

But with tens of millions of dollars at stake in making a movie, few studios and filmmakers are taking any chances. One exception is the team behind *Terminator*.

Warner Bros, a unit of Time Warner Inc, is the U.S. distributor for the fourth *Terminator* starring Christian Bale and set to reach theatres in May 2009. Sony Corp's Sony Pictures is handling international distribution.

The two studios had a similar deal for 2003's *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, which grossed \$433 million worldwide and was the last film in the franchise to star Arnold Schwarzenegger as the unstoppable cyborg from the future who made the line, "I'll be back," a worldwide catchphrase.

Source: Reuters



Christian Bale plays the lead in *Terminator 4*

Cultural programme in Rangamati

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

A cultural programme was held on May 7 at the auditorium of Rangamati Tribal Culture Institute (TCI).

The cultural performances were part of a certificate giving programme for the Community Health Service Workers (CHSW). The function was jointly organised by Rangamati Hill District Council and CHTDF-UNDP.

Jagat Jyoti Chakma, chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council was the chief guest at the programme.

Patrick Sweeting, project manager of CHTDF-UNDP, spoke at the programme as the guest of honour.

Robert Stolman, chief of implementation of CHTDF-UNDP gave the welcome address.

At the programme, certificates were given to Community Health Service Workers, who attended a two-month-long training programme on basic health. The programme was conducted by the doctors of district health department.

Considering that CHT is a malaria prone region, RHDC and UNDP in a joint initiative, have launched a health care programme for the local people.

Rowangchhari in Bandarban, Barkal in Rangamati and Matirangam in Khagrachhari were

under the programme.

The ongoing project will continue till 2012 and more upazilas in the three hilly districts will be included in the programme in future if the fund is available, sources said.

The CHSWs will convey health messages to the local communities and they will provide primary health care services. And a medical mobile team under the leadership of an MBBS doctor will provide health services in each village.

At the cultural programme, indigenous artistes from the Chakma, Marma and Tripura communities presented their traditional songs and dances.



Umbrella dance performed by Rakhain artistes

PHOTO STAR