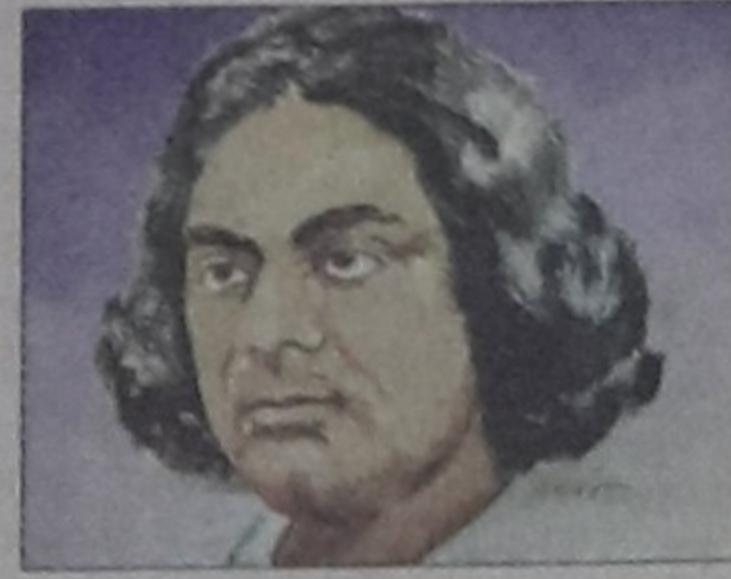


WHAT'S
ON THIS
WEEK

Nazrul Birth Anniversary
Organiser: Nazrul Sangeet Shilpi Parishad
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: May 19-21
Time: 7:00pm everyday



Cultural Programme

Organiser: Sri Lanka Women's Association and the Sri Lanka High Commission
Venue: The Radisson Water Garden Hotel, Date: May 22, Time: 7pm
Passes available at all expat clubs and the Sri Lankan High Commission, Dhaka



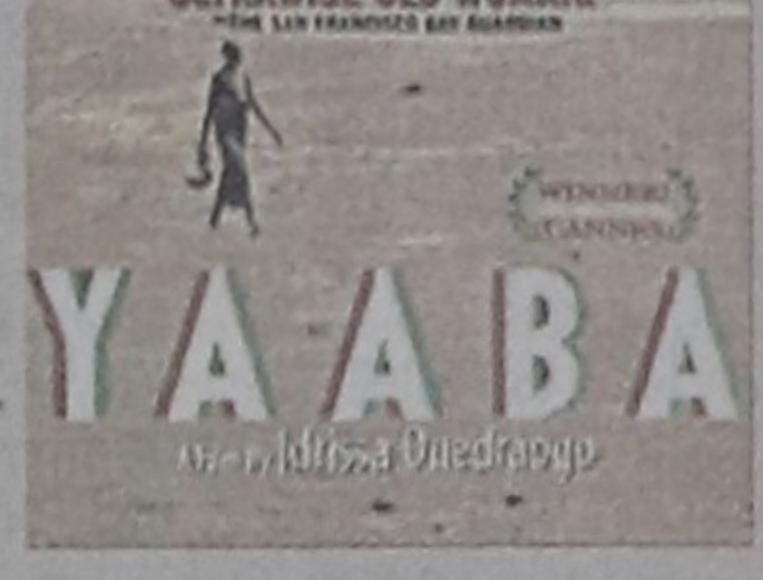
Art Exhibition

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



Film Screening

Organiser: Zahir Rahan Film Society
Venue: Goethe-Institut, H 10, R 9, Dhanmondi
Date: May 18-22
May 20
Country Focus: Burkina Faso
2pm Blakor; 2:17pm The Street is Ours; 2:32pm Souko; 3:22pm The Bowls; 3:15pm Yaaba; 5pm Tali; 7pm Buud Yam



"16th Young Artists' Art Exhibition '08" begins at Shilpakala



An installation (top), visitors at the exhibition (right)

PHOTO: MUMIT M.



ERSZAD KAMOL

The 16th Young Artists' Art Exhibition, scheduled to be held in 2006, was inaugurated on May 18, at the National Art Gallery. The exhibition and competition will continue till June 6. Department of Fine Arts, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) has been organising exhibitions featuring talented young artists' work biennially since 1975.

One hundred and ninety-five artworks by 141 young artists in different mediums -- painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, graphics, and installation -- are on display. Eight artists in three categories -- painting, sculpture and

graphics -- received awards.

M.M. MaiZuddin is the winner of the prestigious Young Artists' Award '08. Sarker Nahid Niazi, Shyamal Sarkar and Sheikh Mohammad Rokunuzzaman won the Best Awards in Painting, Sculpture and Graphics respectively.

Three young artists -- Maksuda Iqbal Nipa, Bishwajit Goswami and M. Hasan Morshed -- received Honourable Mention at the competition.

Eminent artists and art critics -- Abu Barq Alvi, Mansurul Karim, Hamiduzzaman Khan, Abdus Shakur and Syed Jahangir -- were the members of the jury.

Renowned artists -- Ranjit Das, Mohammad Eunus, Dhali Al Mamoon,



Mohammad Enamul Huq and Shishir Bhattacharya -- were the members of the Art Selection Committee.

In his welcome speech at the inauguration ceremony, the Director of the Department of Fine Arts, M. Mizanur Rahman said, "In response to our invitation, 473 artists from different corners of the country turned in 1169 art works for the primary selection. Of them, 195 artworks by 141 artists were selected for the exhibition."

Because of political turmoil the scheduled 16th Young Artists' Art Exhibition could not be held in 2006. In future, we hope to organise the exhibition regularly," he added.

Special guest at the programme, artist

Mustafa Monwar said, "The initiative taken by BSA to encourage the young artists has become popular."

The artists have dealt with diverse themes in some innovative mediums, however, most of the artworks don't represent our culture and our nature," he observed.

On the BSA initiative, Secretary to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, M. Shariful Alam said, "The exhibition and competition will help mould talented artists. It will give them exposure at the national and international level."

Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, director general of BSA, who chaired the programme hoped, "The young artists will enrich our art and society by dealing with humanist issues."

A glimpse of Bangladesh in Washington, D.C.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, D.C. organised an 'open house' on May 17, as part of Cultural Tourism, DC's new annual celebration of international culture showcasing embassies and cultural organisations.

Bangladesh Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir greeted the guests, among whom were Americans and tourists from around the world. In his brief remarks prior to the cultural programme, Ambassador Kabir highlighted the aspects of Bangladesh's unique historical and cultural heritage. He gave an account of the diversity in Bangladesh that also nurtures an egalitarian society. On Bangladesh-US relations, Ambassador Kabir talked about how both sides espouse the values of peace, democracy, pluralism and freedom, which strengthen the ties between the two nations.

The guests enjoyed a series of performances highlighting Bangladesh's rich cultural heritage. Renowned local cultural groups and Jago Art Centre presented a colourful display of our culture. A highlight was a musical presentation narrating the evolution of the nation and that included the Liberation War to the present day democratic transition. Succulent Bangladeshi cuisine seemed to be a hit with the visitors. The daylong programme also included a virtual tour of Bangladesh, the UN peacekeeping missions of Bangladeshi forces, paintings by renowned Bangladeshi artists and more. The event also included concerts, film screenings and a fashion show.

Over 3,000 guests attended the event.

Tony Dias: On screen and behind the scene



Tony Dias and Ishita in a scene from the play

MAINUL HASSAN

Tony Dias, a familiar face on the small screen is also busy behind the scenes. The popular actor has also been directing plays. ATN Bangla will air *Hothath Dekha* -- a single episode TV play directed by Tony -- tonight at 8:45 pm. Written by Shahrukh Shahid the play features a moving story of a young man, Ronju (played by Tony) who is shunned by all, after he becomes infected with HIV through blood transfusion.

The actor turned director talked to *The Daily Star* on the learning curve of direction and more.

The Daily Star (TDS): Why direction?

Tony: Direction is something, which I had in

mind since 1999 but that didn't realise because it is a time consuming business. In our country direction requires mastering many aspects. Apart from direction skills, a director has to pay attention to every possible detail. He is required to remain vigilant during the entire shooting process -- the sound quality, picture quality, managing the crew and more.

TDS: Tell us about plays directed by you
Tony: My first work as a director was *Dur Kuashaye Tumi*, a tele-film written by Farhi Hossain. It was aired during the Eid-ul-Fitr in 2006. After that I have completed four more productions. My last play was aired on TV during the last Eid-ul-Azha. *Hothath Dekha* is my sixth production.

TDS: Are you considering direction fulltime?

Tony: After acting, family and my business, I hardly have any time left. Taking time out for direction is rather challenging. It is only during the special occasions like Eid when I have time for direction. I am certainly interested but I'm afraid I'll only be able to direct few plays.

TDS: What do you consider to be most important in direction?

Tony: First of all I don't make compromises when it comes to maintaining the quality of the production. I don't have many productions to my credit but I am totally dedicated. I work on each project with the same sincerity, so that the audience can enjoy it.

TDS: Which is more difficult, acting or direction?

Tony: (Smiling) Direction is more challenging, I'd say. An actor follows the instructions of the director. The director guides him but there is no one to guide the director. The director has to think on his own. If the production doesn't generate the expected response then all fingers point to the director.

TDS: Tell us about "Hotath Dekha"
Tony: The play highlights a tragic love story. The characters are victims of an unkind reality. Ronju is forced to cut all connections with his wife whom he truly loves, when he becomes aware that he is HIV positive. Mili, Ronju's wife, misunderstands him. The fact that her husband is HIV positive hits her so badly that she even tries to commit suicide. Eventually Mili understands the truth but it might be too late to change anything.

According to Tony, "Shooting for the play was tough, as a major part it takes place on a train. Ishita (who plays Mili) has done an amazing job!"

Apart from Tony Dias and Ishita, the play also features Masud Ali Khan, Nasim and others.

Paintings for UNWFP campaign

United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) has launched a campaign called "Walk the World" recently, says a press release. The chief objective of the campaign is to alleviate hunger around the world by 2015. This year, WFP and its partners arranged special events in Bangladesh to raise funds for underprivileged school children.

A daylong painting workshop was organised by UNWFP, Creative Communication Ltd and Gallery Chitrak on this occasion. Thirty-four prominent artists of the country participated in the workshop. The paintings were later put on display at Gallery Chitrak. Proceeds from the sales of the artworks will go to the campaign.

Eminent artist Rafiqunnabi chaired the inauguration of the exhibition. Among others, Bilkis Mansoor, director of Creative Communication Ltd, and Muniruzzaman, executive director of Gallery Chitrak attended the programme.



Artist Monirul Islam (2nd from left) with guests at the exhibition

"Crayons": Disco queen Donna Summer is back after 17 years

Donna Summer was dubbed "The Queen of Disco" after a series of hit singles in the 1970s: now the singer pokes fun at that title in a new song included in her first studio album in 17 years.

After raising three daughters, Grammy-winning Summer, 59, returned to the studio to record *Crayons*, which has a song titled *The Queen is Back*. It's a hip-hop track (sounds like opening-credit music for the 11 o'clock news) which goes: "So many years ago, on the radio/she crept into your soul/and loved to love you oh-oh." Within one stanza Summer has sung about herself in the third person and referred to the titles of two of her hit songs. Not bad.

"It's just kind of poking fun at the fact that this 'queen image' has prevailed for so long," Summer, whose other major hits include *Hot Stuff* and *She Works Hard for the Money*, said ahead of the album's release last month.

"It's having fun with it and saying I was out of the picture for a while but she's back," said Summer, who is estimated to have sold more than 130 million

albums. Summer's career was crowned with five Grammy awards including best rock female vocal performance and best dance recording. She co-wrote all 12 songs on her new album.

The songs genre-hop without leaving the pop realm. First single *Stomp Your Feet* rocks a big room like a hipper Celine Dion anthem; the Latin-flavoured *Driving Down Brazil* has a breezy, windows-down pulse; and *I'm a Fire*, the lone electronic dance entry, has a mellow softness to it that makes it sound unlike a thumping typical dance tune," Summer said.

"It's a box of crayons. Each crayon has a different stroke of colour and each layer brings with it its own identity," she added.

But while Summer's album is hitting a market dominated by singers who "could be my daughters," she said she does not feel any competitive pressure.

"I don't think I need to reinstate my claim as such ... Whatever I get at this point in the game is all icing on the cake," said "The Queen of Disco".



Cover of the album