

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

## Story of Stitches: The Art of Nakshi Kantha

Exhibition celebrating 30 years of Aarong  
Venue: Plaza, National Art Gallery, BSA  
Date: July 16-29  
Time: 11am-7pm, (Fridays 3pm-7pm)



## Classical Music

Artists: Haripada Sutradhar (vocal), A. K. Chakravarti (vocal) and Mritunjay Das (flute)  
Organiser: Shudho Sangeet Proshar Goshthi  
Venue: SEL Centre, 29, West Panthopath  
Date: July 31  
Time: 7pm



## Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Perception II  
Artist: Subrata Das  
Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi  
Date: July 25-August 6  
Time: 9am-12pm and 5pm-8pm (Saturdays 5pm-8pm)



## Film Screening

Title: Russian Film Diversity  
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society  
Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, H 510, Rd 7, Dhanmondi  
Date: July 29  
Film: Cranes Are Flying and Brother  
Time: 3:00 pm onwards



## Benuka Institute of Fine Arts turns 28

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Cultural organisation Benuka Institute of Fine Arts (BIFA) organised a discussion and cultural programme to celebrate its 28th anniversary and Narzul Jayanti, at National Theatre stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on July 27.

Rasheda K. Chowdhury, adviser to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, was the chief guest. Mohammad Sharif Alam, secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, director general, BSA were present as the special guests. Abu Saleh, president, BIFA, presided over the discussion. Golam Mustafa Khan, principal, BIFA, was also present at the programme.

The cultural programme opened with an Islamic song of Nazrul, *Tomar naamer eki neshha*.

Next students and teachers of BIFA, performed a classical song based on *raaga Bhupali*. Rendition of the popular song *Doldol doloni* followed.

A total of three dance performances were staged by young students of BIFA. The first performed with a patriotic song -- *Baul ami ektarte bedhey nilam ghar* -- was followed by a classical dance. Next was a popular folk number *Shadher lau banailo morey bairagi*.

Nusrat Jahan rendered a Rabindra Sangeet, *Pagla hauer badol doney*. Lina Taposhi sang the Nazrul Sangeet, *Neel jamunai jol* and Mita Mustafa performed a Lalon Geeti, *Kon khamer taar balam khana*.

The event wrapped up with the staging of a dance-drama *Raktolaal Ahonkaar*. A production of BIFA, the dance-drama is a compilation of ten Nazrul Sangeet -- *Akashy aaj chhoriye dilam, Ke dilo khopatey, Tumi shundor tai cheye thaki, O kalo shashirey, Naiyya dhirey chhalao, Mora chhinu ekela, Karar oi lahu kopat, Chhol chhol chhol, Kon kul-e aaj bhiro tori, Nodir naam shoi Anjona* and three poems -- *Tomari bandona, Shonka shuniyo lokkhiko konthey and Nodi paarer meye*.

BIFA was founded in 1980.



PHOTO: MUMIT M

Artists of Benuka Institute of Fine Arts perform at the programme



## In conversation with Ray's Charulata

ERSHAD KAMOL, back from Kolkata

Those who have watched the Satyajit Ray classic *Charulata* (1964), featuring the tale of a lonely, bored housewife, will always remember the serene beauty of Madhabi Mukherjee who plays the protagonist Charu. *Charulata* is perhaps her crowning glory but the renowned actress from West Bengal India has starred in many popular and acclaimed films such as *Godhuli Belaye* (1964), *Mahanagar* (1963), *Baishey Shrawan* (1960), *Subarnarekha* (1965), *Ganadevta* (1979) *Bindur Chheley* (1973), *Streer Patra* (1972) and many more. In fact, for over two decades (1960-1980) Madhabi Mukherjee was one of the leading actors in Bengali cinema. The period is considered as the "golden age of Bangla cinema".

Originally named Madhuri Mukherjee, she became popular as Madhabi Mukherjee in the film industry.

Madhabi Mukherjee began her acting career in professional theatre under legendary theatre personalities such as Sisir Kumar Bhaduri. To quote her, "I learnt acting from the pioneers. I really enjoyed acting on stage, as the medium was very competitive."

"However, after the introduction of Group Theatre, I left the stage, as they began compromising with quality." "The standard could not be maintained under the frame of Group Theatre," she added.

Leaving theatre, she joined films. Subsequently she became one of the leading actresses in the Tollygunge film industry in 1960s. Till the '70s Madhabi Mukherjee acted in over hundreds of films.

Talking about the golden era of Bangla cinema, Madhabi smilingly reminisced, "I was quite popular in central roles. Going abroad I saw people collecting movies in which I



PHOTO: STAR

had acted. Some even collected lobby cards of my films."

On master filmmaker Satyajit Ray, the actress said, "I acted in several films directed by Satyajit Ray and learnt a lot from him. He could truly mould an actor."

After 1980, Madhabi Mukherjee performed only in one feature film titled *Utsab*, which was released in 2000. Directed by Rituparno Ghosh *Utsab* got appreciation in home and abroad. In the film she performed the protagonist character of an elderly woman. Commenting on the hiatus (of two decades) from the big screen, Madhabi Mukherjee said, "The current scenario is not like what we were used to. To me it's a downfall in the film industry."

"Most of the recent films are

"I learnt acting from the pioneers. I really enjoyed acting on stage, as the medium was very competitive."

substandard," she added.

On the golden era of the industry, she said, "The Bangla film industry was at its peak in the 1960s and '70s. We acted in the films directed by Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and other great directors. My peers are still considered as the legends. In those days the

Tollygunge film industry was dominated by these talents. I wonder if our film industry can achieve that excellence again."

Madhabi Mukherjee has also acted in many plays on the small screen. In her words, "I began acting on TV since the inception of Kolkata Durdarshan."

But according to the veteran actress, at present she is not even acting in TV plays, labelling the current scenario as "substandard and devoid of Bengali values."

Madhabi Mukherjee informed that she is making films currently.

Throughout her illustrious acting career, Madhabi Mukherjee has received many prestigious awards at home and abroad such as Vayoshreshtha Samman given to eminent senior citizens of India.

## Shamima: An acid victim turned indomitable social activist

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Acid burnt Shamima does not want to depend on charity. She wants to make it on her own.

Shamima, 24, is the daughter of Rawzan Ali of Bhabanipur village under Kotchandpur upazila, Jhenidah district. She was married to a 35-year-old man when she was just 12. Shamima was a student of class eight then. Her illiterate family members rushed her into marriage as the to-be groom made enough money.

The teenage bride soon returned to her father's home, as she could not endure her husband's abuse. Her in-laws could not understand her mental state and spoke ill of her. Shamima explained every-

thing to her family and her father decided to enrol her in a school. Shamima's abusive husband took it as an insult and at 2 am on September 14, 1996, he threw acid on her while she was sleeping. Her mouth, nose, ears, eyes and hands got severely burnt.

After struggling for life for two years, Shamima started to come around slowly. She decided to learn sewing. She formed 'Aikko Nari Kallyan Sangstha' -- an organisation that includes 43 physically impaired, underprivileged women. Block print, batik, *nakshi kantha* and skills are taught here. Shamima is continuing her studies as well. She has been conducting this organisation for eleven years.

Gradually Shamima has involved herself with three major

operations in association with Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF). Shamima has set up another organisation called 'Anirban'. No impediment could stop her. She has immersed herself in her work. She wants to work for the empowerment of women. Her main goal is to work for the development and rehabilitation of the differently-abled and victims of acid violence. Alongside, she is working for environment preservation. In the last season she has planted 20,000 saplings.

Shamima has received the 'Nasrin Haq Smriti Medal-2007' and Tk 25,000 from ActionAid. Acid Survivors Foundation and Squire Toiletries Ltd. jointly honoured her with the 'Performance Award-2007'.

## Channel i Shera Kontho '08 Open concert tonight



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Talent hunt Channel i Shera Kontho '08 will be aired on Channel i tonight at 7:50pm. This episode will feature an open concert, where the eleven contestants will sing *adhumik* and band songs.

The open concert was recorded on July 26 at the Café C. Square of Plaza A. R. A. Centre of Dhanmondi.

The contestants-- Jhulik, Monir, Ashik, Sharmin, Champa, Imran, Alif, Puja, Nirbachita, Romel and Yousuf-- will perform songs including *Tumi roj bikeley, Tomar ghoray bash korey kara, Shuker prithibi and Torey putuler moto korey shajie* in tonight's programme. Farzana Brownia will host the show. Hasan Abidur Reza Jewel is the director of the programme.



Theme parks Fantasy Kingdom at Ashulia and at Foy's Lake have a special offer for the visitors, says a press release. At Fantasy Kingdom, from July 24 to 31, everyone can enjoy the rides at discount rates. At the Heritage Park, visitors can enjoy all rides for free with entry. At Foy's Lake, from July 24 to 31, everyone can enjoy all rides at discount rates as well.

## India's new partnership: Bollywood and hip-hop

Is Bollywood ready for Snoop Dogg?

The rapper once dubbed 'America's Most Loveable Pimp' by *Rolling Stone* makes his debut in India this summer, with a guest appearance on the title track of a highly anticipated Bollywood movie, 'Singh Is Kinng'. The movie is set to open in August, but the title song is already in heavy rotation on some radio stations in India.

A fusion of hip-hop and *bhangra* with a simple chorus ("Singh is Kinng, Singh is Kinng, Singh is Kinng"), it features Snoop Dogg giving "what up to all the ladies hanging out in Mumbai" and rapping about "Ferraris, Bugattis and Maseratis".

Snoop Dogg wears a Sikh turban and an ornate long coat called a *sherwani* in a video of the title song, which was shot this year in Chicago. Geffen Records owns the distribution rights to the song in the United States and Canada and may release it later this year as part of a compilation.

"I really dig how much music is infused with the movies" in Bollywood, Snoop Dogg said. "Lots of hip-hop tracks sample Indian music, and a lot of their music sounds like it was influenced by hip-hop," he said. "We're putting together something real big" in India, that will include collaborations, live shows and "more movies with some of my Bollywood homies."

"I'm coming to take over Bollywood," Snoop Dogg promised during the video shoot. "I've never been able to come over there and do shows for you all, but now I'm going to come and do shows," he said in a clip that the video's promoters put on YouTube. "This is just the beginning."

Hollywood and Bollywood have been flirting with new partnerships, from deals with Reliance Big Entertainment, an Indian production company, to Sylvester Stallone's scheduled appearance



Indian actor Akshay Kumar (left) and Snoop Dogg in the video of a song from "Singh is Kinng"

in a Bollywood movie.

Western musicians have come to India for inspiration and new sounds for decades, but finding an enthusiastic audience among the country's billion-plus population has not always been easy for modern musicians. Western music of a generation ago still tops India's album charts: top albums sold in India included the Eric Clapton compilation "Complete Clapton" and Michael Jackson's "Thriller" for the month that ended June 15, according to *Rolling Stone's* July India edition.

While a few Western acts like Madonna and Coldplay also sell well in India, hip-hop has traditionally had limited appeal. Karan Wadhwa, the co-founder of Cashmere Asia, a new Los Angeles-Mumbai entertainment company that enlisted Snoop Dogg for the project, said he had been looking for ways to introduce hip-hop to India.

Both Bollywood music and hip-hop traditionally involve a lot of rhythm and beats, Wadhwa said, and some Bollywood movies have started using hip-hop dance in their musical numbers. "We're introducing Snoop to a very broad

audience that has never heard of him before," he said.

The movie "Singh is Kinng" tells the story of a hapless Sikh who is sent to Australia to recover another Sikh in trouble. Many Sikhs hail from the Punjab region that crosses Pakistan and India, and have the surname Singh. Young Punjabis, as natives of the Punjab are called, have become increasingly well known for a proud, often flashy style that has some elements in common with hip-hop.

The film's star, Akshay Kumar, who has morphed from Bollywood action hero to comedic star in recent years, enjoyed a laid-back rapport with Snoop Dogg. The two even tried out a few Indian dance steps, said the video's co-director, Ted Chung, who is the other founder of Cashmere Asia. "Akshay is leading the way on that a bit," Chung said, but Snoop did "try to learn a few *bhangra* moves."

Snoop Dogg added: "Snoop Dogg's got love for everybody. I like how the Punjabis get down; the way they dress is fresh and they got a real appreciation for music."

Source: The New York Times



Shamima (2nd from left) at work

PHOTO: STAR