

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Recitation Programme

Title: Shesh Drishshor

Porey

Organiser: Nanadan Kanan

Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag

Date: August 14

Time: 7pm

Lecture

Topic: Manipuri dance

Lecturer: Artiste Bimbavati Devi

Organiser: Chhayana

Venue: Chhayana Sangskriti Bhavan

Date: August 14

Time: 7pm

Group Art Exhibition

Featuring works of 19 renowned artists

Title: Mukti

Venue: Liberation War Museum

Date: August 9-25

Time: 10am-7pm

Oitijhya Boi Utsab

Celebrating 9th anniversary of the publication house Oitijhya

Venue: Central Public Library, Shahbagh, Dhaka

Date: August 10-25

Time: 10am-8pm

Of devotion, grace and subtlety

Manipuri dance performance by Bimbavati Devi



Clockwise (from left) Bimbavati Devi during a solo performance, *Matrika*. Participants of the workshop, conducted by the artiste, dance and play *pung* at the programme held at Osmani Memorial Hall.

KARIM WAHEED

Apparently, in 1919 Rabindranath Tagore was so impressed after seeing a dance composition, the *Goshtha Leela* in Sylhet (Bangladesh) that he introduced Manipuri dance lessons in Shantiniketan. Tagore further demonstrated his admiration for Manipuri dance by incorporating the style in most of his dance-dramas.

Considered one of the six classical dance forms, Manipuri is defined by spirituality, grace and subtlety. On August 12, the Dhaka audience had an opportunity to

experience this delicate, lyrical dance form at Osmani Memorial Hall. The occasion was 62nd Independence Day of India and the highlight was performance by Manipuri dance exponent Bimbavati Devi.

The programme was jointly organised by the High Commission of India, Dhaka and Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

The Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty thanked the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh and Shilpakala Academy for their support and invited the chief guest, noted cultural personality Asaduzzaman Noor to the stage.

Noor apologised to the distinguished elderly in the audience and said, "I'm not an authority on dance but like other art forms, I enjoy it." Recalling the contribution of India during the Liberation War, Noor addressed cultural exchange between Bangladesh and its closest neighbour. He said, "Commercially viable performers from overseas seem to get permission to stage shows here without much effort but when it comes to artistes of a different kind -- the kind who have something substantial to offer, to teach us -- have to go through 'red tape'. It is an alarming trend; I'd like to request the authorities

to look into it."

Bimbavati Devi started with a composition titled *Shiva Stuti*. As the title suggests, the composition was an invocation to Lord Shiva, whose origins are unknown. His glare illuminates the world. In order to save humankind, he swallowed the poison that was churned out along with the elixir the gods took hold of; and thus he became "Neelkantha" (the one whose gullet is blue).

Manipuri dancers do not wear *ghungroo* (ankle bells) to emphasise the beats tapped out by the feet, in contrast with other Indian classical dance forms. The dancers' feet never strike the ground hard either.

Bimbavati made rounded movements, avoiding jerks or sudden pulls/thrusts. Even during vigorous steps, the artiste touched the ground with the front part of her feet. Her movements and facial expression aimed at devotion. The dancer was accompanied by *pung* or Manipuri *midang* (double-headed drum), *setar*, harmonium and vocals.

Bimbavati's superior dance skills have much to do with her lineage. Daughter of renowned Manipuri dancers Guru Bipin Singh and Kalavati Devi, Bimbavati was introduced to the world of dance at a tender age. Apart from dancing, she also underwent training in playing *pung* and *Thang Ta* (Manipuri martial art). At present, she is a performing artiste at Manipuri Nartanalaya, one of the pioneering institutions of Manipuri dance in India, founded by her parents and the Jhaveri sisters.

Bimbavati conducted a workshop in Bangladesh. Her senior students -- Sudeshna Swayamprabha, Fahmida Siddiqua, Samina Hossain Prema, Sanjana Haque, Sushmita Dey and Subroto Das -- performed in a composition titled *Gope Ras* (dance and music composed by Guru Bipin Singh and Kalavati Devi). The composition is an excerpt from *Goshtha Leela*, a traditional dance-drama of Manipur. The composition featured Krishna and his friends' joyous dance -- their staffs in hands, with which they tend the cattle.

Noted Bangladeshi Manipuri dancer Tamanna Rahman enacted a heartbroken, disappointed Radha waiting in vain for a rendezvous with her beloved Krishna in the composition, *Manini Radha* (dance and music composed by Guru Bipin Singh and Kalavati Devi).

In *Midang Vadan* (composed by Guru Bipin Singh), dancers -- Sharmila Banerjee, Sudeshna Swayamprabha, Warda Rihab, S. Tomba Singh and Nilomoni Singh along with Bimbavati Devi demonstrated their skills in *pung* playing.

Other compositions performed at the programme were *Radha Roop Varnan* (a solo by Sharmila Banerjee), *Pung Cholom* (dual performance by S. Tomba Singh and Nilomoni Sinha) and *Bajikar Khel* (group performance by Sudeshna Swayamprabha, Fahmida Siddiqua, Samina Hossain Prema, Sanjana Haque, Sushmita Dey and Subroto Das).

The programme wrapped up with a solo performance, *Matrika*, by Bimbavati Devi. Concept and choreography by Bimbavati, the composition featured a passionate depiction of motherland based on the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Rishi Aurobindo. The motherland, despite being torn apart by the self-centred acts of her children, nurtures us and provides shelter from all adversities. Through impassioned expressions and movements, the dancer urged the mother to provide us strength so that we can restore her former glory on the world stage.

The evening ended on a good note but with a bit of discontent. Many in the audience wished there was more of Bimbavati's performance, as the title of the programme was "Manipuri Dance Evening by Bimbavati Devi".

NEW DRAMA SERIAL

"Brishtir Jonnyo" on ntv



Shahiduzzaman Selim and Traupa Majumder in the play.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Hasan, Shatabdi Wadud and others.

The plot of the serial follows the life of Brishti, a young woman who is the breadwinner of a poor family living in Dhaka. They remain unknown to the busy city people, but girls like Brishti are parts of our reality. And there are also those who see these women rather negatively. Brishti represents a struggle and her bold existence is the highlight of the serial.

Talented students accorded reception

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The daily *Prothom Alo*, mobile phone operator AKTEL and 'Prothom Alo Bandhu Sabha' jointly accorded a reception to over 200 meritorious students who scored GPA-5 at the SSC examination this year. A cultural function was also held on the occasion.

The reception organised recently was held at Sadar upazila auditorium with Sathkira Prothom Alo Bandhu Sabha adviser Rafiqul Hasan in the chair.

Sathkira Deputy Commissioner, Mohammad Kefayetullah was the chief guest while Sathkira Government College Principal, Professor Sukumar Das; Day and Night College Principal, A.K.M. Nazim Ullah and head of AKTEL

Khulna branch, Ashfaq Hayat Khan were special guests.

Such encouraging initiatives will inspire the future nation builders to take a stance against drug abuse, acid violence, terrorism and corruption and also enlighten the society and the country as a whole, speakers said at the reception.

Sathkira Deputy Commissioner, urged the meritorious students to work hard so that they can be worthy citizens and leaders in future.

On this momentous occasion, the jubilant GPA-5 achievers took a vow to combine their studies with actions to free the country from terrorism, drug abuse and corruption.

A cultural programme followed the reception.

Tile exhibition: An art with a difference



Exquisite tiles displayed at the exhibition.

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

Tiles as an art form? This unusual subject is the theme of an exhibition in New Delhi. Titled *Treasure Trove, the People for Animals* (an NGO) collection features exquisite handmade and hand-painted 7,000 tiles which date back over 100 years. The tiles can embellish walls, doors, toilets, kitchens, chairs, tables, trays, fire places, bedsides, window sills, doorways and wall hangings.

With their bright hues, the tiles are mostly floral and geometric. The exceptional and valuable antique tiles are offered to viewers at a fraction mostly Rs 2,000 each-- of their current international value. Sourced from all over India, there are Chinese, Islamic, Portuguese, Dutch, English and native tiles that have adorned many a palace and monument since early times.

An eager crowd flocked the venue as much to view the superb tiles as well as get a glimpse of

famous chief guest Aamir Khan. Of late the seasoned actor has lent his name and face to a number of social causes. Lately he has figured in the Times of India's Teach India campaign where he not only urges people to sign up but also offers to teach students of Class IV and V. Though the actor prefers to keep a low profile he declined to have an imitation of himself at Madame Tussauds and rarely attends Indian award function she has spoken out forcefully against the Mumbai riots (1992-93), and has voiced his

concern on the earthquake (2001) and violence (2002) in Gujarat.

Maneka Gandhi, the feisty chairperson of PFA, has the last word. In an interview to Metro Now, she pointed out "Are there any tile collectors in Delhi? Yes there are many. A friend of mine recently bought seven tiles for Rs 50,000 each belonging to the Harappan culture with Arabic markings on it. He found his name 'Momin' inscribed on one of them. Most of the Muslim tiles had Hidayats or sayings written on them."

Jolie "to take Cruise's movie role"

Actress Angelina Jolie is to play the lead role in an action thriller, which was previously earmarked for Tom Cruise, according to a report.

The film will be a screen return for the star, who recently gave birth to twins, says Hollywood paper *Variety*.

The script of espionage action flick *Edwin A Salt* will be reworked and the title changed, it adds.

Jolie's most recent big screen outing was high-octane thriller *Wanted*, in which she played a leading role.

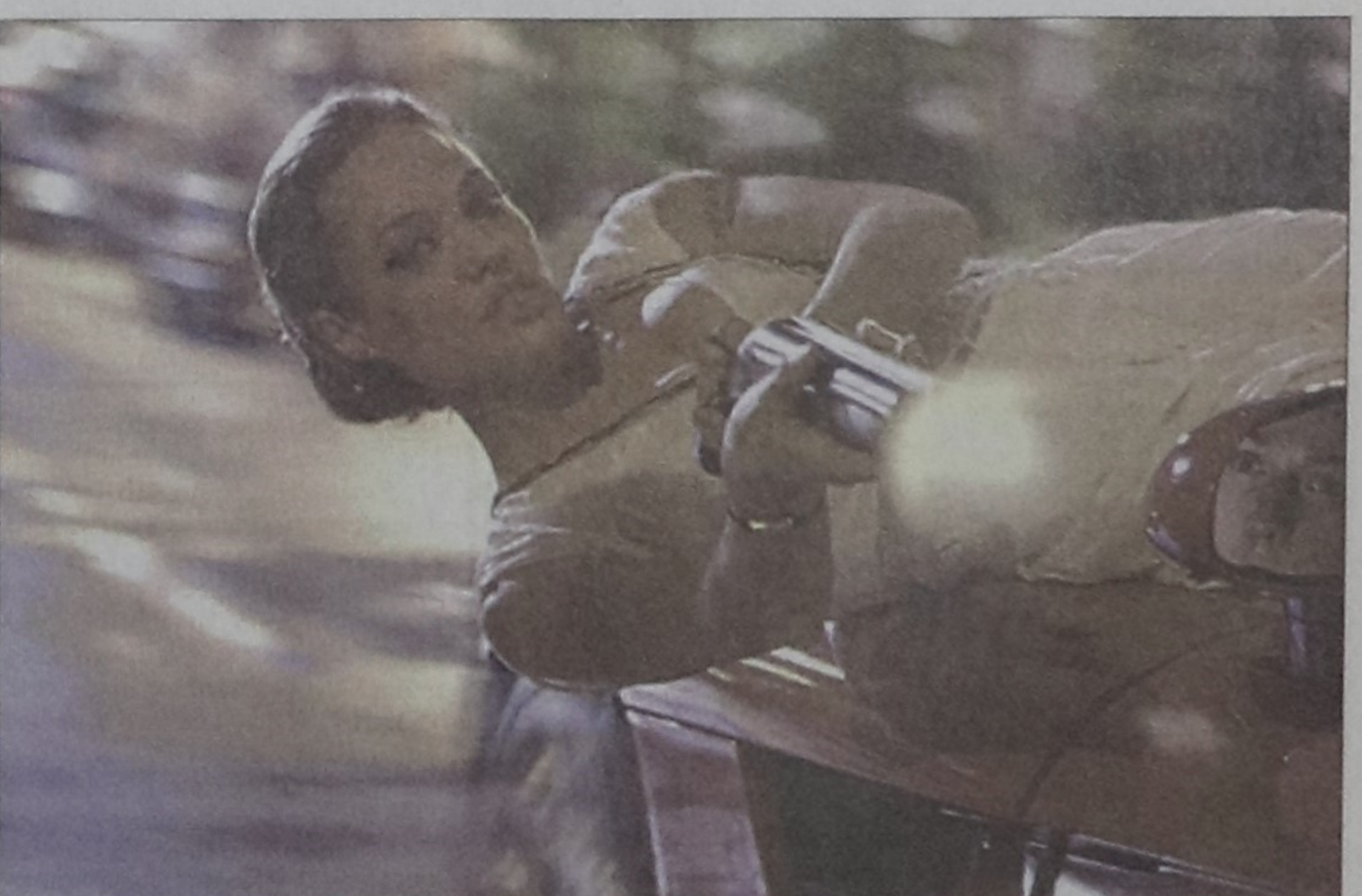
Film company Universal made Jolie's role in the film more high profile and centred its promotion on her, reports *Variety*.

Cruise had a long-standing connection to *Edwin A Salt* and several other male actors wanted to replace him before Jolie expressed an interest in the script.

The newspaper added that the screenplay would not require radical rewriting to fit Jolie.

She will play a CIA officer who is accused of being a Russian spy and goes on the run until she can prove her innocence.

The actress is close to a deal to



Angelina Jolie in "Wanted".

secure the role, while another forthcoming film, *Atlas Shrugged*, is also being touted as a return vehicle for the actress.

Jolie, 33, gave birth to Vivienne Marcheline and Knox Leon in France last month.

The new film has yet to go into

production and is not expected to be released until at least 2010.

Source: BBC