

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Art Exhibition
Abdur Razzaque
Retrospective
Title: Rhythms of Figures, Forms and Nature
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275F, Rd 27 (old), Dharmondi
Date: October 10-29
Time: 12pm-8pm



13th Asian Art Biennale '08
Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Osmani Memorial Hall and National Museum
Date: October 21-November 19
Time: 11am-7pm (Fridays 3pm-8pm)



Musical Soiree
On Lalon and Abbas
Uddin death anniversary
Organiser: Bangladesh Loka Sangeet Parishad
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: October 28
Time: 4:30pm



Group Art Exhibition
Artists: Mahmudur Rahman Dipon, Shahid Sultana and Aqviad Hossain
Organiser: Kamrangia
Venue: Kamrangia, H 30, Rd 42, Gulshan 2
Date: October 25-November 1
Time: 10am-7pm



Remains of Gaur

Yet another archaeological treasure fading away

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Gaur, the capital of Sultanate Bengal is about 35 kms away from Chapainawabganj town. Remnants of the ancient city are scattered within five square kms area. However, the Department of Archaeology has not taken any initiative to preserve the site.

According to a Department of Archaeology official, there are only three permanent staff and five guards to look after the sites. The last time the department carried out renovation on some of the mosques and other structures was in 2004.

According to locals, the passage to Dhanachawk Masjid is now occupied by some influential individuals. A house now blocks the way to Tahkhana.

The Department of Archaeology has repeatedly urged the local administration to remove the illegally placed houses and structures blocking the ways to the mosques, but in vain, says the official.

Darosbari Masjid is famous for its artistic terracotta designs. The mosque is around 99 ft high and 34 ft wide. The old mosque at



Darosbari Mosque, a 14th century structure in Chapainawabganj, decaying through relentless neglect.



Darosbari Madrasa - hearkening back to the 14th century.

Omarpur village is now on the verge of ruination after years of negligence. Deep cracks have developed on the walls of the 15th century structure; weeds now cover most of its exterior. Most of the terracotta tiles have eroded. Others have been stolen.

Others make good use of the mosque as a resting place for cattle, as it's abandoned.

Dr. Mazharul Islam, a local historian and associate professor at the Chapainawabganj Govt. College said that, one Elahi Bakhsh discovered a mosque in the nearby jungle where he found a stone

inscription (11ftx2 ft), which was later taken to the Calcutta Museum in 1876. According to the inscription, the mosque was built during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Yousuf Shah in 1479.

Dr. Islam and other locals urge the government to take immediate steps for the preservation of these archaeological treasures.

Badrul Alam, field officer, Department of Archaeology, Rajshahi Division, said, "We have sent several letters to the concerned ministry, requesting for appointment of guards to the sites. We have also requested the concerned authorities to link the sites with roads but no initiative has been taken yet.

The department claims that if the Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj takes active interest in preserving and protecting these sites, these edifices from the Sultanate period have a short existence.

When contacted, the Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj, Sirajul Haque Khan said that if the roads to these sites are occupied and blocked, he would take necessary steps to be vacated them.

Lalon's death anniversary observed in Chapainawabganj

A CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Speakers at a recent discussion asserted that Fakir Lalon Shah was one of the greatest Bengali philosophers. They demanded a re-installation of his sculpture at its original place and steps against those who are conspiring against Bangla culture and heritage.

On the occasion of the 118th death anniversary of Fakir Lalon

Shah, a discussion and cultural programme was held at Pathan Para mango orchard in Chapainawabganj town.

Chapai Gambhira and Mohananda Sangeet Niketan jointly organised the programme.

Professor Sirajul Islam, folk researcher Dr. Mazharul Islam, Konok Ranjan Das, Azizur Rahman, Enamul Haque and Fazlur Rahman spoke on the occasion.

Speakers at the programme

discussed the works and philosophy of Lalon. They criticised the role of the government vis-a-vis the fundamentalists and vowed to resist any kind of conspiracy against the country and national culture by the extremists.

After the discussion, a cultural programme was held. Artistes of Mohananda Sangeet Niketan and Chapai Gambhira performed at the programme. Hundreds of Lalon enthusiasts turned out for the programme.

Jennifer Hudson family in fatal shooting



Jennifer Hudson (right) with her mother Darnell Hudson at the 'Dreamgirls' premiere, '06.

The mother and brother of Oscar-winning American actress Jennifer Hudson have been shot dead and her seven-year-old nephew is missing, police said.

Police have cordoned off access to the large white house.

"Currently we're looking for a white suburban vehicle that's missing from the location as well as a seven-year-old African-American child," said deputy chief Patterson.

Authorities have issued an Amber Alert for Julian King.

Police said in a statement that he might be in the company of a suspect in the murder investigation, but later local media reports said that the suspect had been taken into custody and did not have the child with him.

Hudson, 27, a singer-turned-actress who shot to fame on American Idol in 2005, won an Oscar for best supporting actress in the hit-film "Dreamgirls" in 2006 and starred in the film "Sex and the City".

She is currently starring in "The Secret Life of Bees".

Source: BBC

Bauls unite for culture

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Cultural activists of Sylhet organised a session of Baul songs at the city's Central Shahid Minar at Chouhata area, on Friday. Their aim was to protest the removal of the sculpture near Zia International Airport and to press for its immediate re-installation. A human chain was also taken out in front of the central Shahid Minar in the afternoon.

Poet Tushar Kar, Dr. Abul Fateh Fattah, Poet Shuvendu Imam and Press club Vice-President Al-Azad spoke on the occasion before a crowd of thousands of people.

The speakers called for resis-

tance against communalism. They also demanded a free atmosphere for the arts. Their protest, they added, would continue till the Lalon sculpture was re-installed.

Bauls like Ramesh Thakur, Mitali Chakravarty, Baul Siraj Uddin, Md. Shahab Uddin, Mamata Moy Dass, Fatema Tuj Mukta, Zoerima, Kamal Uddin Russel, Sumi and Dulal Sarker presented Baul songs in addition to those by members of Baul Kalyan Sylhet, and Bhatta Bangla Baul Academy O Gobeshana Kendra.

Nabashikha Theatre staged a play titled "Team". At the concluding session the speakers included principal Golam Hossain Azad; cultural activists Nazmul Haque,



Bauls perform at a programme demanding a free atmosphere for the arts.

PHOTO: STAR

Never off air

Radio Today turns 2

KARIM WAHEED

Two years of non-stop music, news and updates. It did not go off air even during Sidr. Devoted staff had to take the stairs, all 19 floors of it, as there was no electricity during the catastrophe. Radio Today, the first 24-hour private FM radio station in Bangladesh, has been committed to its listeners since inception (commercial launch on October 15, 2006; test launch on May 6, 2006) and going by the gung-ho attitude of its staff, things could only get bigger and better.

"When we started, we had no one to look up to," says Nasiruddin Komol, senior producer, sound and creative, Radio Today. "We did an RJ (radio jockey) hunt at Dhaka University and selected ten students. They were trained by Anil Chandra Roy of Red FM, India. Roy also helped set up the basic framework of programmes. Experts from US and Australia oversaw the software-related issues. The first batch of RJs went to Kolkata to learn more about the 'FM cul-

ture,' he adds.

Pegged as "The Station of the Nation," Radio Today started out with ten RJs, three sound engineers, four producers and five in the technical department. At present the station has 110 staff members (Dhaka and Chittagong centres combined). Its transmission range is 89.6 FM in Dhaka and around the world and the frequency is 88.6 in Chittagong.

Radio Today is the brainchild of entrepreneur Rafiqul Haque (managing director of the station). According to Komol and other employees, Haque has always treated the station as a labour of

love. Management also includes Mushfiqul Haque (director), Md. Atiquel Haque (director), Md. Mahabub ul Haque and Md. Mozammel Haque (chairman). The Dhaka studio is at Awan Centre, Kernal Ataturk Avenue.

Getting a generation that has grown up without radio to tune into the station was no cakewalk. It took word of mouth, stickers, billboards, some nudge from the print media, and Radio Today staff offering to turn on the car radios

and tune to the station. That drive paid off. Soon, through Radio Today and a few other private FM stations, the airwaves were busy again.

Rafiqul Haque decided to set the frequency at 89.6 after doing some research on the FM broadcasting system. Apparently the reconditioned car radios here cannot pick up frequencies over 90 too well. In Dhaka, the transmission covers about a 100 km radius.

According to Komol, Radio Today's target age group is 20-40. Programme schedule has been designed keeping different audience groups in mind. Mornings begin with soothing melodies, geared towards people rushing to work. Younger listeners get hip-hop 10 am onwards. After 4pm, its time for a U-turn -- people getting ready to go home from work. Evening onwards, audience interactive programmes take centre stage. Then there are educational and religious programmes.

"There have been mistakes and we've learnt a lot in the process. But at Radio Today, the drive to do better is constant," says Komol.



RJs of Radio Today pose for a snap

Roadside Romeo: Bollywood often energetic, now animated

With the animated dog's-life feature "Roadside Romeo", Bollywood continues its technological juggernaut. A co-production of Yash Raj Films and Walt Disney Pictures, "Romeo" is something new under the Indian sun: sophisticated computer-generated animation that uses stars to voice the characters. But craftsmanship and Disney aside, "Romeo" is very much a conventional Hindi movie with a small-guys-versus-gangsters plot, song-and-dance sequences and film references galore.

Romeo, a honey-coloured pup living on the Mumbai streets, has the voice of Saif Ali Khan, and he's a typical Khan character, a Westernised sweet-talker with a propensity to start every sentence

with "Dude" and "O.K. guys." His idea for financial uplift? Open a hair salon, which he does with his crew of Bollywood-savvy mutts. (The uninitiated needn't worry: the subtitles let no reference go unparsed, as in "Imitating Shah Rukh Khan" after a line of dialogue.) Trouble occurs when the gang runs afoul of Charlie Anna (Jaaved Jaaferi), the big don dog, who loves Laila (Kareena Kapoor), the same fluffy white creature with dreadful pink eye shadow that Romeo adores.

Written and directed by Jugal Hansraj, "Roadside Romeo" may have its stars' voices, but what it needs is their bodies. Perhaps Bollywood's most ingratiating quality is how hard the actors work to entertain you: they dance, they

cry, they risk appearing silly. The animated dogs in "Romeo" aren't particularly appealing. They mostly walk on two legs and, unlike Disney characters, don't wear anything beyond neck gear. They look oddly naked and move awkwardly, which flattens the dance sequences and keeps the film earthbound.

And for all the movie-making know-how on display, "Romeo" isn't visually attractive, though there are some nice touches: a dingly, spit-splattered "No spitting sign"; a beautifully detailed train; and peeling movie posters with images of larger-than-life stars, reminding us of Bollywood's true glory.

Source: The New York Times



A scene from "Roadside Romeo," a Hindi-language animated film produced with Disney.