

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Classical Music

Artiste: Nimalya Dey (India)
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Francaise de Dacca, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: November 14
Time: 6:30pm



Exhibition

Title: Sculptures of Bangladesh
Organiser: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: November 2-6



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-6pm)



Film Screening

Title: Maestro: Tarkovsky
Organiser: DUFFS
Venue: Auditorium, Russian Centre of Science and Culture, H 510, Rd 7, Dhanmondi
Date: November 5-6
Time: 3pm onwards
November 5
"The Steamproller and the Violin" and "Nostalgia"



In Focus

A clarion call to preserve songs of Pagla Kanai

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Mystic bard Pagla Kanai was born to Messer Ali and Momena Khatun in Labutala Madhabpur village under Jhenidah district on March 18, 1809. Kanai became renowned for his folk songs. He composed a good number of devotional songs but a large number of these have not been preserved. An auditorium and library named after him now stand near the 'mazaar' (shrine) of Pagla Kanai, but the area often becomes a grazing space for cattle.

Pagla Kanai's passion and intense spirituality was evident at an early age, hence the locals started calling him "pagla" (crazy).

Pagla Kanai left his village to evade the oppression of the British rulers who forced the farmers to cultivate indigo. Dirt-poor Kanai became a drifter after his father's death. He became a cowherd. Many were taken aback by his eclectic spiritual songs and "dhua jaari." His spiritual inclination put him in touch with the bauls and fakirs of the area.

People from all walks of life used to throng his "ashore" (performance) and

listened to his songs for hours. And gradually his fame extended throughout the country.

According to Reverend Satish Chandra Mitra, Pagla Kanai's verses are intensely poetic and replete with spiritual energy and enchanting tunes.

Pagla Kanai's songs can be classified into "jari," "dhua," "pala gaan," "kobi gaan," "murshidi," "marfati," Islamic and more.

Of his disciples, Edu Biswas, Sultan Mollah, Amed Ali, Saber Ali Samir Uddin are worth mentioning.

Scholars such as Mohammad Mansur Uddin, Dr. Mazharul Islam, Abu Talib, Amin Uddin Shah, Durga Das Lahiri and Upendranath Bhattacharya collected Pagla Kanai's songs and conducted researches on the bard.

The legendary baul passed away in July, 1889.

Ali Haider of Berbari village, where Kanai stayed for years, said that the 'mazaar', auditorium and library are situated on one acre and 60 decimal area. However, no wall has been erected around the complex yet.

Abdul Gafur, of the same village, said that on the 25th of Bangla month Phalgun every year, a 'Pagla Kanai fair' is held here where



The 'mazaar' of Pagla Kanai.

PHOTO: STAR

thousands of people come together. The authorities, he added, could fill the big ditch close to the 'mazaar', which would provide more space for the fair.

Abu Musa, in-charge of Pagla Kanai Library, said that if philanthropists provided more books on the legendary bard, local students and public would greatly

benefit from it.

Pagla Kanai Shilpi Goshthi President Abdur Rashid said that musical instruments are necessary to retain the tradition of the great baul singer. He added that 419 songs of Pagla Kanai have been recovered from different locations and it is necessary to preserve them.

TV Watch

New talk show "Business Blog" on Rtv



Sufi Faruq Ibne Abu Bakar (right) hosts "Business Blog."

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

First episode of "Business Blog," a new talk show, will be aired tonight on Rtv at 11:30 pm. The show highlights latest business issues and methods implemented in various sectors. Produced jointly by Rtv and Sufi &

Associates, the show is directed by Shabab Arzoo. Sufi Faruq Ibne Abu Bakar hosts the show conceptualised by Paula Aziz Faruq.

With a view to encourage the youngsters into business and corporate culture, the show will feature several corporate leaders who will share their experiences with the audience. In the coming

12 episodes of the show, personalities from renowned organisations such as Rubaba Daula, Emad Ul Amin, Aminul Haque, Naquib Khan, Asif Iqbal and others will be featured.

Starting from tonight, the show will be aired on every other Wednesday at the same time.

Painting competition for children in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Children took part in an art competition on the theme of Liberation War last Friday at Rajshahi District Council Auditorium premises.

Mugdhoo, Nafisa Anjum and Abdullah Al Habib came first, second and third in the 'Ka' group respectively, while Mridu, Fariha and Rajeswari were chosen for the positions in the same order in 'Kha' group.

Poet Mohammad Kamal recited poems at the programme.

Organised by 'Remembrance Preparatory Committee', the event was a homage to the late Abdus Salam, who had made a great contribution to the Liberation War.

Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman was the chief guest. Eminent citizens and freedom fighters including Salam's widow Suraiya Salam; former Rajshahi University Vice Chancellors, Saidur Rahman Khan and Abdul Khaleque and others spoke on the occasion.

Abdus Salam, a prominent lawyer, was remembered for his integrity, commitment to the society and above all his sacrifice for the nation.

Pakistani army and their local collaborators killed five members of Salam's family including his two sons. Instead of breaking down, Salam was resolute. He went to India and returned reorganising a huge group of freedom fighters.

The speakers termed his death (on December 21, 2006) an "irreparable loss" for Rajshahi.

TV show on Bangladesh vs South Africa series



Dr. Anupam Hossain hosts the show.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The cricket series between the Bangladesh national team and South Africa starts today. ATN Bangla is airing a special programme on the series titled "Ashiyani City Top Spin." The second episode of the show will be aired today at 11:15 pm.

Hosted by Dr. Anupam Hossain and directed by Biplab Rahman, the show features highlights of each match, latest updates and interviews of cricketers, coaches and sports experts.

Starting from today, the cricket series includes a Twenty-20 match, three ODIs and two test matches and will continue till November 29. "Ashiyani City Top Spin" will be aired every day during the series.

Aishwarya and Abhishek in their second Mani Ratnam film



Abhishek and Aishwarya

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

For Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, celebrating 35th birthday was not an occasion to let her hairs down. Instead, accompanied by her husband Abhishek, she was busy shooting for Mani Ratnam's next film in the woods in Kerala on November 1.

The shooting of Ratnam's multi-lingual "Ravana," which stars both Aishwarya and Abhishek, would continue non-stop for a month. This is the second time that the couple is being featured in a Mani Ratnam movie. Abhishek has earlier acted in Ratnam's "Yuva" which, along with "Guru," brought the actor critical acclaim at a time when he was struggling for box office success.

Aishwarya, who made her debut in Ratnam's Tamil film "Iruvar" in 1997 opposite leading Malayalam actor Mohan Lal, has risen to become one of the most bankable stars of Bollywood and found time to act in some art house films like "Raincoat" and "Chokher Bali" by director Rituparno Ghosh.

However, it's not that it was all work and no

fun for Aishwarya and Abhishek on the former's birthday. Reports said a birthday bash was held on the night of November 1 at the hotel where the star couple were staying and it included staging of Kerala's traditional dance "Mohiniattam," South Indian cuisine, North Indian dishes and tribal delicacies.

Professionally, Aishwarya can look back at the year 2008 with considerable satisfaction as her movies "Jodha Akbar" and "Sarkar Raj" have been appreciated and did fairly good business.

She has retained her international appeal not only through acting but also by turning up at the Cannes Film Festival and endorsing some global brands. Among the international films she has done are "Bride and Prejudice," "Provoked," "Mistress of Spices" and "The Last Legion" -- all between 2003 and 2007.

In a career spanning more than a decade, Aishwarya has acted in over 40 movies including in Hindi, Tamil, Bengali and English. Her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed "Devdas" catapulted the actress to the pinnacle of stardom in Bollywood in 2002.

Jane Fonda returns to Broadway after four decades

REUTERS, New York

Oscar-winning actress Jane Fonda will return to Broadway after a 46-year absence to perform in "33 Variations" in 2009.

The play written and directed by Moises Kaufman tells the story of Beethoven's fascination with a trivial waltz and the modern-day musicologist Katherine Brandt (Fonda) who sets out to discover the root of his obsession.

"I am very excited about being in Moises' new play. I can't wait to get back on stage with him in this role that I understand so well. It's been 40-some years!" Fonda said in a statement.

Fonda, 70, made her Broadway debut in the 1960 play "There Was a Little Girl" for which she earned a Tony Award nomination for Best Featured actress. Her last appearance on Broadway was in the 1963 drama "Strange Interlude."

The actress has won two best actress Academy Awards -- in 1979 for "Coming Home" and in 1972 for "Kluge."

"33 Variations" is due to open on Broadway in early 2009.



Jane Fonda