

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Group Exhibition of Masks
Title: Mukh O Mukhosh-2
Venue: Gallen Kaya
Date: January 16-25
Time: 11am-8pm



Solo Ceramic Art Exhibition
Title: Dissolved Past and Present
Artist: Debashish Pal
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, 275F, Rd 27 (old), Dharmadi
Date: January 17-26
Time: 12pm-8pm



2nd Children's Film Festival '09
Organiser: Children's Film Society Bangladesh
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: January 24-30
Time: 11am onwards



Art Exhibition
Artist: Steven Renald and Samina Nafies
Venue: Creative Destination, Shanto-Mariam University
Date: January 14-20
Time: 12pm-8pm



Seminar at the Selim Al Deen memorial programme

In quest of cultural roots



Professor Anu Muhammad (centre) speaks at the seminar. Also seen in the photograph are Nasiruddin Yousuff (left) and Aatur Rahman (right).

NADIA SARWAT

As part of the five-day programme observing the first death anniversary of theatre icon Selim Al Deen, a daylong seminar was held yesterday at the conference hall of National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). Professor Anu Muhammad was the main speaker at the seminar and presented the Selim Al Deen memorial speech titled "Sanskritir Shekor, Sanskritir Sangram".

Dr. Lutfar Rahman was the moderator of the seminar. Almost a hundred participants including eminent

theatre personalities, activists and enthusiasts attended the lively discussion. Professor Hasan Azizul Haque, Dr. Afsar Ahmed, Aatur Rahman, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Kamaluddin Kabir, Pijush Bandopadhyay and Simon Zakaria, among others, spoke at the seminar.

In his keynote paper, Professor Anu Muhammad raised several elemental questions regarding culture, which, according to him, were also the focal points of Al Deen's works. "Cultural heritage does not refer to an undivided, all-inclusive entity. It has many different interpretations. Which elements we should accept

as our 'heritage', is difficult to decide. Al Deen took a definite stance; he sided with our people and nature," he said.

Professor Muhammad ended his speech saying, "Our culture and cultural struggle refer to that stream of people who dream of a society free of exploitation and discrimination between classes, genders, races and religions. It's a universal dream, a universal struggle of the humankind... Selim Al Deen spoke of this struggle throughout his creative career."

The discussants spoke on Professor Muhammad's paper and elaborated on the issues, relating them to Al

Deen's work. "Selim Al Deen's works get a new lease on life with the death of the maestro. Like Tagore, Al Deen was lucky enough, in the sense that people learnt to appreciate his works in his lifetime. Through time, he will be discovered and re-discovered by the future generations and remain relevant," said eminent theatre personality Aatur Rahman.

The last part of the seminar was a vibrant open discussion. In the evening, Dhaka Theatre staged a popular Selim Al Deen play "Joiboti Konyar Mon". Directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff, the play featured Shimul Yousuf and Shomi Kaisar in the lead roles.

Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad celebrates 11th anniversary

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad celebrated its 11th anniversary on January 15 at the Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library. The event included a colourful rally, discussion and a musical programme. An announcement to collect and publish thousands of folk songs was also made at the event. The organisation has so far published many folk songs by rural bards and lyricists -- a move which has been hailed by the cultural enthusiasts in the country.

The rally started from the National Press Club and stopped at the Public Library premises with hoisting the National Flag. Seasoned folk singer Kuti Mansur inaugurated the event while several cultural personalities along with the members of Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad attended the rally.

The discussion was presided over by Akhter Ahmed Chowdhury, convenor, Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad. AKM Selim, member secretary of the organisation presented the welcome speech, providing information on the Parishad, its goals and achievements. Veteran journalist-activist Kamal Lohani; poet Asad Choudhury; noted folk singer Kiran Chandra Roy and the



Kiran Chandra Roy speaks at the programme.

founder of Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad, eminent artiste Indra Mohon Rajbangshi were the others discussants.

"We are often overlooking our rural heritage. We cannot even unite to confront the aggression of Western trends, letting the 'satellite' culture devour ours. Initiatives by the Loko Sangeet Parishad for over a decade give us hope," said Kamal Lohani in his inspiring speech.

The last part of the event featured a vibrant musical programme by artistes

of Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad. Directed by Shyamol Kumar Pal, the programme included performances by Shanto, Ohama, Hawa, Azad, Farid, Tuli, Anima Mukti, Bimal, Mahtab and others. Among noted singers, Akramul Islam, Kiran Chandra Roy and Indra Mohon Rajbangshi's performances were highlights of the programme.

Instrumentalists Tawhid Sarker, Kamol Malo, Khokon, Nayan, Shantosh and Shankar accompanied the vocalists.

Grand finale of Lux-Channel i Super Star tonight

Top ten contestants at a glance

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The grand finale of beauty pageant/talent hunt "Lux-Channel i Super Star", will be held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre today. This is the fourth instalment of the show. The first "Lux-Channel i Super Star" was held in 2005. Since then the contest has been held every year. Launched in August 2008, this instalment of the show saw a huge response as thousands registered from all over the country, chasing the dream of becoming a star. Only ten have made it to the finals. This year's winner will be awarded major roles in a TV serial and a film.

watching movies, listening to music and reading.

Chaity, 19, is doing her BBA under National University. Her interests include reading books on history and listening to music. She is an aspiring actress and model.



Arabi

Shiddheswari Girls College. Her interests include reading and listening to music.

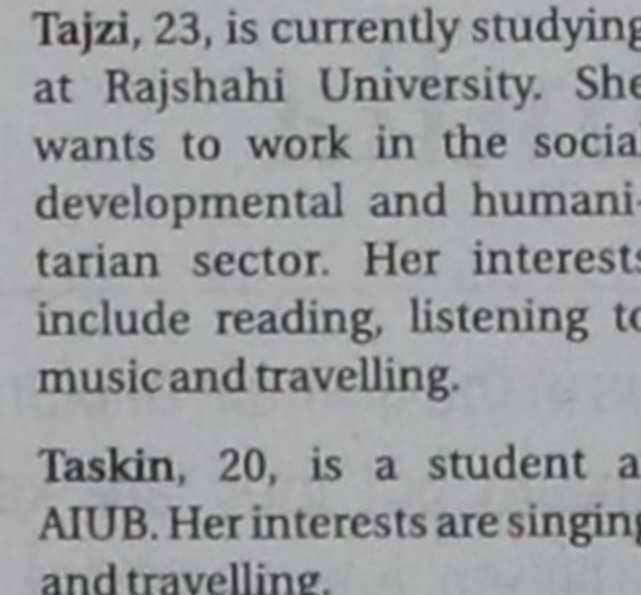
Lisani, 22, is studying at Dhaka City College. Her ambition is to pursue a career in the showbiz circuit alongside working in the corporate



Chaity

include browsing the net and listening to music.

Shampa, 24, wants to pursue a modelling career but her ultimate goal is to be a magistrate. Her interests include watching talk shows on TV and playing with her younger sister.



Tajzi



Taskin



Tonima

successful entrepreneur and intends to work in the development sector. Tonima is currently studying at Stamford University Bangladesh.

The finale of "Lux-Channel i Super Star" will be aired live on Channel i from 7:30 onwards tonight.



Deepa



Hera

Here's a quick look at the ten contestants who have made it to the top.

Arabi, 19, is currently studying at the American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB). Her interests include hanging out with friends,



Lisani

world. Her interests are listening to music, painting and designing clothes.

Orin, 20, wants to be a model and TV presenter. Orin is currently an undergraduate at the United International University. Her interests



Tajzi

Deepta, 23, is doing her BA Honours in English Literature at Eden College in Dhaka. Like most of her fellow contestants, Deepta also wants to be a model-actress.

Hera, 20, lives in Rampura, Dhaka. Hera is studying at the

Six secrets of "Slumdog" success

"Slumdog Millionaire" is not the average Oscar contender. It's not about WWII survivors or tragically flawed geniuses. It doesn't star Kate Winslet, Cate Blanchett, or Meryl Streep. Instead, "Slumdog" has no big-name Hollywood actors, a minuscule budget, and a good chunk of the flick was shot in Hindi. Racking up four awards at the recent Golden Globes, plus taking home five trophies at the Critics' Choice Awards, "Slumdog Millionaire" has become an unlikely front-runner for Oscar gold. So why has this movie, which as late as last spring looked like it might be released straight to DVD, become such a huge hit with both critics and audiences in the West? Here are a few reasons:

1. **Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?** In these days when TV financial experts are having full-blown conniption fits on air and the US economy is nose-diving its way into the next Great Depression, who doesn't want to be a millionaire? It's a real thrill to watch the character of Jamal (played by Dev Patel) go from the most abject poverty imaginable to the final round of the quiz show that could make him wealthier than he ever imagined. And apparently, the use of the one-time national sensation as a framing device in "Slumdog" has inspired ABC to bring the quiz show back to TV this summer, just in time for its 10th anniversary.

2. **An Incredible Story:** "Slumdog" might feel fresh and new but its story is essentially a good old-fashioned melodrama, complete with dizzying highs, dismal lows, and a fairy-tale ending. The movie was based on a best-selling Indian novel called "Q&A". Veteran screenwriter Simon Beaufoy -- previ-

ously Oscar nominated for "The Full Monty" -- spent months in India researching the real conditions of the young children just barely getting by in Mumbai's poorest areas. Then he added the stirring love story to tie everything together. The resulting movie left audiences cheering.

3. **Director Danny Boyle:** Boyle has been the oddball wunderkind of British cinema

for over a decade. He first came to international attention with "Trainspotting," perhaps the most entertaining movie ever made about the dangers of heroin addiction. And his "28 Days Later" is a slick and engaging movie about blood-thirsty zombies and the collapse of society. With his potent blend of over-caffeinated action and

heartfelt emotion, Boyle was uniquely qualified to make a feel-good fable about abject poverty and child slavery.

4. **Actress Freida Pinto:** Simply put, she's gorgeous. A former model with no prior acting experience, she was the ideal casting choice for the dreamgirl who inspires Jamal to risk everything. The Mumbai-born Pinto quickly became an Internet sensation, and she

back and shooting the movie like a travelogue. Instead, he thrusts the audience into a street-level view of the sights and sounds of India -- from the slum's crowded back alleys to the new gleaming towers of Mumbai, from the Taj Mahal to a stomach-churning outhouse. When you watch "Slumdog," you feel like you've been to India.

6. **Bollywood:** In the early '90s Hollywood did a collective double-take about wildly over-the-top flicks coming out of Hong Kong, movies like "The Killer," "City on Fire" and "Supercop". It wasn't long afterwards that the likes of John Woo and Chow Yun Fat were making movies stateside and Hong Kong choreographers like Yuen Woo-ping were in high demand to add some kung fu spice to films "The Matrix." Well, the same might be happening now with Bollywood.

In 2005, one of India's largest film distributors -- Yash Raj films -- revealed that Indian movies make over \$100 million a year in the US. Bollywood diva Aishwarya Rai is appearing in more and more Hollywood movies including the upcoming "Pink Panther" sequel. That being said, "Slumdog" is essentially a love letter to Bollywood. Not only does the movie feature two of India's renowned actors -- Anil Kapoor and Irrfan Khan -- but "Slumdog" also ends with that staple of Indian cinema: the lavish dance number. Is it only a matter of time before intricately choreographed musical routines show up in the average Sandra Bullock flick?

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent



Mumbai-born Freida Pinto has made several "Breakout Stars of 2008" lists.

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made several "Breakout Stars of 2008" lists. Never underestimate the box-office draw of a pretty face.

5. **The Tourist Factor:** For those Westerners whose only exposure to India might have been phone calls to customer service and the odd curry dinner, "Slumdog" is an eye-opener. Boyle resisted stepping