

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Musical Soiree

Title: Praener Khela
Organiser: Bengal Shilpalaya
Artists: Adil Mohsin, Anup Bana
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, H 275/F, Dhanmondi 27 (old)
Date: January 29
Time: 7pm



Solo Ceramic Art Exhibition

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



Group Art Exhibition

Artists: Mainul, Mehedi, Babu, Safin & Tomal
Venue: Shilpangan Art Gallery, H-26, R-3, Dhanmondi
Date: January 20-28
Time: 10am-1pm and 5-8pm



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



2nd Int'l Children's Film Festival begins

Opening doors to imagination



JAMIL MAHMUD

Amidst much enthusiasm and presence of hundreds of children, the 2nd International Children's Film Festival '09 opened at the Central Public Library premises on January 24. Eminent educationist Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed inaugurated the festival. Children's Film Society Bangladesh (CFSB) has arranged the festival in association with Unicef. This year's festival features 156 films from 40 countries.

The colourful inaugural programme started with a 'dhol' performance by a father and son duo from Manikganj. This was followed by a rendition of the Tagore song "Alo aamar alo" by child artistes of Chhayana. Among six venues, Central Public Library has been chosen as the main venue for the festival.

As part of the inauguration, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed; noted media personality and President of the advisory committee of the festival, Mustafa Monwar and renowned writer and President of CFSB, Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal hoisted the National Flag, festival flag and CFSB flag respectively. Releasing balloons and doves were also part of the inauguration.

The inaugural programme was followed by a discussion held at the Shawkat Osman auditorium. Munira Morshed, general secretary, CFSB gave the welcome speech. Noted filmmaker and festival director Morshedul Islam elaborated on the festival.

Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal said, "City children spend their leisure time sitting in front of the TV or computer. This festival can be a refreshing opportunity for them. However, providing entertainment is not the only purpose of this festival. We also want to encourage their



PHOTO COURTESY: SAIKAT MOJUMDER

(From left) Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Mustafa Monwar, Syed Shamsul Haq and Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed release doves at the inaugural of the festival on January 24.

creativity."

Carel de Rooy, representative of Unicef in Bangladesh was the special guest at the programme. He said, "Unicef is delighted to be a part of this festival. This can be a unique opportunity for children to watch lots of films made for them. In future Unicef will raise hands to arrange more such programmes."

In his speech Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed said, "Children are the future of the nation. If we create a better, nurturing space for our chil-

dren, we can dream of a better Bangladesh."

Mustafa Monwar presided over the programme. He said, "Children are imaginative by nature. We should provide them with opportunities to realise their dreams. One of the purposes of this festival is to introduce our children to films from across the globe that are meant to stir their imagination."

The inaugural session was followed by a screening of German filmmaker Detlev Buck's award

winning film "Hands Off Mississippi".

Everyday films will be screened in four sessions -- 11 am, 2 pm, 4 pm and 6 pm -- at six venues. The venues are -- Shawkat Osman auditorium, British Council, Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, Alliance Francaise de Dacca, Russian Centre of Science and Culture and Iranian Cultural Centre. The festival is open to all children but guardians have to purchase tickets.

Rasheda K Chowdhury on abc radio

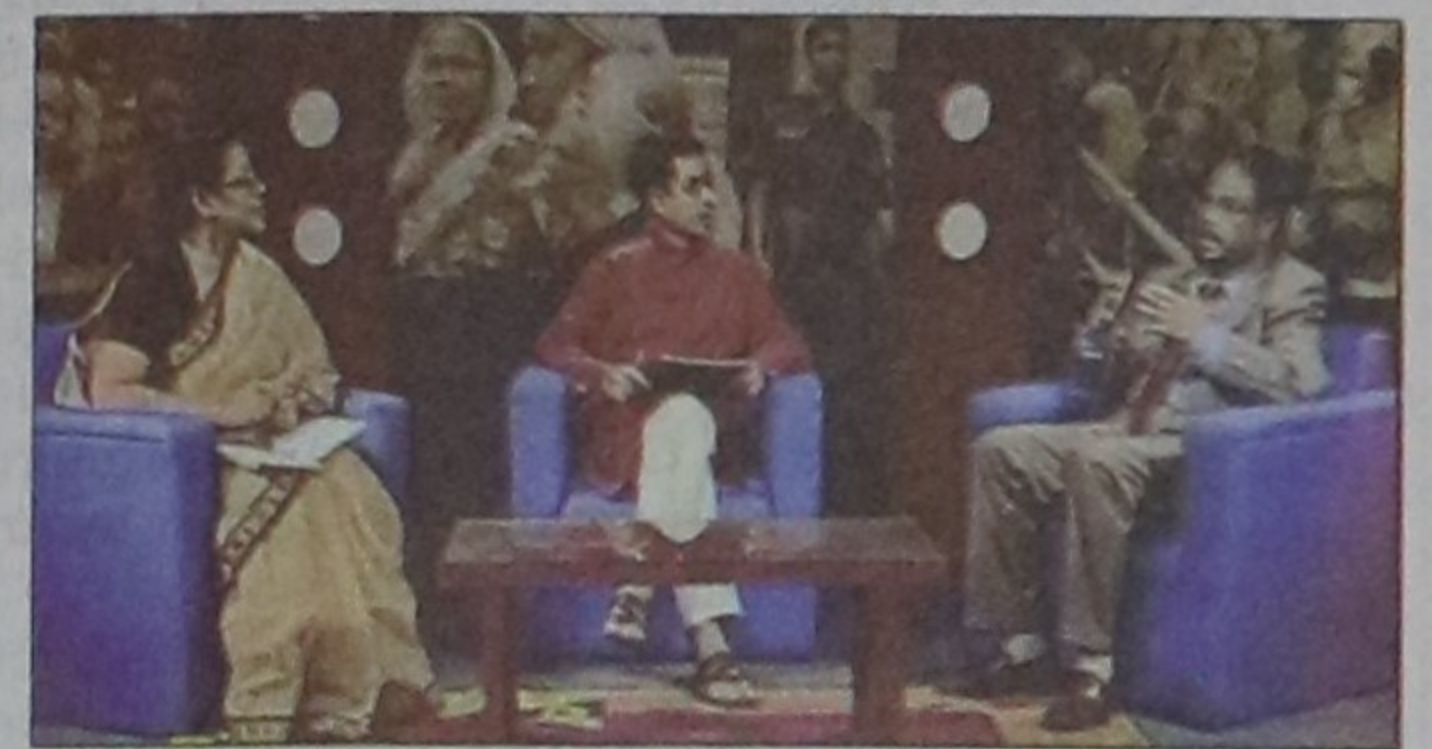
CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to the last caretaker government, Rasheda K Chowdhury, will be present as guest on "Aparajita", a live talk show on abc radio today. The programme will be aired from 12:20 pm to 3 pm. The former adviser will share her experiences with the audience on the show. The audience can participate through SMS during the show.

"Aparajita" features eminent female personalities and is aired on abc radio every Monday at the same time.

TV Watch

Women in the spotlight



S.M. Shamim Reza (C) is the moderator of the show.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The ninth episode of "Women in politics and good governance" will be aired today at 6:20 pm. This episode focuses on the role of women councillors in the city corporation. Among the questions raised are whether they are able to perform their duties, whether they face any obstacle from male partners, the nature of these obstacles and their role in an executive committee.

Studio panelists of this episode are G.M. Quader, Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Dr. Zerina Rahman Khan, Professor, Public Administration, Dhaka University and moderator S. M. Shamim Reza.

Antorikkho on Banglavision

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama serial "Antorikkho" will be aired on Banglavision today at 4:20 pm. Written by Pantha Shahrar and directed by Sumon Anwar, the play features Abul Hayat, Pijush Bandopadhyay, Masud Ali Khan, Joya Ahsan, Richi Solaiman, Ahmed Rubel, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Jayanto Chattopadhyay, Chandni, Pran Roy, Nadia and others.

The serial centres on Arif, a loner who leaves home to escape the humdrum of the city. On his journey he meets many, everyday people living amongst us. Each story contains some dramatic element-



Joya Ahsan and Ahmed Rubel in a scene from "Antorikkho".

-all parts of a greater story, the journey. Arif realises that story of life. Confronting new leaving a place or some people experiences throughout his does not always mean change.

Push claims top prizes at Sundance

REUTERS, Park City, Utah

"Push: Based on the Novel by Sapphire" claimed three prizes on Saturday including best drama by the jury and audiences at the Sundance Film Festival, putting it on 2009's must-see list for independent film fans.

The dark drama about an overweight teenage girl growing up in Harlem who is neglected and abused by her parents, also earned a special jury prize for acting for Mo'Nique, who shed her image as a comedienne to take the role as the girl's mother.

"This movie made us laugh, made us cry and basically blew our minds," writer/director Mike White, who was on the five-member jury that picked the movie, told the audience at the Sundance awards ceremony.

Lee Daniels, director of "Push," held back tears as he thanked both Sundance organisers and the jury, saying they "tapped into the truth of what I was trying to get at."

He said the movie was important because "it spoke to every minority in Harlem, that's in Detroit, that's in Watts... that can't read, that's obese and we turn our back on."

Documentary honours were split among several titles, with "We Live in Public," which chronicled 10 years in the life of Internet pioneer Josh Harris, winning the jury prize, and "The Cove," about the capturing of wild dolphins in the town of Taiji, Japan, taking home the audience award.

Sundance, backed by Robert Redford's Sundance Institute for filmmaking, is the top gathering for US independent cinema, and each year the movies seen there are released to fanfare in theatres around the United States and the world.



"Push" tells the story of an embattled teenager living in 1980s Harlem.

Award winners are named by juries of industry veterans, as well as by voting from audiences. A win gives the movies a promotional boost as they enter the crowded market for mostly low-budget movies made outside Hollywood's mainstream studios.

Other main US winners included "Sin Nombre," which took home the best director prize for Cary Joji Fukunaga and best cinematography for Adriano Goldman. Set in Mexico, "Sin Nombre" tells of immigrants looking for a better life in the United States and the gangs that control the routes to the border.

In recent years, Sundance has sharpened its focus on international filmmakers, too, by beginning competitions in world cinema categories, and the 10-day festival's multiple award winners in that grouping were drama "Five Minutes of Heaven" and documentary "Afghan Star," each with two honors.

"Afghan Star," which looks at an "American Idol" type of singing contest in Afghanistan, was given the audience award for best world documentary, and its maker, Havana Marking, was named best director. The jury prize for best documentary went to "Rough Aunties," about sexual abuse in South Africa.

Among world cinema dramas, "Five Minutes of Heaven," about two men on opposite sides of Northern Ireland's conflict between Catholics and Protestants earned Oliver Hirschbiegel and Guy Hibbert, best director and writer, respectively.

But the jury prize for best international drama went to Chile's "The Maid" ("La Nana"), about class division in that South American country, and the audience award was given to UK film "An Education," a girl's coming-of-age tale based on a book by writer Nick Hornby and directed by Lone Scherfig.

Udichi premieres "Half Akhrai"

Conflict between a master and his disciple



PHOTO COURTESY: SAIKAT MOJUMDER

The play, written by Ratan Siddiqui and directed by Azad Abul Kalam, features the conflict between Ramnidhi Gupta and his once-favourite disciple Mohan Chand.



NADIA SARWAT

Central theatre department of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi staged its latest production "Half Akhrai" at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpkala academy on January 24. Based on the historic conflict between Ramnidhi Gupta -- popularly known as 'Nidhu Gupta', the originator of Bengali 'tappa' songs -- and his once-favourite disciple Mohan Chand, the play is written by Ratan Siddiqui and directed by Azad Abul Kalam.

Ramnidhi Gupta formed a musical troupe, Akhrai, in 1804 through which his singing style and songs became popular. Gupta was considered to be one of the most talented artistes of his time. He believed in "art for art's sake." He felt that appreciating music was not for everyone. He retired from the troupe in 1832 due to ailments related to age and conferred the leadership to Mohan Chand, one of his favourite disciples.

Though a loyal disciple, Mohan differed with his master's view and believed that music is for the masses. With his innovative style, he presented Bengali poetry fortified with rich theatrical elements from "Vaishnav Padabali", "Mangal Kabya", "Nath Geetika" and others. Ramnidhi Gupta could not tolerate these changes and in response to his master's discontent, Mohan left the Akhrai group and formed his own group named 'Half Akhrai'.

The play uses this historic incident as the focus and expands the scope of the context through several imaginary characters and events. The inspiring love affair between Ramnidhi Gupta and the courtesan Srimati also comes into the limelight.

Ratan Dev in the character of Ramnidhi Gupta, Anwarul Haque as Mohan Chand and Fahmida Haque Koli as Srimati were somewhat average in their performances. The light-hearted conversations between disciples of the 'Akhra' provided comic relief in the otherwise serious play.

Azad Abul Kalam, guest director of the play, said, "This play has a rich subject matter. Ramnidhi Gupta was a pioneering character, who set free classical music from an exclusively religious atmosphere and made love the focal theme of his songs. Mohan Chand was one step ahead to introduce it to the masses. The play has a contemporary message: art has always been targeted by conservatives and fundamentalists."

"As for the performances, I admit that the first show has its limitation. The performers tried their best, and I think some changes in the characterisation, script etc will make the play more enjoyable," he added.

"Half Akhrai" is the 15th production of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi.