

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Ekushey Boi Mela '09
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Bangla Academy premises
Date: February 01-28



Chobi Mela V
Infi Festival of Photography, Bangladesh 19
Theme: Freedom
Venues: National Museum, BSA, Drik Gallery, Bengal Gallery, AF, GIB, British Council, Asiatic Gallery, Kalpana Bazar and Karwan Bazar underpass
Date: Jan 30-Feb 20



Theatre
Play: Akjon Ruhul Amin
Troupe: Bot Tala, a performance space
Venue: Shaheed Minar premises, Narayanganj
Date: February 15
Time: 7:30pm



Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan
Organiser: Jalyo Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad
Venue: Shaikat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
Date: February 15
Time: 6:30 pm



Nrityanchal showcases its dancers in the making



The recital showcased students of Nrityanchal, demonstrating their 'Kathak' aptitude.

PHOTO: MUMIT M

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Nrityanchal, one of the leading dance schools in the country, held a recital at National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on February 13. The recital showcased 250 students of the school, demonstrating their 'Kathak' aptitude.

Muhammad Jahangir, coordinator of Nrityanchal, provided a brief but precise update on the school's current position and activities. Starting in 2000, Nrityanchal now operates at two venues -- Rajdhani High School at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Siddeshwari University College at Maghbazar. The institution regularly invites dance gurus and exponents to conduct workshops. "2009 should be an active year for Nrityanchal," hoped Jahangir.

Ramendu Majumdar, president of ITI worldwide, was the chief guest. In his speech Majumdar said, "Within a short span, Nrityanchal has made an impressive contribution to the dance scenario in our country. The organisation is working tirelessly to mould young dancers. But the more important aspect of Nrityanchal's contribution is preserving the indigenous dance forms of our country that are on the verge of extinction, which I consider to be a need of the time."

The recital had a shaky start, as power went out in the middle of the first performance, "Saraswati Bandana." It's unfortunate that the BSA authority cannot ensure uninterrupted power supply during a show. The young dancers quickly recovered though, impressing the audience with their ode to 'Venapani', the goddess of knowledge and arts.



The following act was "Guru Bandana," a tribute to the teacher, putting him/her in the ranks of Vishnu, Barhma and Shiva.

The next composition featured a deconstructed demonstration of

'Shuddha' Kathak. The young dancers performed the piece in 14 'laya,' accompanied with 'paranth' (rhythmic syllables) by their guru Shibli Muhammad (director of Nrityanchal) and Rumana Rashid Ishita.

"Bou Pakhi Dakey," accompanied with a song by Saadi Muhammad and Shakila Zafar, was a contemporary dance composition based on Kathak movements.

The highlights of the evening were two performances -- "Gath-Bhav" and "Pratibimba." In "Gath-Bhav" a single dancer interprets stories to the accompaniment of a basic 'taal' and a melody. Amidst rounds of applause, a young dancer articulated tales of Radha fetching water from the 'ghaat,' Krishna frolicking with Radha, a young Krishna stealing butter and getting caught red-handed by Yashoda. Though the handout provided by the organisers listed all performers, it would have been better if the advanced students (in particular those in solo and duet acts) were introduced to the audience.

In "Pratibimba," six dancers -- in three sets of two -- mirrored each other's movements.

The USP of Kathak is that skilled dancers of this classical art form possess the ability to become flashes of lightning on the stage at times and the subtlest of waves at others. These young dancers demonstrated that potential.

The programme wrapped up with a performance, titled "Pathshala," featuring 250 students of Nrityanchal.

There were minor flaws here and there, but it would be imprudent to form an opinion based on those. These dancers are still at the initial stages of their training. Going by their verve and penchant for the dance form, their prospects of becoming accomplished artistes seem bright.

Film screenings in and outside the city



A scene from the Zahir Raihan classic "Ka(n)cher Deyal," screened at the ongoing film festival at Jahangirnagar University.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Film Society (DUFS) has arranged a six-day film festival titled "Amar Bhashar Chalochchitra" at the TSC auditorium starting from February 13, while on the same day a four-day film screening began at the Central Auditorium of Jahangirnagar University. Both events feature popular and critically acclaimed Bangla films from Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. On the other hand, Centre for Asian Arts and Culture (CAAC) arranged its 4th Asian Film Festival at Alamgir Kabir Film Centre, Science Laboratory Road from February 12.

At DU, the festival will continue till February 18. Over six days, films including "Bhat De," "Nodi O Nari," "Meghey Dhaka Tara," "Shimana Periyé," "Kal Purush," "Chhuti Ghanta," "Hridoyer Kotha" and "The Bong Connection" will be screened.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad inaugurated the festival, while Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Dr. A.A.M.S. Arefin Siddique and eminent artist Murtaza Basir were present as special guests.

President of DUFS Shami Shurid presided over the opening ceremony. At the inaugural,

"Nodi O Nari" by Sadeque Khan was screened. Everyday four films are being screened from 10 am onwards.

At the central Auditorium of Jahangirnagar University, the four-day programme titled "Aarek Falgun: Bangla Chalochchitra Utsab 1415" features 14 Bangla films that include "Aalinton," "Ajantrik," "Shareng Bou," "Sharey Chuattur," "Dui Poishar Alta," "Dui Jibon," "Harano Shur," "Sonar Kella," "Ka(n)cher Deyal," "Rangbaaz" and "Pitch Dhalapath."

Jahangirnagar Students' Film Society (JSFS) is the organiser of the programme. General Secretary of JSFS Al Haseeb Nomanee informed that the film screening is a part of JSFS' 10th anniversary celebration. JSFS started its journey on February 14, 1999.

The six-day 4th Asian Film Festival by CAAC features 19 films from six countries -- Bangladesh, India, Iran, China, Japan and Thailand. The festival kicked off with the screening of Chinese filmmaker Sun Zhou's "Zhou Yu's Train." Some of the films that are being screened at the festival are -- "Brombona," "The Road Home," "Before the Rain," "Crimson Gold," "The Lady from Musashino" and "I am Not Stupid Too."

Bashontokaleen Shahitya Utsab in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Like every year, 'Bashontokaleen Shahitya Utsab' (spring literary festival) was held in Barisal city on February 13.

The daylong programme, organised by the regional Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, included a cultural programme, discussion, recitation, a rally and an award giving ceremony for outstanding literary works.

The function was presided over by Professor Bahauddin Golap, coordinator of the regional Bishwa Shahitya Kendra. Political leaders, educationists, journalists, social workers and others participated in the programme.

A rally, brought out from



PHOTO: STAR

A rally was brought out on the occasion.

Ashwini Kumar Town Hall, then went round the city.

Syed Dulal and Kajal Ghosh, president and former president of Sanskritik Sangathan Samannay Parishad; Habibur

Rahman, president of Human Rights Jote; Mintu Bose, general secretary of Nagorik Parishad; freedom fighter MG Kabir, among others, spoke on the occasion.

59th Berlin International Film Festival

An interface between East and West

SHAHEEN DILL-RIAZ

Ever since it was founded in 1951, Berlin International Film Festival (nickname: Berlinale) has seen itself as a showcase of the world and an interface between East and West. But the festival really got a new lease of life when it moved to its current location, Potsdamer Platz centre in Berlin, on its 50th anniversary in the year 2000. The red carpet is now rolled out in the heart of Berlin for a good two weeks in February and the German capital has become an attractive venue for Hollywood stars. After Cannes, Berlinale is considered the biggest international film festival in the world.

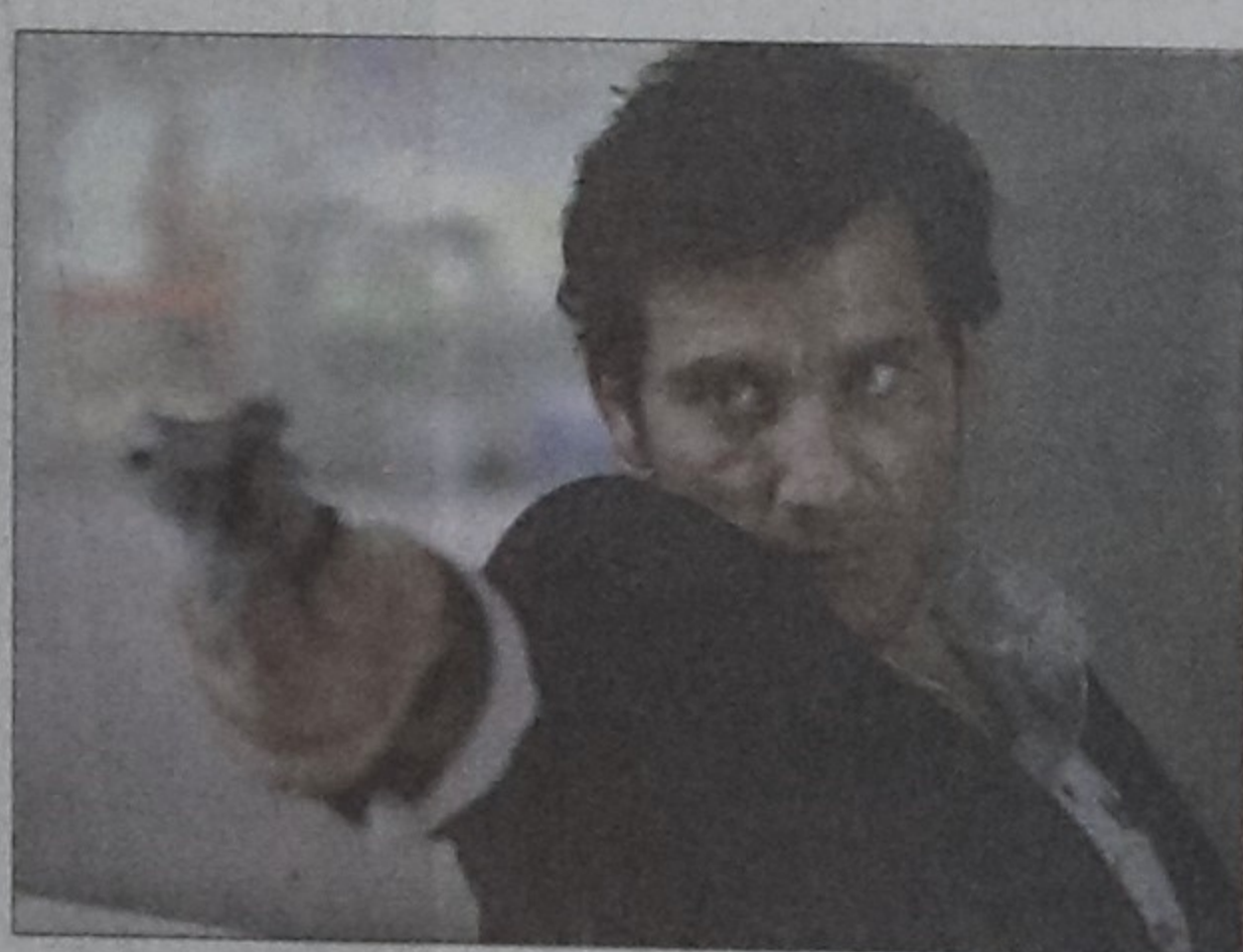
Stars such as George Clooney and Tilda Swinton have almost become a permanent fixture at the festival. And of all the major film festivals, the Berlinale is the biggest open to the general public. Year by year the number of tickets sold to "average cinemagoers" has steadily increased. Screenings in all of the sections now reach audience levels that are the envy of the festival's key competitors in Cannes and Venice. The festival today attracts film professionals from 120 countries, 40,000 journalists and even more movie-goers from



all over the world.

The 59th Berlinale kicked off this year on February 5 with the world premiere of Tom Tykwer's feature "The International," sporting a title that could not be more appropriate for this film fest.

On the eve of the festival, the Federal Film Board (FFB) reported that a total of 129.4 million visitors passed through cinema turnstiles, exactly four million more than in 2007. Boosted by a 3.2 per cent increase in attendance, turnover rose to 794.7 million euros (\$1,018 million), 36.8 million euros (4.9 percent) more than in the previous year.



In total 18 films are competing for the prestigious 'Golden Bear' (left) this year. Clive Owen in a scene from "The International"; the film opened the 59th Berlin International Film Festival.

"The Reader," with Kate Winslet in the main role, is probably the first commercially successful international production that draws an enormous attention on the German Film Industry, which is struggling hard to get projects from Hollywood. This year's program is accommodating the maximum number of German Films ever shown in the history of Berlinale.

The other films in the international competition are: "Sweet Rush" by Andrzej Wajda (Poland); "Cheri" by Stephen Frears (UK/Germany/France); "Ricky" by François Ozon

(France/Italy); "Storm" by Hans-Christian Schmid (Germany/Denmark/Netherlands); "Alle Anderen" by Maren Ade (Germany); "Mammoth" by Lukas Moodysson (Sweden/Germany/Denmark); "Little Soldier" by Annette K. Olesen (Denmark); "Katalin Varga" by Peter Strickland (Romania/UK/Hungary); "London River" by Rachid Bouchareb (Algeria/France/UK); "Rage" by Sally Potter (UK/US); "In the Electric Mist" by Bertrand Tavernier (France/US); "The Milk of Sorrow" by Claudia Llosa (Spain/Peru); "Gigante"

by Adrián Biniez (Uruguay/Germany/Argentina); "About Elly" by Asghar Farhadi (Iran); "Forever Enthrall" by Chen Kaige (China); "The Messenger" by Oren Moverman (US); "Happy Tears" by Mitchell Lichtenstein (US) and "My One and Only" by Richard Loncraine (US).

In total 18 films are competing for the Golden Bear. There are couple of favourites but the Jury is unpredictable. The colourful combination of Jury personalities might surprise the audience.

Scottish actress Tilda Swinton is heading the International Jury. Swinton has received numerous international awards for her work -- most recently the 2008 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, for her role in the film "Michael Clayton." Last year she played an alcoholic in Berlinale entry "Julia," directed by France's Eric Zona.

The other members of the Jury are Spanish director Isabel Coixet, director Gaston Kaboré (Burkina Faso), Swedish best-selling author Henning Mankell, director Christoph Schlingensief (Germany), director Wayne Wang (USA) and food activist and author Alice Waters (USA).

The writer is a freelance cine-journalist.



PHOTO COURTESY: SAIKAT MOJUMDER

As a part of the cultural programmes organised by Bangla Academy at the ongoing "Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela," young artistes of Nrityam Nrityasheelan Kendra performed at the mela premises on February 13. The performance, "Alor Desh," was a musical-dance-drama directed by noted danseuse Tamanna Rahman. Azad Rahman has written the dance-drama and composed the music. Light design was by Thandu Raihan.