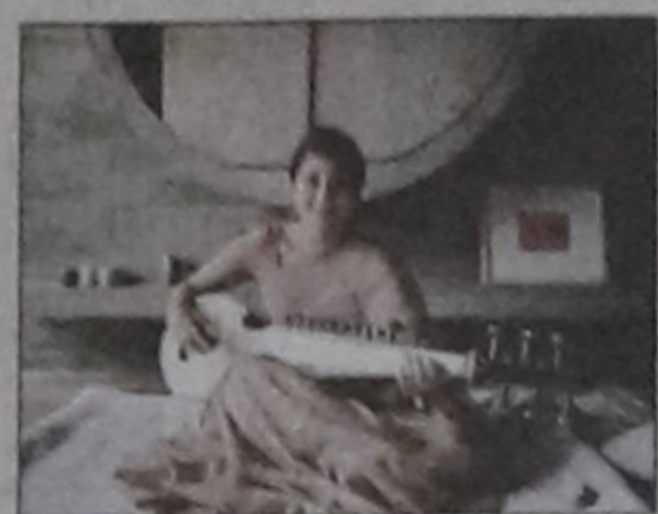


## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Recital of Sarod**  
 Artist: Rajrupa Chowdhury  
 Venue: HCI Cultural Centre and Library, H 35, Rd 24, Gulshan 1  
 Organiser: Shadhona  
 Date: March 20  
 Time: 7pm



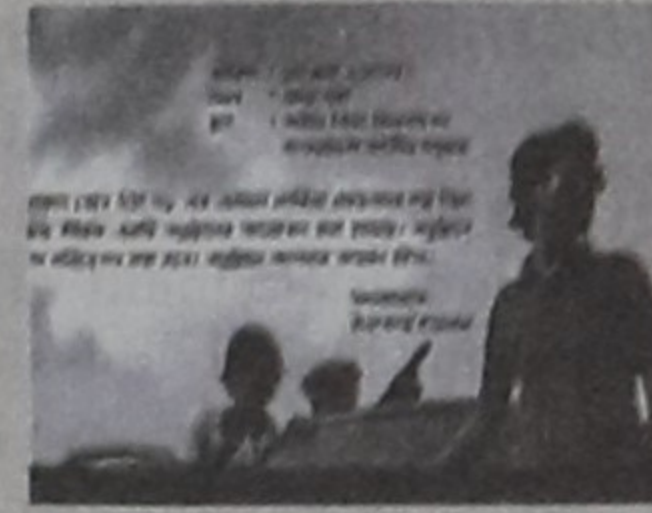
**Adivasi Cultural Festival**  
 Organiser: SEHD  
 Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
 Date: March 12-14  
 Time: 4pm onwards



**Film Screening**  
 Organiser: High Commission of India, Cultural Centre  
 Venue: High Commission of India, H 35, Rd 24, Gulshan-1  
 Film: Slumdog Crorepati (Hindi)  
 Date: March 16  
 Time: 6pm



**Discussion on Film**  
 Film: Dip Nebhar Agey  
 Venue: Shaheed Zia Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbag  
 Date: March 15  
 Time: 7pm



## A rainbow of cultures

Adivasi Cultural Festival '09 at Shilpakala



Clockwise (from top-left): Traditional dance performances by Santals, Khasis, Hajongs and Marmas on the first day of Adivasi Cultural Festival 2009.

NADIA SARWAT

With a view to highlight the vibrant cultural diversity of the Adivasi communities living in different parts of our country, a three-day "Adivasi Cultural Festival" began at the Art Gallery Plaza of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on March 12. Organised by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), the festival features vibrant cultural programmes by the Adivasi communities, discussions, photography and painting exhibitions, display of household items, artefacts, tools, handicrafts, clothing and more. A

total of 15 ethnic groups -- Santal, Marma, Tangchangya, Khasi, Hajong, Oraon, Chakma, Khyang, Rakhain, Mahale, Bawm, Tripura, Manipuri, Mandi and the Tea Community -- participated at the festival.

Veteran Adivasi leader Promode Mankin, MP inaugurated the event while Dipankar Talukdar, MP, state minister, Ministry of Chittagong Hill tracts Affairs was the chief guest. Human rights activist Khushi Kabir, Director General of BSA, Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam and Adivasi leader Paul Chawrwa Tigga were present as special guests at the inauguration. At the event, a book titled, "Bangladesh-er Khudra Jatishattar Itihas," and its

English translation were launched. The book has been edited by Philip Gain and Partha Sarkar Saha with an aim to provide a window to the diverse cultures of different Adivasi communities in Bangladesh.

The first day's programme featured performances by artistes of five ethnic groups -- Santal, Marma, Tangchangya, Khasi and Hajong. The event began with a "Dhol Nritya" by the Santals, an Adivasi community from the northern regions. A popular musical instrument, 'dhol,' plays a major role in Santal life and is an essential part of their festivals and celebrations. The 'dhuli' or the players of this instrument, not only demon-

strate their prowess over rhythm, the performance also showcases their energetic movements.

Next were the Tangchangyas from the hilly lands. The name Tangchangya is believed to be derived from the word 'Tang,' which means the peak of a hill. The artistes performed a dance number with the song "Ru ru o battey." The song speaks of the enchanting tunes of flute coming from the hills.

Dressed in white tops and blue skirts, Marma artistes performed a dance number "Kairo Krochhurey." Traditionally, Marmas celebrate the New Year with this dance.

A small ethnic community from the northeast, the Khasis presented "Jingtrei," a performance featuring their livelihood. Agriculture being the lifeline of the Khasis, has a major impact on their culture. The "Jingtrei" dance enacts the harvesting of betel leaves, the main cash crop of the Khasis.

"Pek Khela" dance by the Hajong was also an interesting one. The dance is based on a Hajong festival related to harvest. During the festival, the Hajong people gather at their chief's place and celebrate. The women indulge in throwing mud (the term 'pek' means mud in Hajong language) at their chief.

The dazzling event also included several traditional performances by the Adivasi artistes such as "Dang Nritya" and "Gaanjuary" by the Santals; "Rashimoni" songs and dances, "Bastupuja" by the Hajongs; "Ubageet" by the Tangchangyas; "Kallang" by the Khasis; "Prabarana" festival by the Marmas and more.

The festival will end today.

## Gantha celebrates second anniversary

Gantha, a literary circle initiated by Dr. Niaz Zaman, observed its second anniversary recently at Bengal Café in Dhanmondi, says a press release. Marking International Women's Day as well as Independence Day, the event featured Firdousi Priyobhashini and Shirin Banu Mital sharing their experiences during the Liberation War.

An informal body of writers representing different generations, who write in different languages and follow diverse genres, Gantha

time the perpetrators were our own people," said Priyobhashini.

Noorjahan Bose, who has just published her memoirs, "Agunmukhar Meye," introduced the two speakers.

Priyobhashini narrated how she had to endure abuse at the hands of Pakistani army. Shirin Banu actually fought in the Liberation War in male disguise. She described her experiences of guerrilla warfare in the Pabna sector.



(From left) Shirin Banu Mital, Jahanara Nausheen, Firdousi Priyobhashini and Noorjahan Bose at the anniversary programme of Gantha held recently.

meets once a month to share writings, translations, discuss books and noteworthy female writers, past and present of literature and more. Because of the recent Pikhana tragedy, the anniversary celebration was on a muted note.

The anniversary gathering was presided over by Jahanara Nausheen. The programme started with a one-minute silence in memory of those who were killed at the BDR headquarters on February 25. "It reminded us of 1971. This

"No other district saw so many Pakistani soldiers killed so early during the war," she said. "There were 240 of them. We knew that they had limited ammunition, so we waited until they exhausted their resources and attacked with whatever we had."

Dr. Niaz Zaman thanked the speakers for their moving accounts of the war. The meeting ended with the announcement of the next meeting on April 8.

## Latin Jazz band to play a concert in Dhaka

The U.S. Embassy will host a free outdoor concert on March 16, 2009, featuring Latin Jazz band The Duende Quartet, says a press release. The concert will be held at the GSO Field, General Services Compound, U.S. Embassy, Dhaka (Nutanbazaar, east of the embassy).

The Duende Quartet, formed in 2004, is based in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, M.D. areas. The band is devoted to playing Latin Jazz in the style of Mongo Santamaria, Cal Tjader and Willie Bobo with a nod to the Blue Note sound of the '60s. In a unique small group setting (with piano as the lead instrument) Duende Quartet captures the vibe of the jazz combo while using the rhythms of a Cuban conjunto. Duende has a vast repertoire ranging from traditional Cuban songs to modern jazz compositions.

The Duende Quartet features Harry Appelman on piano and keyboards, Josh Schwartzman on bass, and



The Duende Quartet

Sam Turner and Mark Merella on percussion.

The band was chosen by Jazz at Lincoln Center as one of six jazz quartets to tour abroad in 2007, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's American Music Abroad programme. Free tickets are available at

The American Center (House 110, Road 27, Banani), Alliance Francaise, Goethe-Institut, Golpea Burger (Bailey Road), Bangladesh Short Film Forum (Aziz Super Market), Pizza Hut (Gulshan and Dhanmondi locations), Western Grill (Banani), and Coffee World (Banani).

## Sneak Peek

### Kanchivaram: The discord between preaching and practicing communism

Fifty-two year old Priyadarshan started his career in 1984 with the Malayalam film "Poochakoru Mookuthi," a slapstick comedy on the lines of "Laurel and Hardy."

In the last 25 years, he has directed 36 Malayalam, 22 Hindi and four Tamil films, in addition to writing stories and screenplay for many more.

Though Priyadarshan's films have been effective moneymakers, not many save for "Kalapani" and "Virasat," have won major awards. It has been a very disappointing fact for the director. "Kanchivaram," made with an eye on the festival circuit, just might achieve it. The film received rave reviews at the Toronto Film Festival last year.

The film is about a silk weaver of Kancheepuram who is "caught in the conflict between his adopted ideals and individual dreams."

"Kanchivaram" starts with Vengadam, the protagonist stepping out of jail on parole, on a rainy day, into a world that looks different, a world that he does not recognise any more.

Despite his humble beginnings, Vengadam makes a promise to his newborn daughter that he would drape her in a fine silk sari on her wedding day. When Vengadam realises that he would not be able to



"Kanchivaram" is about a silk weaver who is conflicted between his adopted ideals and individual dreams.

keep the promise, he steals one silk thread a day. As his daughter grows up, the length of the sari Vengadam is weaving for her expands too.

The weaver's life changes forever after the appearance of a communist propagandist in his village. From being apolitical, he goes to the other extreme of living and breathing communism.

His affiliation to the new ideology helps him become a leader of the community. He instigates a revolt against the mill owners who rule over the workers like feudal lords and the mills are shut down. As the strike gets prolonged, Vengadam realises that he can't get silk thread anymore, and his daughter's wedding is fast approaching.

Torn between his vow and ideology, he starts to question the principles of communism. He realises that preaching is easier than practising a philosophy.

The film is an analysis by the director on why communism took a backseat all over the world.

Prakashraj plays Vengadam while Shriya Reddy dons the role of his wife Annapurna. Shammu plays Thamarai, Vengadam's daughter.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent.



PHOTO: MUMIT M

Members of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi render a Rabindra Sangeet at the Liberation War Museum at a programme held by Wrishiz Shilpi Gosthi. The programme on March 11 marked the ninth death anniversary of Altaf Ali Hashu, former general secretary of Wrishiz. Wrishiz honoured Jatin Sarkar, former president of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, with 'Altaf Ali Hashu Padak' at the programme.