

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Shammlan
 Organiser: Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Shammlan Parishad
 Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag
 Date: March 20-22
 Time: 9:30 am onwards

National Pantomime Festival '09
 Organiser: Pantomime Movement
 Venue: Theatre Institute, Chittagong
 Date: March 20-22
 Time: 4pm everyday

Installation
 Title: Kagojer Chhayay
 Artists: Wajidul Rahman and Dhali Al Mamun
 Organiser: The daily Prothom Alo
 Venue: Nalinikanto Bhattacharya Gallery, National Museum
 Date: March 20-30

Francophone Film Festival
 Organiser: Alliance Française de Dacca, Zahir Raihan Film Society
 Venue: Auditorium, AFD, Rd 3 Dhanmondi
 Date: March 16-24
 Time: 5pm onwards
 March 22: Heads and Tails, Hunting and Gathering

Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Shammlan '09

300 participants from across the country congregate at Public Library



PHOTO: STAR



The three-day convention features dance and music by seasoned and promising Tagore artistes from across the country.

JAMIL MAHMUD

The 28th Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Shammlan began at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag on March 20. Organised by Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Shammlan Parishad (JRSSP), this three-day annual programme features nearly 300 participants from across the country.

The inaugural session took place early on March 20 morning. Noted

Tagore artiste and General Secretary of JRSSP, Bulbul Islam gave the welcome speech. Tagore exponent and president of Chhayana, Dr Sanjida Khatun inaugurated the programme. Eminent educationist and President of JRSSP, Professor Zahir Rahman Siddiqui, presided over the programme.

The morning session featured songs, recitation and dance. Noted media personality and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor recited a poem, while noted artiste Sharmila Bandyopadhyay performed a dance. A

group recital of "lahora" (of percussions) was the highlight of the session. Nilmoni Sinha, Gautam Sarkar, Swarup Hossain and Enamul Haque performed respectively on Manipuri 'mridanga', 'tabla', 'pakhawaj' and South Indian 'mridanga'.

A competition on Rabindra Sangeet featured 50 adolescent singers from across the country. Bulbul Islam informed that the competition, which started a few months back, intends to groom and inspire talented singers outside Dhaka who do not get the

exposure they deserve.

In the afternoon, a seminar titled, "Shatobarsho Agye: Jatiyo Shikha Andolon O Rabindranath" was held at the venue. Eminent educationist Professor Anisuzzaman presented the keynote paper. Among others, Professor Shafi Ahmed, Department of English, Jahangirnagar University discussed on the topic.

The evening session featured over 30 artistes performing songs, dances and recitation. Veteran actress Ferdousi Majumdar inaugurated the evening session, accompanied by a chorus of "Aguner parashmoni chhowao praney" rendered from the backstage.

Rokaiya Hasina started her solo performance with "Madhuro dhoni bajey." Nargis Chowdhury and Biswajit Sen Gupta (from Barisal) rendered "Kul thekey mor" and "Aamar hiyar majhey" respectively. Among others, Iffat Ara Dewan, Selina Huda, Tapan Bhattacharya, Babul Chakrabarti (Chandpur), Rana Sinha (Silhet) and Aniruddho Sen Gupta (Chittagong) sang at the programme.

Pallabi Krishnan and Tamanna Rahman performed dance, while Hasan Arif recited poetry at the programme.

Today, apart from performances, a convention of the representatives from different districts will be held in the morning. In the evening, the concluding programme will take place at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium. Botanist Dwijendra Sharma will grace the programme as chief guest. This year's 'Rabindra Padak' will be announced at the programme.

Last year the convention was held in the northern district of Jaipurhat.

A treat for information seekers

Kindling interest in Mymensingh

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A CD titled Mymenpedia, a vast storehouse of information about Mymensingh, was launched at the local Shilpakala Academy on March 19. Dhaka divisional commissioner Dr. Khandaker Shawkat Hossen unveiled the CD the first of its kind here - as chief guest.

Deputy commissioner of Mymensingh, Mohammad Ziaur Rahman Khan who prepared the pedia, replete with the area's rich history and culture, presided over the ceremony. Among others, mayor of Mymensingh Municipality, advocate Mahmud Al Noor Tareq; additional deputy commissioner Mohammad Mohsin; additional police superintendent, Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman; heads of different educational institutions and cultural personalities attended the function.

Earlier a discussion was held to mark the launch. The speakers said that the district of some 225 years' vintage and popular for folk ballads such as "Mahua", "Malua" and "Chandrabati", had produced many valiant and noted sons. Among those born in Mymensingh were Acharya Jogodish

Chandra Bose, the world renowned scientist; littérateur, journalist and politician Abdul Mansur Ahmad, littérateur Abul Kalam Shamsuddin; Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin. Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore visited the district, while National Poet Kazi Nazrul stayed in Trishal in his younger days.

The district, through which flow many rivers like Old Brahmaputra, Kansha, Khiru, Sutia and Sumeshwari, has a rich historical and cultural background, but until now there was little known about the district. This pedia, said the speakers, will help people to extend their knowledge about about Mymensingh, one of the oldest districts of this sub-continent.

Talking about the contribution of Mohammad Ziaur Rahman Khan, the speakers said that the people of Mymensingh will remember his initiative. The pedia, they said, could set Bangladesh into the digital era by 2021.

In his speech, Khan said that Mymensingh's rich literature and culture needed preservation so that it could be saved from extinction. "I have tried to include a great deal of information about Mymensingh in this reasonably priced CD," he said.

Latest Warfaze album to be released on Nokia 5800

Nokia is set to lure Bangladeshi music lovers with 5130XpressMusic - the newest addition to the brand's XpressMusic range and a first of its kind to team up with musical powerhouse Warfaze with the exclusive release of the band's Album on Nokia 5800, according to a press release.

Prem Chand, general manager for Nokia's emerging Asia markets, recently announced the launch of 5130XpressMusic in Bangladesh. "For many people in emerging markets like Bangladesh, their mobile devices are their favourite, and sometimes only, source of entertainment. The appeal of music is universal and so should be music lovers' access to their favourite songs. The

5130XpressMusic, with its highly competitive price is targeted at music enthusiasts and will make mobile entertainment more accessible. The release of an album on a mobile device instead of traditional use of CDs is also unprecedented. It is the first of its kind here," he said.

The 5800 XpressMusic will come pre-loaded with the yet to be released Warfaze album with 13 tracks including two completely new tracks titled "Tomake" and "Omanush." Nokia has exclusive rights to the album until April 14.

"We are delighted to team up with Nokia, a brand truly close to peoples' hearts," said the band members.

Selim al Deen's Dhaboman: Death, the inseparable companion

Shimul Yousuf directs Dhaka theatre's latest production

NADIA SARWAT

Dhaka Theatre premiered its latest production "Dhaboman" on March 20 at the National Theatre Stage. Through this Selim Al Deen play, noted actress Shimul Yousuf made her debut as a theatre director.

On her newest identity, Shimul Yousuf said, "I didn't consider directing plays before. But I felt a void when Selim Al Deen, who was a mentor and friend to me, passed away unexpectedly. It's my effort to survive the loss."

"It's painful to premier a Selim Al Deen play without him physically present among us. Written during his last days, this play has an indication of death silently stalking life," Nasiruddin Yousuff said at the premiere.

"Dhaboman" belongs to the post-colonial 'narrative' theatre, a form conceived by Al Deen that highlights our indigenous traditions and art forms, countering the western concept of theatre. Set in a village by the Someshwari River in the greater Mymensingh area where Bengalis have been living side by side with the Mandis, the play features a buffalo named Sohrab as its protagonist. In the Mandi culture, buffaloes are honoured as manifestation of god.

Raised by Nahabat, a Bengali villager, Sohrab is treated not as a farm animal, but as his owner's child. Sohrab grows up to be a powerful animal and Nahabat takes great pride in him. He wants the buffalo to win the traditional annual buffalo-fight and Sohrab does win his first fight. But



PHOTO: MUMIT M

Presented in the "ritual theatre" form, the play uses indigenous ceremonial traditions as narrative.



Nahabat's physically challenged son, Eshak, who develops a complex akin to sibling rivalry, "dreams" that he will be cured if the buffalo is sacrificed. Unable to deny his fatherly duties, Nahabat finally decides to sacrifice Sohrab with a heavy heart.

But the powerful beast breaks free and runs away. He is overwhelmed by the cruelty of his human kin and also considers them his only inspiration to live. Sohrab eventually come backs to the yard where he grew up, with the realisation that this is his final resting place.

Presented in the form of "ritual theatre," the play adopts traditional ceremonial elements of the Mandi culture, along with "Madar Pirer Geet," "Muharram-er Jari," "Padma Nachan," "Kach Nritya," "Lathi Khela," "Nat Pala" and more. Sporting the grandeur of an epic, the play has nature and animals interact with the human characters to disseminate a message against slaughtering.

Shimul Yousuf performed the role of Bibek (conscience), another indigenous theatrical element. Shahiduzzaman Selim, Chandan Chowdhury, Nasrin Nahar, Rosy Siddiqui, Jayasree Bhandopadhyay, Sajjad Ahmed and Asaduzzaman Aman played the major roles. Esha Yousuff played Sohrab the buffalo; Al Deen himself apparently considered her to be perfect for the role. Nasirul Haque Khokon was the light designer of the production. Music and set design were done by Shimul Yousuf.