

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Reminiscence
On the 5th death anniversary of founder-curator of BFA AKM Abdur Rauf
Organiser: Mukjodha, Shilpi Abdur Rauf Smit Sangsad
Venue: Auditorium, Bangladesh Film Archive, 121, Shahbag
Date: April 1, Time: 5pm

BFA
বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম আর্কাইভ

Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Recent Works
Artist: Fareha Zeba
Venue: Galleri Kaya, H 20, Rd 16, Sec 4, Uttara
Date: March 21-April 3
Time: 11am-8pm

Art Exhibition
Artists: Jupiter Pradhan & Sauganga Darshandhari (Nepal)
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Francaise de Dhacca, 26, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi
Date: March 27-April 5
Time: 9am-12pm, 5-8pm (Saturdays 5-8pm)

Intra NSU Photography Competition and Exhibition
Organiser: NSU Photography Club
Venue: GMQ ground floor, GMQ Monami Tower, Banani
Date: March 29-April 2



Up-close

"I don't have a dream role"

--- Bipasha



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star's cultural correspondent recently caught up with Bipasha Hayat. A TV and theatre personality, she is more into writing scripts for TV plays and finds little time for modelling assignments. Excerpts from the interview:

What do you fear the most?
Snakes! My fear of snakes is so intense, that I can't stand pictures of them on magazines or on TV channels. Even Toukir sometimes gives up surfing TV channels upon hearing my ear piercing screams!

If you had three wishes, what would they be?
That my son Aareeb and daughter Arisha, grow up to be true citizens of the country and that they acquire enough worldly knowledge and are always happy.
That my family, with whom I am so much attached, dwells in happiness forever.
That our country turns out to be peaceful once again, and we all live in harmony.

Movies you can't have enough of--
Cinema Paradiso--it's an Italian movie, but it contains a certain nostalgic overtone and philosophy which really intrigues me. I like to watch it over and over again.
Mediterraneo--an Italian war-movie which is actually very different. I think everyone should watch it.
I am also attached to Satyajit Ray's films. I never miss them whenever they are telecast.

Books you could always read--
I really don't have any specific books which I always read. However, I do prefer books reflecting certain philosophies and thoughts of people. In fact, the book *My Feudal Lord* by Pakistani writer Tehmina Durrani had a great impact on my mind.

Your dream role--
I don't have a dream role as such, however, whenever I am on screen, I try to be as different as possible. I try to bring in a variety of elements to make my role as believable as possible. I think this is how one can be a success on screen.

Are you satisfied in terms of being an artiste and a human being?
As a painter and an actress, I think I have a lot more to offer and achieve. As a human being, I feel extremely lucky to have been born in a wonderful family and to have been married in an equally wonderful family.

Your upcoming project as a playwright--
I have just completed shooting for my latest single episode TV play *Jokhon Brishiti Namlo*. The location was set at Nakhhatro studio in Rajendrapur. Toukir, Aupi Karim, Apurbo, Masud Ali Khan and Sharmili Ahmed play the lead roles. Directed by Chayanika Chowdhury the story has elements from my own life. The other TV serial, *Jyotsnakaal* scripted by me and directed by Toukir, is now telecast twice a week on ATN Bangla in which I play a lead role. Another serial written by me, *Jolkonna* is telecast on Desh TV. Toukir directs the TV play.

Captivating show by Gano Sangeet artiste Ajit Pandey

NADIA SARWAT

A charged performance of Gano Sangeet, as it aimed at inspiring people to brave the darkness of society, literally brought light to a load shedding-affected Natmanadal. A solo musical evening by eminent Gano Sangeet artiste of the subcontinent was organised by Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi and the Department of Music and Drama on March 30 at Natmanadal. The event was interrupted by frequent electricity failure right from the start. The enthusiastic audience showed extreme tolerance by staying on at the event till the end, due to the outstanding performance by the internationally acclaimed artiste.

The event started off with the students of the department of Music and Drama rendering the popular number "Purba Digontey Surjo Uthechhey." Dr. Mridul Kanti Chakrabarti, acting Chairman of the Department of Music and Drama, delivered the welcome speech. The organisers honoured the seasoned artiste by an 'Uttario' and wreath of flowers.

"I came here to attend the Gano Sangeet Festival organised by Udichi. I never thought I'd be so honoured here, especially at the Dhaka University campus, which I respect so much for its history. We Bengalis on the other side of the border look to you for many things, as you have set examples in establishing your language and nationality," Pandey said, in his remarks.

Born in 1939 in Murshidabad, Pandey was introduced to the classical music at an early age, as his family was a culturally oriented one. Actively involved in



politics, he chose to sing for the masses subsequently. He was elected a member in the West Bengal Parliament, and it was at his initiative Calcutta was renamed as Kolkata. He recovered the room of Baker Hostel where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resided while he was a student of Calcutta Islamia College and has preserved the place for visitors.

The artiste started his performance with the song "Janooni Go ka(n)do", a song written and composed by the artiste himself. Next was a song written in the local language of Churulia, where the Rebel Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was born. The song, "Dukhu Miah Hey," was a tribute to the poet. An interactive performer, Pandey made the audience sing the song "Ekushey February", following his rendition of the song "Bangla Bhasha Uchcharito Holey." "Chasnalar Khanitey," a song about the explosion in Chashnala coalmine in Jharkhand in 1975 that killed around 400 miners, moved the audience.

His performance included some others of his popular numbers like "Ora Amader Gaitey Deina," "Tumi Jakhon Ka(n)dchhiley," "Amal Kanti Hotey Cheyechhilo," the Spanish song "Wantana Meba," and the celebrated song "We shall overcome." He also rendered some Tagore and Laloo songs at the event.

Bookfest | Catering to pastoral minds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The three-day long book fair organised to mark the 39th Independence and national Day ended here recently.

Kachi-Kachar Mela, an organisation formed by local people to promote literary and cultural activities among the children organised the fair to offer the rural book lovers a scope for flipping through pages and buying books.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Professor Dr. A.F.M. Ruhul Haque inaugurated the book fair at Nalta Ahsania Mission residential college premises, remote area in Kaliganj upazila on March 27.

A total of 21 stalls graced the book fair.

Local book lovers including school and college students thronged the book fair premises every day and bought books.

At a discussion on the concluding day of the fair, Sathkira deputy commissioner, Md. Mizanur Rahman delivered a speech while Kachi-Kachar Mela director Abdul Bari Al Baki presided over the concluding ceremony.

Kaliganj upazila Nirbahi officer (UNO) Jasim Uddin Khan and others took part in the discussion.

Speakers said rural readers who are not able to go to major book fairs in Sathkira, Dhaka and other big cities now had an opportunity to buy books at discount prices at the fair.

Other speakers said that Bangla became our mother tongue after much sacrifice. In fact it is rare for so many patriots to give up their lives for their mother tongue.

They said history of our Language Movement should be conveyed to the next generation.

They said that books would go a long way in familiarizing people about the Language Movement.



Health and Family Welfare Minister Professor A.F.M. Ruhul Haque (2-R) is seen visiting a bookstall.



Madonna with children Lourdes, Rocco and David Banda

Madonna urged to rethink adoption

Pop star Madonna has been urged by Save the Children to reconsider her apparent plans to adopt another Malawian child.

Malawian officials have indicated she will arrive in the African country this weekend in an attempt to adopt an orphan called Mercy James.

The UK-based charity said ideally orphans should be cared for by their extended family or community and taking them abroad was "not a solution".

Madonna took then 13-month-old David Banda to the UK from Malawi in 2006.

The Reuters news agency reported that it was told Mercy James has "no father and mother, they both died", and an assessment had been completed last Thursday.

Reuters reported that Mercy James was four years old, while the AFP agency said she was three.

Madonna is expected to arrive in Malawi to attend a procedural hearing at the country's High Court on Monday.

Save the Children spokesman Dominic Nutt told the BBC's Newshour programme: "For the most part so-called orphans in poor countries tend to have family still available to them, if not actually a parent still living. It is vital, we say, that children should not be taken abroad to be looked after but should be cared for in their own environment by their own community, ideally by their own family, particularly their extended family."

He said even if an orphaned child had no extended family, it was "much easier and better" to continue looking after them in their own country.

"The thing to do is to support the community, to support local agencies and charities who can look after the child so that the child is at least cared for in their community," he said.

"You cannot literally take every poor child who may only have one parent living, or no parent living, across the world and transport them all into Kensington in London. It's not a solution."

Madonna took David Banda to the UK from an orphanage three years ago and the official adoption of the boy was confirmed last year.

Writing in response to e-mailed questions from Nation readers last week, Madonna said: "Many people -- especially our Malawian friends -- say that David should have a Malawian brother or sister. It's something I have been considering."

In 2006, critics accused the Malawian government of side-stepping laws banning foreign adoptions in order to allow the celebrity to take David home with her.

Advaita in full gear in Delhi

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

Advaita, a New Delhi-based band, had something for everyone at its recent concertwestern and Indian classical, complete with the guitar, keyboards, drums, sarangi and tabla. Held to launch its first CD, titled Grounded in Space, the group had the huge audience, largely the university crowd, cheering them on.

Advaita members have reason to be elated with the show. Says Abhishek Mathur, who is on the guitar and electronics, "Yes, we were expecting people at the concert; we had put up posters, had a radio partner and have a fan following in Delhi, but we did not anticipate such a huge and responsive crowd."

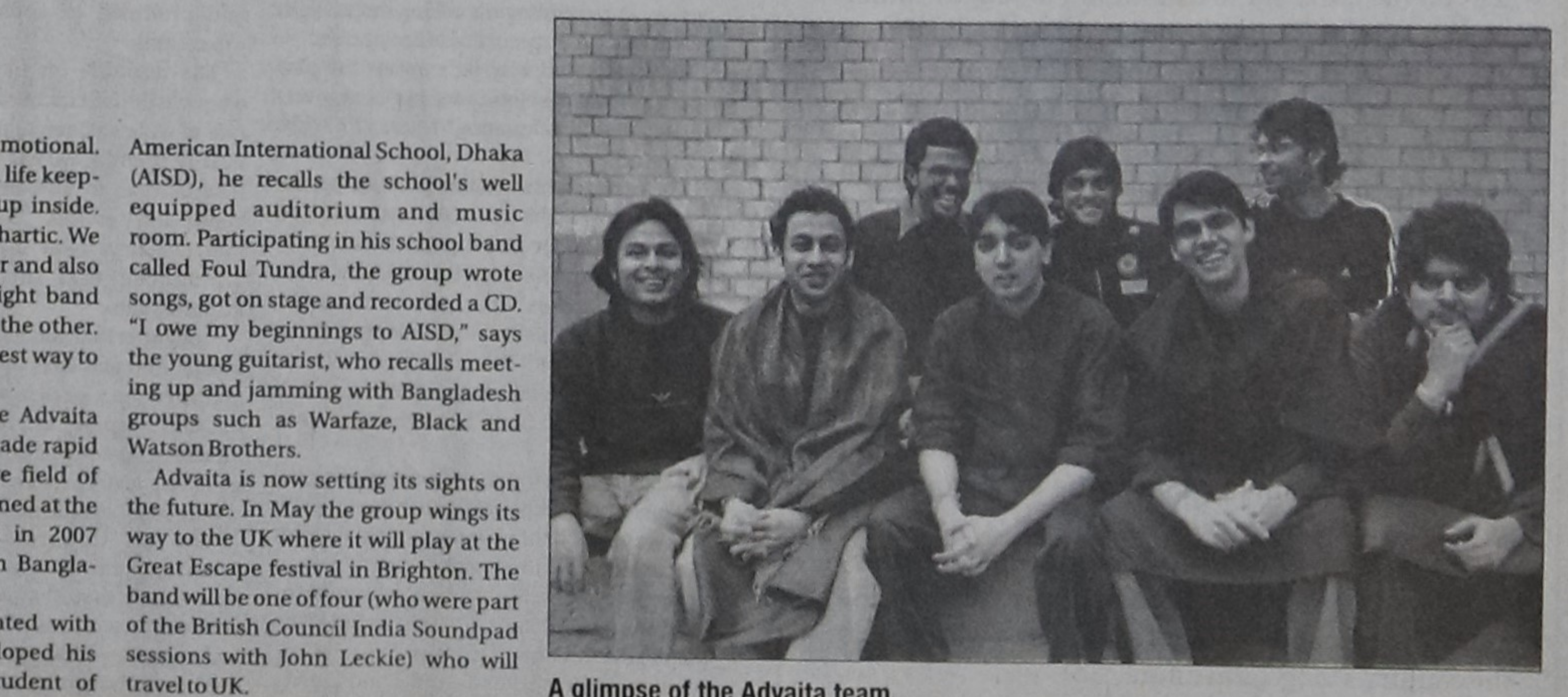
And what about the purists who grumble about Indian classical music coming together with western music? Ujwal Nagar, Hindustani classical vocalist, who rendered a song based on Raga Miya Malhar for the benefit of this correspondent, has his own take on the issue. "I totally respect views that Hindustani and western music should not be brought together. However, I would say that this is a collaboration, a meeting of styles. You can expand your boundaries and yet be authentic to your music as well. I really think we should take such fusion more positively."

Says Abhishek in turn, "There is more positive energy in this kind of music rather than in heavy metallic music. Our songs are very emotional. Generally people go through life keeping their emotions bottled up inside. You could call our music cathartic. We enjoy playing with each other and also the fact that none of our eight band members tries to overpower the other. Yes, harmony would be the best way to describe our USP."

Over the four years since Advaita was formed, the band has made rapid inroads into the competitive field of music. The group has performed at the SAARC festival, New Delhi in 2007 where Bangla, a group from Bangladesh, was also in evidence.

Abhishek is well acquainted with Bangladesh where he developed his musical skills. A former student of American International School, Dhaka (AISD), he recalls the school's well equipped auditorium and music room. Participating in his school band called Foul Tundra, the group wrote songs, got on stage and recorded a CD. "I owe my beginnings to AISD," says the young guitarist, who recalls meeting up and jamming with Bangladesh groups such as Warfaze, Black and Watson Brothers.

Advaita is now setting its sights on the future. In May the group wings its way to the UK where it will play at the Great Escape festival in Brighton. The band will be one of four (who were part of the British Council India Soundpad sessions with John Leckie) who will travel to UK.



A glimpse of the Advaita team.