

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

4th National Dance Festival

Organiser: Bangladesh Dance Artists' Association
Venue: Plaza, National Art Gallery, BSA
Date: April 23-29
Inauguration on April 23 at National Theatre Hall
Time: 6pm



Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Searching
Artist: Nusrat Jahan Nazee
Venue: Radius Centre-Bay's Galleria, 5th Floor, 57, Gulshan Avenue
Date: April 17- May 1



Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Touching the Reality
Artist: Golam Faruque
Venue: Shilpangan, H 26, Rd 3, Dhanmondi
Date: April 17-26
Time: 10am-8pm



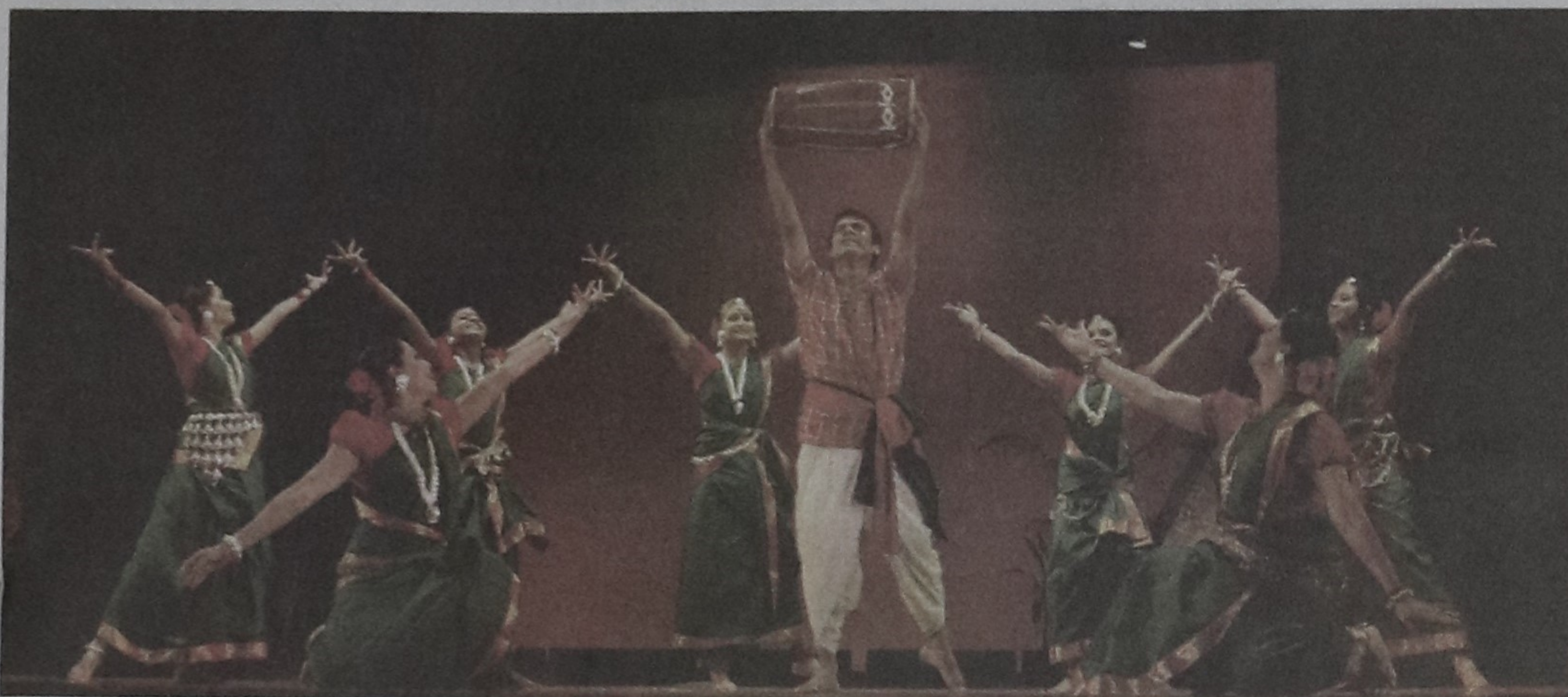
Folk Theatre Festival

Organiser: Department of Theatre and Film, BSA
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Date: April 23-29
Time: 6:30 pm everyday
April 25
"Nouka Bilash" by Pagal Bhai-er Ashtak Dal, Narail



When rhythm assists flying feet

4th National Dance Festival kicks off



JAMIL MAHMUD

With the slogan "Milechhi Miloney Chhandey Anandey," the weeklong 4th National Dance Festival started at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on April 23. Organised by Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS), the festival will end at the same venue on the International Dance Day (April 29). Celebrations are also on at other major cities of the country.

A brief inaugural ceremony preceded the first day's programme. Shaju Ahmed, general secretary of BNSS, welcomed the audience. Renowned theatre personality and president of International Theatre Institute (ITI), Ramendu Majumdar, was the chief guest. Rahiza Khanam Jhunu, president of BNSS, presided over the programme.

Shaju Ahmed pointed out the uphill battle they had to endure for the allocation of the venue. He urged the BSA authority to allow dancers to

stage programmes at the National Theatre Hall on at least two days every month.

"Though Shilpakala Academy provides an auditorium -- National Music and Dance Centre -- for the music and dance artists, the stage is not suitable for dancers to hold shows," said Ramendu Majumdar in his speech. Majumdar, who is also a member of the BSA advisory body, urged the authority to allow dancers to stage shows at the National Theatre Hall.

Every year a message from a well-known dance personality is circulated throughout the world on International Dance Day. This year, acclaimed British-Bangladeshi choreographer Akram Khan has authored the message. At the programme, Majumdar read out the message on behalf of Khan.

Akram Khan's message reads: "This very special day is dedicated to the one language that everybody in this world can speak, the inherent language of our bodies and our souls, of our ancestors and of our children...It is dedicated to the little child

that wishes it could move like its star, and to the mother who says, 'you already can.' This day is dedicated to every body of every creed, colour and culture that carries the traditions of its past into stories of the present and



Around 1000 dancers, from all over Bangladesh, are taking part in this year's festival.

dreams of the future..."

In her speech, Rahiza Khanam Jhunu stressed that dancers should be considered for national awards like

Ekushey Padak.

Nearly 1000 dancers, from all over Bangladesh, are taking part in this year's festival. On the opening day, several dance troupes including Nrityalok, Bhabna, Nrityaloy from



Faridpur, Nandanik, Pallabi, Dibya Sangskritik Shangathan and Bhorer Pakhi staged performances.

The programme started with a performance by differently-abled children. Dancers of Nrityalok staged a fusion piece highlighting a mother's sorrow after losing her son to a war. Kabirul Islam Ratan was the choreographer of the performance.

Nrityaloy staged a folk dance, while artistes of Bhabna performed a classical dance.

Earlier in the afternoon, a fair featuring everything related to dance was inaugurated at the Plaza of National Art Gallery. Cultural personality Syed Hasan Imam inaugurated the fair, which will continue till April 29. As part of the celebration, a programme was held at the Bogra Shilpakala Academy premises yesterday.

Folk artiste Professor Abdur Rashid passes away

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Eminent folk artiste and exponent, Professor Abdur Rashid Miah, composer of the popular dance-drama "Mahua," died of old age complications on April 21. The 74-year-old Professor Rashid passed away at his residence at Golkibari area in the district town.

Professor Rashid is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter. A host of relatives and admirers gathered at his residence to mourn his death. He was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Biara village, Nandailupazila.

Among those who paid homage to the late folk artiste were Mayor of Mymensingh Municipality, Advocate Mahmud Al Noor Tareq; president member of



Professor Abdur Rashid

Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Shahadat Hossain Khan; convener of Sammito Sangskritik Jote's local unit, Professor Amir Ahmed Chowdhury; president of Mymensingh Lok Kristi Sangstha, Abul Kashem; secretary of Nazrul Academy, Professor Shafiqul Islam and secretary of Jhilik Natya

Sangstha, Saiful Islam.

A regular artiste of Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, Professor Rashid was a talented music composer, lyricist and performer. "Mahua," the dance-drama, won him recognition both at home and abroad. Some of his other notable works "Chandrabati," "Kajal Rekha" and "Rupoboti" were aired on Bangladesh Television.

Founder of Mymensingh Lok Kristi Sangstha, Professor Rashid authored two books -- "Sur Bihanga" and "Sangeet Bichitra" -- on folklore and indigenous cultural traditions of the country. The former assistant director of Birishiri Cultural Academy in Netrokona was also adept on the 'dotara.'

Drama Serial Channel 21 on Ekushey TV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama Serial "Channel 21" will be aired tonight at 9:30 pm on Ekushey TV. With the concept of Abdus Salam, the serial has been written and directed by Masum Shahriar.

The plot zooms in on a news team working for Channel 21. The news at 7 on the channel is very popular for its bold reporting and style of presentation. Shailla Sharmin is the chief reporter. Known for her bravado, she is quite a star. Cameraman Wahid Reza is timid, but on duty, he is fearless. Preeti is the popular news presenter. Then there are the news producers, editor, technical hands and others. Starting with an issue between Shailla Sharmin and the news



A scene from the serial.

editor over airing a particular news, the play moves on with these characters in the newsroom of Channel 21.

The cast includes Jayanto Chattopadhyay, Richi Solaiman, Anisur Rahman

Milon, Zakia Bari Mamo, Naznin Hasan Chumki, Shamsul Alam Bakul, Manash Bandopadhyay, Ahsan Habib Nasim and others. A number of real TV reporters are also featured in the serial.



PHOTO: STAR

Folk organisation 'Bhawaiya' celebrated its first anniversary recently with a "Bhawaiya Utshab" at the Department of Dance and Music auditorium, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Shafiul Alam Raja (C) is seen performing at the programme.

Back to the roots Folk Theatre Festival begins at Shilpakala

NADIA SARWAT

The performers gathered in a circle and the 'Gayen,' narrator and protagonist, was singing his story to the audience. He is the king of Kharvan, and despite his endless riches, he wants to drown himself in the river Jamuna because he has no heir. The story progresses with moving songs and dance sequences, featuring the seven beautiful queens (all played by male performers). The 'pala' continued for hours; the city audience included several noted theatre and cultural personalities. The pala, "Gujra Satir Banobash," was staged by Sundarganj Pala-gaaner Akhra from Gaibandha.

To promote the various forms and styles of folk performing arts from different regions of the country,

Department of Theatre and Film, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) has organised a weeklong Folk Theatre Festival. The festival started at the Experimental Theatre Hall of BSA on April 23, featuring seven troupes from Gaibandha, Tangail, Narail, Netrakona, Khulna, Manikganj and Sunamganj. BSA has organised the festival in cooperation with ActionAid. A workshop on folk theatre is also being held as part of the festival.

Ramendu Majumdar, president of International Theatre Institute, inaugurated the event, saying, "Since the proscenium theatre, following the English concept of the medium, was introduced here we moved away from our own traditional performing art forms. A division between folk and mainstream performing art forms was created. Our opu-

lent folk traditions are now on the verge of decline, due to lack of interest and patronage. BSA's initiative to turn back to our roots is a timely

one." Pointing particularly to the importance of the workshop where the students of theatre can learn different

folk performing arts, he expected BSA to continue the festival every year.

Sara Ara Mahmud, director of Department of Theatre



Performers of Sundarganj Palagaan-er Akhra in the pala "Gujra Satir Banobash."

and Film, BSA; Golam Sarwar, deputy director of the department and Abdul Mannan Hawladar, director of Training Department, BSA also spoke at the inaugural event presided by Kamal Lohani, director general of BSA.

"Gujra Satir Banobash" was composed by Palakar Subal Chandra Das. This particular form of pala is known as 'Mati Khocha Gaan' in the northern districts such as Sirajganj, Natore, Bogra and Gaibandha. It is believed that before the invention of plough, the farmers used to till their lands with their feet, singing this 'pala'. Quite popular among the working class people, nightlong performances are held at the villages where several troupes perform at a competitive event known as "Gidaler Akhra."

The second day's (yester-

day) programme included

"Behular Nachari" by a

troupe from Haripur, Tangail

led by Palakar Rustam Ali. The

troupe consists of marginalised

Muslim farmers, tea sellers,

rickshaw pullers and vendors from the villages of

Tangail.

Today, "Nouka Bilash" will

be staged by the troupe Pagal

Bhai-er Ashtak Dal from

Narail. "Nouka Bilash" is a

traditional 'Ashtak Gaan'

performance -- a tradition

carried on by generations in

the village Hatiara of Narail.

Ashtak Gaan is performed as

a part of Shib (Shiva) puja at

the 'Chaitra Sangkranti' (celebrating the last day of the

Bangla year). "Nouka Bilash"

is an adaptation of "Sri Krishna Kirtan" by the leg-

endary medieval poet Baro

Chandi Das.

