

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Film Screening**  
Film: Psycho (1960)  
Director: Alfred Hitchcock  
Venue: Bangladesh Film Centre, 160, Lake Circus, Kalabagan  
Date: April 30  
Time: 6pm

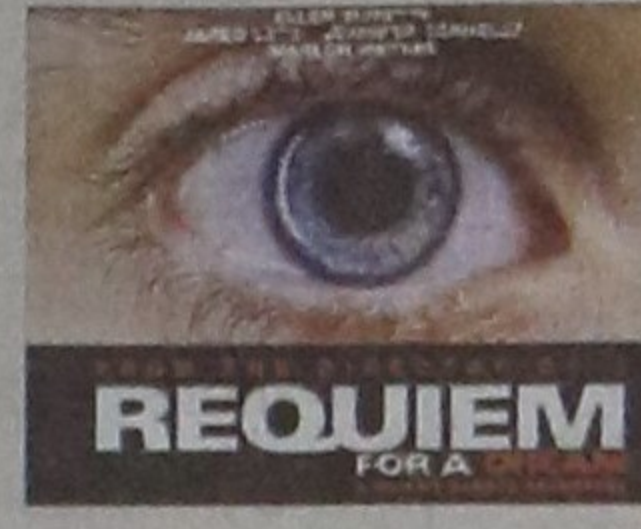


## Solo Painting Exhibition

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



**Film Screening**  
70th World Film Manifestation Programme  
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society  
Venue: Goethe Institut auditorium, H10, R9 Dhanmondi  
Date: May 10-11  
Time: 3pm onwards



**Clay Art Exhibition**  
Title: Clay Art by Harappa  
Organiser: Harappa  
Venue: Drik Gallery, H58, Rd 15A (new), Dhanmondi  
Date: May 2-8  
Time: 3-8pm  
Inauguration on May 1 at 5pm



# A brilliant display of diverse folk theatre

NADIA SARWAT

The tradition of folk theatre in Bangladesh could be traced back to the ancient times. Rural denizens express their indigenous theological beliefs, geographical experiences, social and political views, expectations and dreams through various forms of folk theatre related to their respective regions and lifestyle. But the continuity of this opulent tradition was hindered by the aggression of cultural globalisation. Failing to compete with the urban trends, these diverse forms of folk theatre are now on the verge of extinction. To promote these indigenous traditions and to integrate them with the mainstream theatre movement, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organised a folk theatre festival that ran from April 23 to 29.

Curtains came down on the weeklong folk

theatre festival organised by the Department of Theatre and Film, BSA with a performance by Jai Durga Dhop Jatrar Dal, Sunamganj, titled "Shanir Chakranto" on April 29. The festival, which was held at the Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA featured seven theatrical performances featuring different forms and styles indigenous to the various rural localities of our country. The festival also included a workshop on folk theatre, seminars and a photography exhibition.

On the fifth day of the festival, a 'Manik Jatra' titled, 'Tajul Badshah' was staged by Moslemuddin Khan Shamproday from Khulna. 'Manik Jatra' is a distinct form of 'Jatrapala,' which involves celebrating the magnificence of the legendary Manik Pir (saint). The troupe, led by Moslemuddin Khan Gayen, is very popular in the Khulna region. The 'pala' narrates how Manik Pir



Moslemuddin Khan Shamproday from Khulna staged "Tajul Badshah" at the festival.

becomes a spiritual leader instead of becoming a king. The 'pala' also tells the story of Tajul Badshah, a man who received Manik Pir's blessings to outdo all the evil conspirators working against him. Sheikh Abdul Latif directed the 'pala'.

'Imam Jatra,' a performance with Islamic religious overtones, was staged on the sixth day of the festival. 'Imam Jatra' is performed in Gaibandha, Natore and Manikganj on the occasion of Muharram (the anniversary of the supreme and inimitable sacrifice which Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), the youngest grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made). Saidur Rahman Boyati was the 'Palakar' in the 'Imam Jatra' performed by Hashli Jubo Natyogosthi, Manikganj.

Performers in glitzy costumes, accompanied by a troupe of musicians, enacted the story of Karbala in the 'pala'.

The last day's performance, "Shanir Chakranto" represented the tradition of 'Dhap Jatra,' a form derived from the 'Dhap Kirtan' performance based on "Sri Krishna Kirtan." "Shanir Chakranto" portrays the myth of the god Shani, who comes down to earth to seek justice and reverence that was denied to him in heaven. Failing to attain King Chintamani's respect, Shani brings disaster to the latter's life.

Eminent folk researcher Shamsuzzaman Khan, Dr. Afsar Ahmed, Dr. Israfeel Shahin, Lutfar Rahman and Simon Zakaria were the members of the selection committee.



Performers of Hashli Jubo Natyogosthi, Manikganj in a scene from "Imam Jatra."

## International Dance Day celebration in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS), Barisal unit, held a cultural programme at the Barisal Central Shaheed Minar premises to celebrate the International Dance Day on April 26.

Members of BNSS and the audience started the programme with lighting candles.

Mina MD. Nazrul Islam, executive member of BNSS central committee, read out this year's message, circulated by the Barisal unit, on the occasion of International Dance Day.

Murad-Uz-Zaman Khan, divisional coordinator of BNSS, presided over the programme and Shawkat Hossain Hiron, Mayor of Barisal City Corporation, attended as chief guest.



Young dancers perform at the Shaheed Minar in Barisal.

## Fan fever is rising for debut of Avatar

In an old airplane hangar near the beach in Los Angeles, James Cameron has been working feverishly to complete a movie that may: (a) Change filmmaking forever, (b) Alter your brain, or (c) Cure cancer.

For certain expectant movie fans, the answer might as well be all of the above.

Eight months before its scheduled release on December 18, Cameron's "Avatar," a science-fiction thriller filmed with his own specially devised 3-D technology, is stirring up a kind of anticipation that until now had been reserved for, say, the Rapture.

That might foretell a hit on the order of Cameron's "Titanic," with \$1.8 billion in worldwide ticket sales.

Or it might just be a giant headache for 20th Century Fox, which is backing "Avatar" and will have to spend much of the year managing expectations for a film whose technological wizardry is presumed by more than a few to promise an experiential leap for audiences comparable to that of "The Jazz Singer," the arrival of Technicolor or an Obama campaign rally.

To date, neither a trailer nor even a still photo from the film, which tells the story of a disabled soldier who uses technology to inhabit an alien body on a distant planet, has been made public by Cameron or Fox.

But a number of enthusiasts who have been swapping notes on the message boards at IMDB.com claim to have already seen the movie -- in their dreams. "The special effects were mostly drawings and cartoons, but they looked 3-D still," wrote one "planetshane," whose particular dream involved a pirated copy of an early version.

"It was the best movie I had ever seen," the post continued.

Only a few weeks ago, Joshua Quittner, a technology writer for Time magazine, fed the frenzy when he reported feeling a strange yearning to return to the movie's mythical planet, Pandora, the morning after he was shown just 15 minutes of

the film. Cameron, Quittner wrote, theorised that the movie's 3-D action had set off actual "memory creation."

Executives and producers of the film declined to be interviewed. In a statement Fox said: "Jim Cameron is breaking new ground with this film. Like all movie fans, the studio is excited by the prospect of such an original piece of entertainment."

In a brief interview reported by The Associated Press in December, Cameron said he was worried that "Avatar" could not live up to the expectations that were building around it. "Whatever they think it's going to be, it's probably not," he said at the time about those who were speculating about the movie on the Internet and elsewhere.

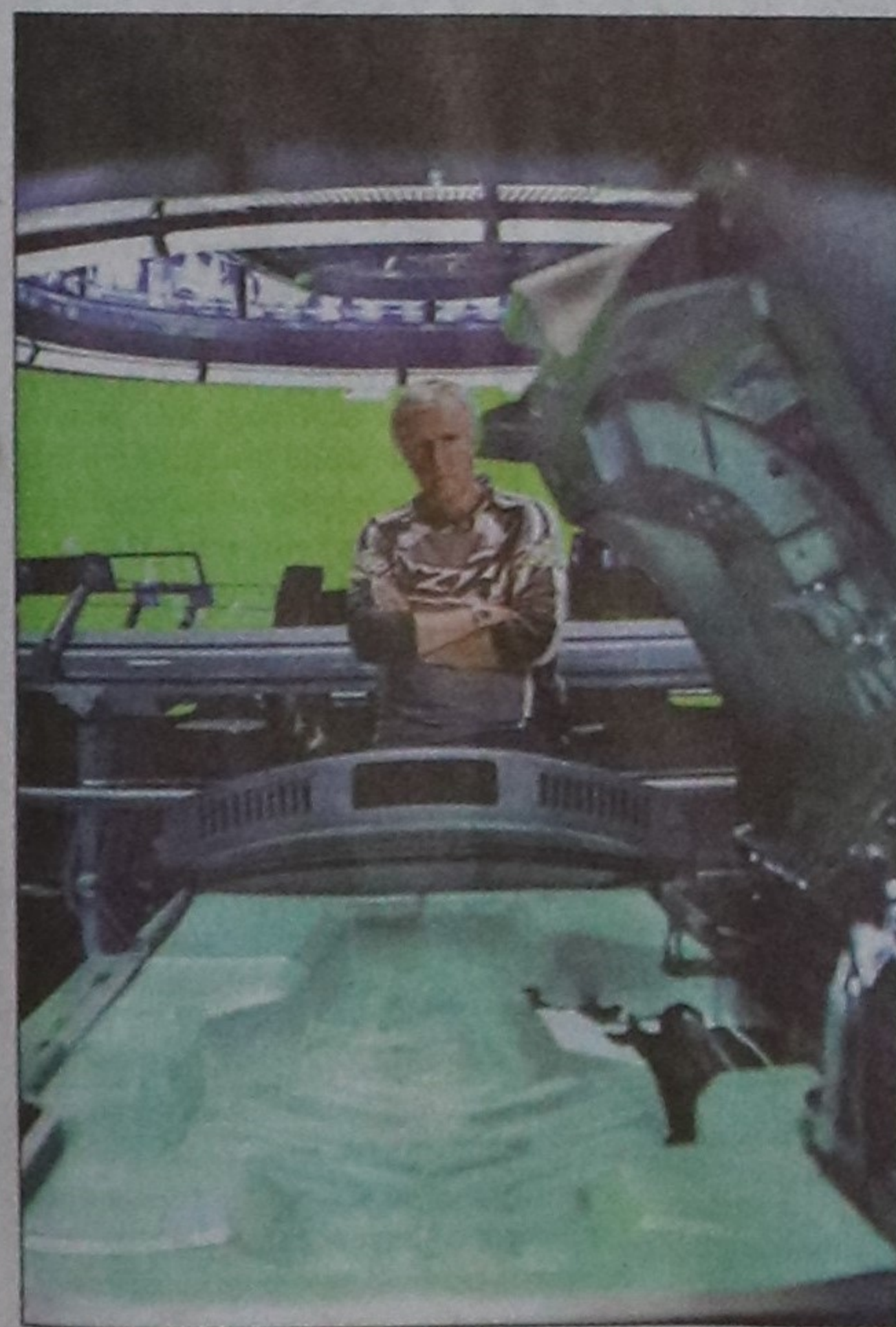
Yet Cameron has done his share to feed the hype with his repeated assurances that a coming wave of 3-D cinema (yes, it still requires glasses) would have the power to penetrate the brain in a way that movies never have.

Some fans believe that Cameron and his colleagues have finally crossed the "uncanny valley." That is a supposed point at which a viewer's responsiveness to a simulated human takes a sudden drop into revulsion as the image comes close to reality but strikes the watcher as being zombie-like, or not quite right.

At ShoWest, a convention of movie exhibitors, a few weeks ago, Cameron in a short promotional video compared watching "Avatar" to "dreaming with your eyes wide open." (It was a neat complement to those who have been viewing the movie in their sleep.)

But, sooner rather than later, an increasingly restless group of the fans would like to sample the real thing. And that presents a conundrum for Fox, which will be hard pressed to release a conventional, 2-D trailer online -- one of the most powerful ways to promote a movie these days -- without undercutting the promise of a transcendental 3-D experience.

Source: The New York Times



Director James Cameron on the set of his latest film, "Avatar," a 3-D space adventure to be released in December this year.

## INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY '09

## Seminar on inclusion of dance in primary curriculum

JAMIL MAHMUD

As part of the International Dance Day '09 celebration, organised by Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS), a seminar on the necessity of including dance in primary curriculum was held at the Seminar Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy yesterday. Professor Afsar Ahmed, Department of Drama and Dramatics, Jahangirnagar University, presented the keynote paper titled "Prathomik Shiksha Curriculum-e Nrityakala Shiksha Jaruri Keno?" at the seminar. Noted dance artistes and cultural personalities spoke on the topic.

Professor Ahmed's paper pointed out several integral aspects of primary education system in our country that are a must learn for children. He emphasised that learning should start with curiosity and wonder and not monotony. "If it doesn't then it will never create an impact on the minds of children, and they won't flourish to their full potential," Ahmed said at the seminar.

According to Professor Ahmed's paper, "Growing up to become a secular and culturally oriented individual, dance, along with other art forms like music, theatre and fine arts, are must learn for children and this education would create a sense of responsibility in them, enabling them to become the successors of an opulent cultural heritage."

It is often said that dance in our country does not have a rich past and as a subject of modern education system, dance is not so important. But Ahmed opposed the idea and pointed that dance is not only a medium of entertainment but rather there are many educational aspects of the art form.

Professor Ahmed referred to medieval works -- Ramai Pandit's "Shunyo Pura" and Jaidev's "Geet Govinda", and said that our predecessors enacted different aspects of agrarian life through dance and other art forms.

In our recent past, immediately after annual examination, many primary schools across the country used to evaluate students' craftsmanship through homework on pottery, woodwork etc. Though that practice has reduced significantly at present, and those were part of an additional subject of the primary curriculum, they helped in grooming children's latent talent.

In his paper, Professor Ahmed argued that dance should be included as a core subject in the education system rather than an additional subject.

In this regard he also emphasised on generating awareness on dance and said that mass communication is necessary to achieve that goal.

Noted dance artistes Laila Hasan, Rahiza Khanam Jhunu and Munmun Ahmed; human rights activist Sultana Kamal, Nazrul artiste and journalist Sadya Afsan Mallick, folk researcher Simon Zakaria and dance researcher Shaikh Mehedi Hasan discussed on the topic.

In her speech Sultana Kamal said, "As a human rights activist, I dream of a secular country. Dance, as an art form related to different aspects of life, can be a powerful medium to disseminate the message of secularism. In our perspective, the idea of inclusion of dance in primary education is bold and progressive."

Sadya Afsan Mallick stressed on learning with wonder and curiosity that can fortify contemporary education system for children. She pointed out that the inclusion of dance in primary level would be helpful to counter the so-called "cultural invasion." "Growing up, we learnt to dance and sing from mentors like Dr. Sanjida Khatun, Waheedul Haque, Sheikh Luthfur Rahman, Abdul Ahad and others, who instilled patriotism in us through the arts," said Mallick.

Simon Zakaria spoke on the different folk elements that are enacted through dance.

Minu Haque, vice president of BNSS, was the moderator of the seminar.



A Chinese dancer performs at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library on April 28. The performance was part of the inaugural programme of the three-day '3rd Swadesh Properties Dance Festival.' Nabonriya and Orenda Communication are the organisers of the festival.