

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Archive Inauguration
Organiser: Chhayanaat
Venue: Chhayanaat
Sanskriti Bhaban
Date: May 17
Time: 7pm



Solo Performance
Marking three decades of musical career
Artist: Shakila Zafar
Organiser: Amra Shurjomukhi
Venue: Main Auditorium, National Museum
Date and time: May 16 at 6pm



Cultural Show
Title: Lakrangana '09
Organiser: Sri Lanka Women's Association & High Commission of Sri Lanka
Venue: Infi School of Dhaka
Date: May 16
Time: 6:30pm



Photography Exhibition
Title: The Story of Tea Workers
Photographer: Philip Gain
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, Rd 15/A (new), Dhammond
Date: May 10-19
Time: 3-8pm



Re-enacting the 'Indigo Uprising'

Nagarik Natyangan Ensemble premieres "Neel-er pala"

NADIA SARWAT

He was forced to cultivate indigo in his land instead of paddy. He could have earned a golden harvest if he was allowed to sow paddy. He knows he can't recover the cost of cultivating indigo, let alone make any profit. Pushed to a dead end, he bursts in protest and refuses to sell his crops to the local 'Neelkuthi' (establishments of the English settlers who started the cultivation of indigo) and goes to the neighbouring village to get a reasonable price for the fruit of his labour but only to realise that all English indigo traders are united and neither of them will buy products from another's territory. Eventually, the desperate farmer, Mathur, has to sell his indigo at the cost determined by the English traders; in addition, he gets whipped for his insolence.

"Neel-er Pala," the latest play by Nagarik Natyangan Ensemble tells the story of a farmer in mid-twentieth century Bengal. England was going through the Industrial Revolution at that time. There was a huge demand for indigo, and a major share it came from the subcontinent. The English settlers forced the poor farmers to cultivate indigo instead of local crops. After many individual objections and consequent tortures, the farmers were finally united in protest against the British and decided that they would not cultivate indigo anymore. Through the story of Mathur, the play "Neel-er Pala" re-enacts the history of the uprising, known as "Neel Bidroho."

The play, which is the 13th production of the theatre troupe, was premiered at the National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on

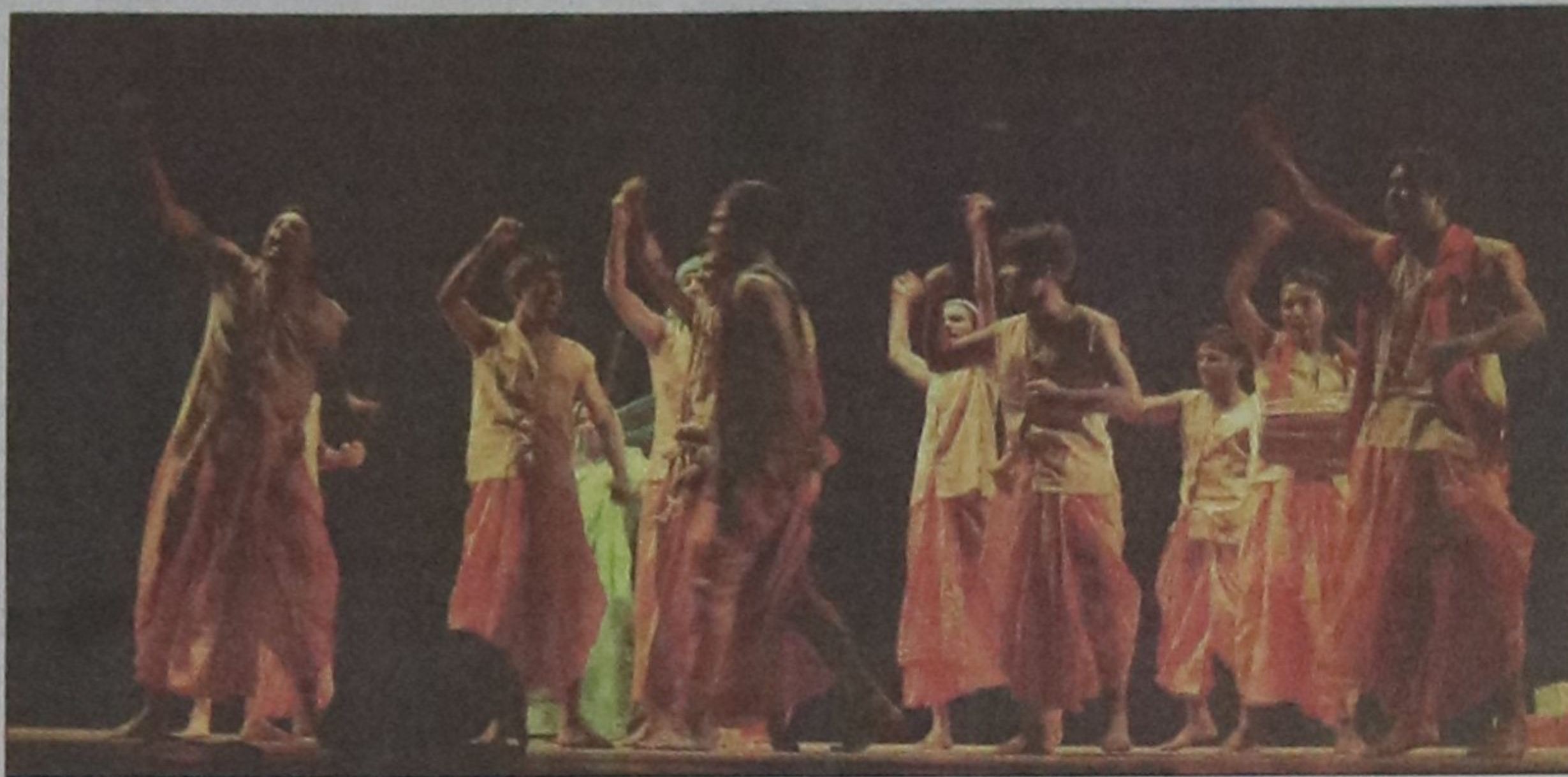


PHOTO: MUMIT M

"Neel-er Pala," staged by Nagarik Natyangan Ensemble, re-enacts the historic 'Indigo Uprising.'



May 13.

Noted theatre and TV personality Abul Kashem has directed the play, written by Chitto Ranjan Ghosh. Abul

Kashem welcomed the audience, saying, "A group of young and enthusiastic theatre activists, many of whom have no prior experience on

stage, are performing in the play. If the audience enjoys this production, their efforts would be encouraged." He also regretted that the president of the troupe, noted Tagore exponent Kalim Sharafi, general secretary Jamaluddin Hossain and vice president Raushan Ara Hossain could not be present at the event due to unavoidable reasons. However, M. Hamid, president, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and artist Hashem Khan were present as guests and spoke at the event.

The cast of the play included Rabi Babu, Taposh Saha, Chanchal Shaikat, Saddat Shohag, Sharmin Sraboni, Shefali Parveen Shathi, Taslima Alam Rupa, Shaon Sagir, S.I. Tokon and many other newcomers. Seasoned musician Bishwajit Roy has composed music for the play. Tarik Mahbub and Shaon Sagir designed the light and set respectively.

Talent hunt for underprivileged girls on Ekushey TV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

"Nachey Gaaney Number One," a talent hunt for underprivileged adolescent girls, will be aired tonight on Ekushey TV at 7:45pm. Jointly produced by BRAC and Ekushey TV, the talent hunt features 30 young girls, who have never received any formal education, from 59 districts of the country through a four-step selection round. Best two (one as the best singer and the other as best dancer) will be selected from these 30 competitors.

Music composer and lyricist Prince Mahmud, singer-musician Hamin Ahmed and pop singer Kaniz Suborna are



Judges (from left) Prince Mahmud, Kaniz Suborna and Hamin Ahmed on the show.

judges for the music section while film actors Anjana, Aruna Biswas and dance artiste Sohel Rahman are judging the dance segment. The audience can also vote for the contestants, starting from the SMS round, which will feature performances by the best ten.



PHOTO: STAR

Purnima Rani Sarkar (left), a local 'kabial' (rhymester) performs at a 'battle of words' with 'kabial' Dinesh Chandra Sarkar at the central Town Club premises, Ranishankail upazilla, under the Takurgaon district. The Town Club was the organiser of the programme featuring the indigenous art form, 'Kabi Gaan' -- held on May 10 to 12. The programme drew an audience of nearly thousands.

Dancing away...

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

Learning salsa, rock n' roll, hip-hop and traditional dance has become all the rage these days in Delhi. No wonder a large crowd turned out at a performance of these dances recently. Hugely popular were the sensuous salsa dances, while the peppy hip-hop, rock n' roll and Bollywood numbers too drew rounds of applause.

Other dance forms were jive, swing/jitterbug, rumba, hip-hop and "Chhau" (attributed to Orissa). The latter, which is very popular in the eastern states of West Bengal, Jharkand and Orissa, originated as a martial art form and contains vigorous movements and leaps. The "Chhau" dance was performed complete with swords, and attracted much attention. The other dances were set to popular Hindi and English numbers such as "Kabhi kabhi Aditi," "Fashion," "Lucky lips," "Tere bin marjawa," "Mambo No 5" and Michael Jackson numbers. Says Nanda Kundu the founder of Kiran Dance and Rhythm, which organised the show, "Nowadays, such dances have become hugely popular as age is no bar and people of different fitness levels can learn this art."

The young audience enjoyed the show thoroughly as was evident from the rounds of applause after each piece. The elders at the performance, however, grumbled away at the "amateur and tacky performance," particularly the large gaps between the dances. Whatever the views, the young ones had a field day at the show -- and ultimately it is their voice that counts.



Performers at the dance programme in Delhi.

Cannes opens with an Up moment of animated fun

The Cannes film festival lightened up and animated storytelling achieved heavyweight status as the Pixar comedy "Up" kicked off the world's most exclusive movie gathering.

Wednesday's opening was full of levity, both literal and figurative. Before the nighttime premiere, Pixar chief John Lasseter, "Up" director Pete Docter and producer Jonas Rivera made a public appearance outside the historic Carlton Hotel. A pier was festooned with a miniature wooden house attached to a colossal cluster of multicoloured floating balloons.

As a crush of photographers snapped away, the animators loomed over the small house and mimicked climbing around on it in a publicity stunt aimed at attracting worldwide attention for the movie, opening May 29, about an old man who sets off for adventure by airlifting his home with balloons.

But there was a serious side to their film premiering at such a prestigious venue.

Docter, who also directed "Monsters, Inc.," said the choice of "Up" as the kickoff film was a leap forward for animated storytelling. He said that Pixar has struggled to prove the form was more than children's theatre. "When we think of Cannes, I always think Alfred Hitchcock and all of these terrific directors."



Pixar comedy "Up" kicked off Cannes, the world's most exclusive movie gathering, last Wednesday.

"Yes, 'The Birds,' 'Pulp Fiction'..." chimed in producer Rivera. "What are we doing here?" Docter joked.

He added more seriously that it has taken years for the medium to become accepted as more than just a marketing device for toys and merchandise -- though he realises not everyone who produces animation takes it seriously.

"That's up to those of us in the animation business. It's up to us to raise the intelligence level of the work we're doing, so people will look at it differently. It's easy to look at animation and say, 'Oh, it's for kids,' because a lot of it is kind of lacklustre."

"Up," apparently, isn't one of those. The audience of international filmmakers, critics and studio execs notoriously one of the most hardened crowds for any new movie took in the 3-D film, each one wearing special glasses to create the effect. The slapstick that kids will be sure to love was offset by several tearjerker moments. Sniffles and coughs could be heard throughout the hushed Grand Theatre Lumiere.

As the credits came to an end, the crowd was on its feet applauding.

In its 62nd year, a festival that occasionally suffers from an overdose of grimness found happy note to start on.

Source: Internet

Martin Scorsese to direct biopic of Frank Sinatra

AP, Los Angeles

Martin Scorsese will tell Frank Sinatra's life story on film.

The Academy Award-winning director of "The Departed" will direct "Sinatra," the first feature film about Ol' Blue Eyes' life, Universal Pictures and Mandalay Pictures said last Wednesday.

The film will be "an unconventional biopic," said Mandalay Pictures President Cathy Shulman, who is co-producing the film with Mandalay Chairman Peter Guber.

"It's not a cradle-to-the-grave traditional portrait of the consecutive events in a man's life," Shulman said. "Instead it's more of a collage and, in many ways, it will feel like an album itself. It's a collection of various moments and impressions in his life and

"My father had great admiration for the talent of the people he chose to work with, and the talented people who worked with my father had great admiration for him," she said, adding, "to me that this paradigm continues with Marty Scorsese at the helm of the Sinatra film."

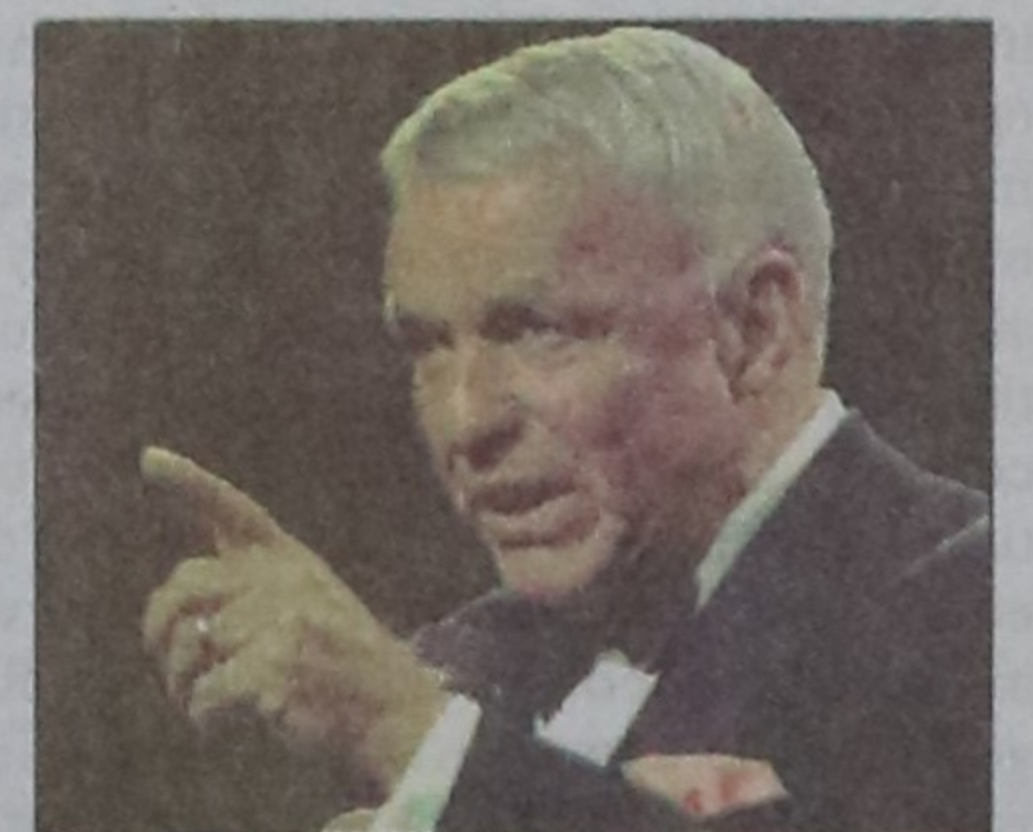
An iconic entertainer, Sinatra was known for his smooth voice and even smoother personal style. He was part of the Rat Pack that included Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford.

Sinatra "was indisputably the 20th century's greatest singer of popular song," according to Rolling Stone.

"Not only did his freely interpretive approach pave the way for the idiosyncrasies of rock singing, but with his character a mix of tough-guy cool and romantic vulnerability, he became the first true pop idol, a superstar who through his music established a persona audi-



Martin Scorsese



Frank Sinatra

together we hope they'll tell the full story and present full themes."

Oscar-nominated screenwriter Phil Alden Robinson ("Field of Dreams") has spent "at least a year buried in 30,000 pages of research" to write the screenplay, Schulman said.

No casting decisions have been made and no production date has been determined, she said, adding: "It's everyone's hope that this will be a movie that comes to the screen shortly."

It took two years to secure the rights to Sinatra's life and music, Shulman said. Warner Music Group and the Sinatra estate are partners on the project.

Having Scorsese bring "Sinatra" to the screen "seems like a match made in heaven," she said.

Sinatra's daughter, Tina, said it was "personally pleasing" to know Scorsese would oversee the celluloid version of her father's life story.

ences found compelling and true," the magazine says on its Web site.

Sinatra, who died in 1998, performed on more than 1,400 musical recordings, was awarded 31 gold records and earned 10 Grammys. He also appeared in 58 films and won a supporting-actor Oscar for 1953's "From Here to Eternity." In 1971, he was presented with another Oscar: the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.

Sinatra's story has been told before on the small screen. A 1992 made-for-TV movie, "Sinatra," starred Philip Casnoff in the title role. It won a Golden Globe for best miniseries and an Emmy for director James Sadwith. Ray Liotta played Sinatra in the 1998 HBO film, "The Rat Pack."

At one time, Scorsese was in talks to direct a Dean Martin biopic, but that project never came to fruition.