

WHAT'S
ON THIS
WEEK

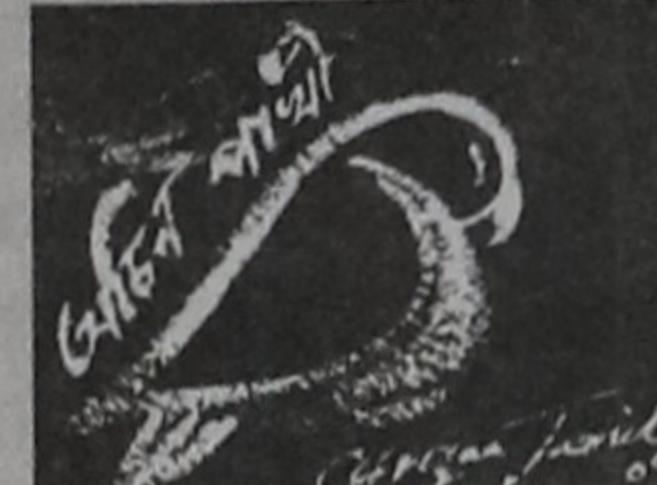
Archive
Inauguration
Organiser: Chhayanat
Venue: Chhayanat
Sangskriti Bhawan
Date: May 17
Time: 7pm



Films on Spanish Civil War
Organiser: Zahir Rahan Film Society & Goethe-Institut
Venue: GIB, H 10, Rd 9, Dhamondi
Date: May 17-21 from 3pm onwards
May 17: Raise Ravens, The City of No Limits. For Whom the Bell Tolls



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Ochin Pakhi
Artist: Afroz Jamil
Venue: Radius Centre, Bay's Galleria (5th Floor), 57, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1
Date: May 15-31
Time: 11am-1pm (Fridays 3-11pm)



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



Untold woes in the scenic tea gardens

Philip Gain's solo photography exhibition at Drik



Though citizens of Bangladesh, the tea-pickers community continue to remain socially excluded, low paid, overwhelmingly illiterate and deprived.

JAMIL MAHMUD

A lush tea garden with towering shade trees is always a respite for the eyes and senses. The foliage obviously induces a sense of peace and tranquility. But underneath the veneer of this beauty and serenity, remain stories of untold agony and muted cries.

The ongoing solo photography exhibition by Philip Gain tries to uncover stories from the communities of tea-pickers working at the gardens in different parts of the country. The exhibition titled, "The Story of Tea Workers," is on at Drik, Dhamondi.

The history of these communities in Bangladesh does not go that far back. Over 150 years ago the British companies brought their forefathers to the Sylhet region from different parts of India like Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Initially they were put into the Labour Line (residential

area for tea-pickers) that alienated them from their roots as well as from the local people.

Of the 163 tea gardens in Bangladesh, 90 are in the Maulibazar district. As a result, a great number of tea-pickers live in this district. Most of the tea estates in the country are on government land -- a colonial legacy.

In most of the gardens, women are well ahead as the tealeaf-pickers. A female tea-picker works 7/8 hours a day on an average, during a 30/35-year career. They spend most of their work hours standing under the merciless burning sun, and getting soaked in torrential rains. Harsh working conditions have severe consequences on their health, which escalates rapidly once they retire.

After a hard day's work, tea-pickers assemble at authorised collectors' where the tea leaves are weighed. A worker earns Tk 32.50 per day, according to a report in 2008. A tea-picker owns a house in the Labour Line. If a husband and wife work in the same garden they get one house.



In winter, the workers enjoy a comparatively leisurely time, as it is the pruning season. Tea plants have to be pruned to keep at chest level, otherwise they can grow as high as 50 feet.

Each tea-picker, in almost servitude, represents the face of oppressed. Their children's future is corded to theirs. The child of a tea-picker has no option but to follow the footsteps of his/her parents.

The story of Ratna tea garden in Maulibazar is particularly heart-rending. The garden was closed in 2004 and left behind by its owners. All workers at the estate suddenly found themselves jobless. Some of them were eventually forced to beg.

Though citizens of Bangladesh, the tea-pickers community continue to remain socially excluded, low paid, overwhelmingly illiterate and deprived.

The exhibition will continue till May 19. As part of the exhibition, a 45-minute documentary on the tea-pickers has been screened at the venue. The documentary has been jointly directed by Ronald Halder and Philip Gain.

Charity on birthday

Fan gifts wedding wows to Madhuri

Madhuri Dixit's birthday this year offered her fan Pappu Sardar another chance to display his philanthropic side by doing something unusual.

Owner of a popular chaat shop in Sakchi, Pappu solemnised the marriage of a Muslim couple on May 15. He bore all the expenses of the wedding held at Cheshire Home in Sundernagar. "I have been celebrating Madhuri's birthday every year since 1996. But this marriage has been the most special gift to my sister (Madhuri). The bride belonged to a poor family and had no money to get married. I decided to help them. My condition was that the marriage would be today. I know if Madhuri came to know of this, she would be

happy," Pappu said, recalling his meeting with the actress in Mumbai two years ago.

Pappu also distributed sweets and cakes among mentally challenged children at Cheshire Home. The celebrations started with a procession in Sakchi.

A special cake named Madhuri Nagar was cut today. Dhalbhum sub-divisional officer Karthik Kumar Prabhat was the chief guest on the occasion. A 5ft-4inch replica of Madhuri decked in lehenga choli was also made to add to the celebrations. A havan was organised where Pappu's family members and friends prayed for the actress.

Source: Internet



Tagore birth anniversary observed in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

The birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore was observed in Jhenidah recently.

The day was observed at Zilla Shilpkala Academy (ZSA) chaired by ZSA president, Jhenidah Deputy Commissioner Roma Rani Roy, while AL lawmaker Abdul Hye

was present as chief guest and Jhenidah sadar upazila chairman Kanak Kanti Das; additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sheikh Rafiqul Islam; acting police super Nazrul Islam were present as special guests. Besides, elite of the town attended the celebrations.

At the end of the programme, artists performed songs and dances on the occasion.

Andrew Lloyd Webber eyes future for Susan Boyle

She "dreamed a dream" on the TV show "Britain's Got Talent," but could Susan Boyle be living that dream as the star of a West End show?

It's a possibility, according to a spokeswoman for Andrew Lloyd Webber, the award-winning composer and producer of more than a dozen musicals including "The Phantom of the Opera" and "Cats."

Lloyd Webber recently bumped into Simon Cowell, the music and TV producer behind "Britain's Got Talent" and "American Idol," and "discussions took place" about future possibilities for Boyle, said the spokeswoman.

"He's an admirer of her talent," she said. "There's certainly been no firm offer made (but) discussions about Susan have been had."

The 47-year old from West Lothian in Scot-



land, who revealed she had "never been kissed," surprised the audience and judges when she belted out the classic "I Dreamed a Dream" from the musical "Les Misérables."

The performance was a hit on YouTube and made her famous around the world.

The Sun newspaper in Britain reported last Friday that Webber offered Boyle a role in London's West End, but the spokeswoman said that is inaccurate and that no offer has been made.

"She's a great fan of my shows," Lloyd Webber was quoted as saying to The Sun. "If she wanted to be in one, well, it could happen. It would have to be the right role. Maybe I know what it could be, but I'm not telling. She's got a great future."

Source: CNN

Tahsan on The Total Music



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Music based show "The Total Music" will be aired on Ekushey TV this evening at 6:30 pm. Tonight's episode features popular singer Tahsan in a segment titled, 'New Arrival.' The show will also feature a new song by the vocalist-musician.

"The Total Music" also includes several interesting segments featuring a popular international chartbuster (in the segment 'Music around the world'), brief interview of a popular artiste, new music videos, top five recent Bangla songs and more. There is also a quiz and an SMS segment for the audience. 'Rockumentary' is a segment where documentaries on rock bands or artistes are features. 'Old is Gold' is another interesting segment of the show.

"The Total Music" is produced by Prashanto Das and hosted by Bhabna.

Scorsese hits Cannes with plan for restored films

AP, Cannes

Martin Scorsese has plans to get restored films in front of a larger audience.

The director of "Raging Bull," "Goodfellow" and "The Departed" announced an initiative Friday at the Cannes Film Festival for wider distribution of movies restored by Scorsese's World Cinema Foundation.

The foundation plans to make films from developing countries available online through its Web site and via Netflix and iTunes. Films eventually will make their way into boxed sets from the Criterion Collection DVD label.

Scorsese said it was critical to restore deteriorating movies from around the world so audiences besieged with Hollywood action flicks such as "The Terminator" movies have a chance

to view little-seen classics.

"We can make a difference," Scorsese said. "If we make these films available, there's going to be someone out there who's going to be affected by them. If we hit one out of a hundred or one out of a thousand, we've done something, and maybe there aren't that many 'Terminators' afterward."

The foundation has four restored films playing this year at Cannes, including the 1969 Egyptian tale "The Night of Counting the Years" and the 1936 Mexican picture "The Wave."

The group is trying to do the same for movies from developing parts of the world as Scorsese's Film Foundation, which aims to preserve U.S. cinema heritage. The Film Foundation is showing a restored version of the 1948 classic "The Red Shoes" at Cannes.

