

### WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Art Exhibition**  
Title: 18th National Art Exhibition  
Venue: National Art Gallery, Shilpkala Academy  
Date: May 24-June 7  
Time: 11-8pm (3-8pm on Fridays)



**Theatre Festival**  
Organiser: Bangla Theatre  
Play: Che'r Cycle  
Venue: Studio Theatre, Shilpkala Academy  
Date: June 4-8  
Time: 6:30pm



**Musical Soiree**  
Organiser: Dakhini Rabindra Sangeet  
Venue: National Music & Dance Centre, Shilpkala Academy  
Date: June 13  
Time: 7pm

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**Group Art Exhibition**  
Title: Appointment 2009  
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H 26, Rd 3, Dhamondi  
Date: May 28-June 12  
Time: 12-8pm

JOINT MEMBER  
APPOINTMENT  
2009

## Pulling at the heartstrings

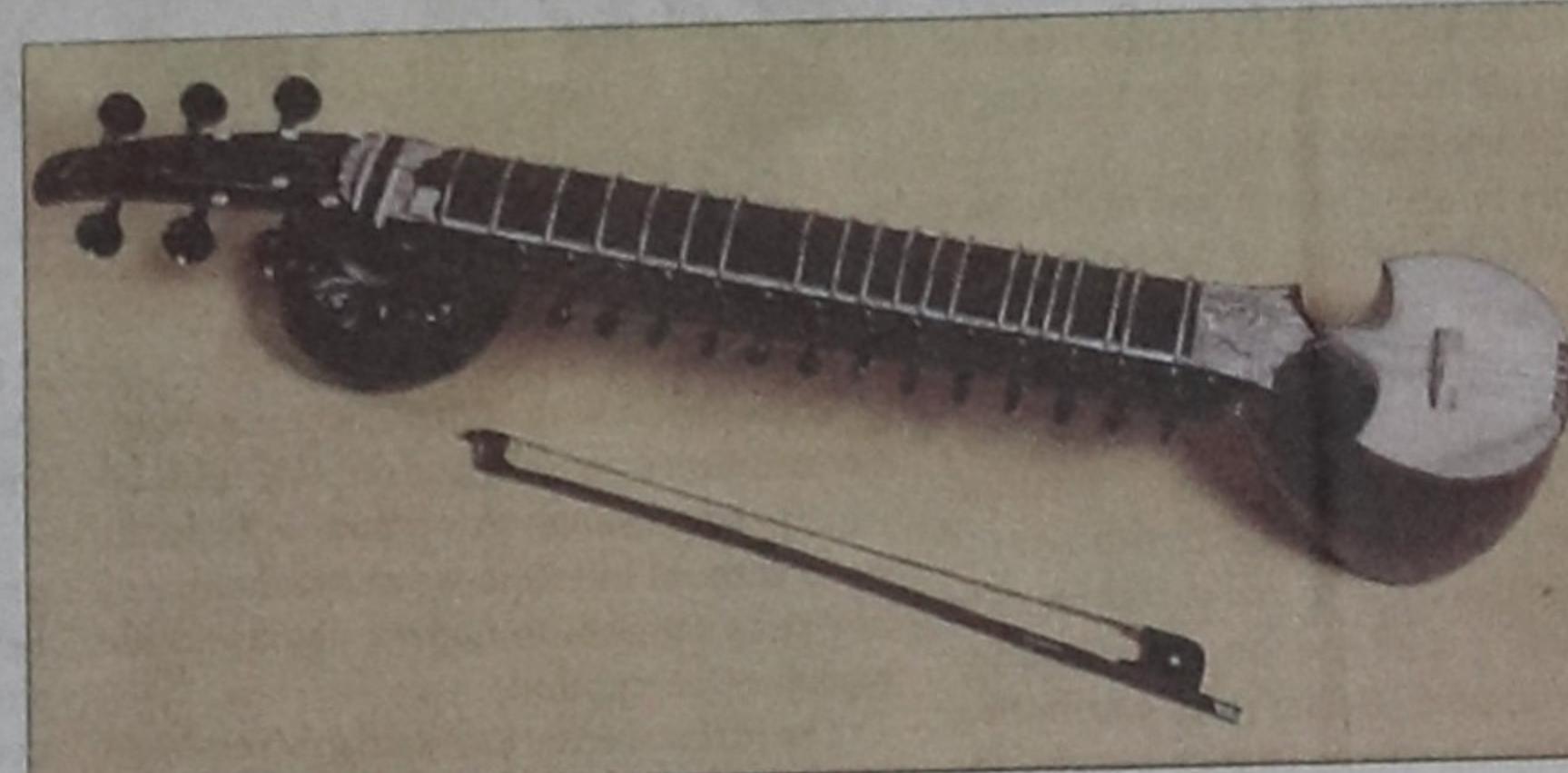
### Esraj recital by Buddhadeb Das

KARIM WAHEED

'Esraj,' sibling of 'dilruba' (literally meaning 'robber of the heart') and 'sarangi' (evocative of a 'hundred colours'), is an instrument that possesses the ability to pull at the strings of the coldest of hearts. In the hands of a seasoned musician, Esraj can be like an effusive lover -- providing moments of tranquillity and conjuring a storm of emotions. There has to be a reason why Tagore is believed to have been an ardent admirer of this instrument (it is often the accompanying instrument of choice for Rabindra Sangeet singing). Esraj requires the most serious of connoisseurs; only absolute silence will do. Justifiably, the audience at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts on June 4 evening were getting annoyed at the otherwise tolerable camera shutter sounds.

The performer: Buddhadeb Das, from Shantiniketan (the best known exponent of the instrument at present). The object of everyone's affections: his esraj.

A young instrument by sub-



continental terms (being only about 200 years old), esraj is notoriously difficult to play and tune. It's traditionally been used primarily for accompanying singers (shadowing the vocalist's improvisations), but in recent times it has become recognised as a solo instrument used for full 'raaga' development. What makes esraj (or, for that matter, its siblings -- dilruba and sarangi) unique is that it closely resembles the sound of the human voice -- able to imitate vocal ornaments such as 'gamak' (shake) and 'meend' (sliding movements).

Esraj has a medium sized sitar-like neck with 20 heavy metal frets. The neck holds on a long wooden rack of 12-15 sympathetic strings. Four main strings

are bowed. The bow is known as 'gaz'. Buddhadeb Das started off with a rendition of "Raaga Puriya Dhanashree." Initially, it was just esraj alone; after some 15/20 minutes, tabla joined in. Elaborating with 'alap' and 'jod,' the rendition -- within a brief duration -- demonstrated the eclectic gamut of the instrument and the musician's hold on it. During the two-hour performance, Das' esraj also rendered "Jhinhott" and "Bhairavi." By the time the performance wrapped up, the audience seemed intoxicated -- after effects of having heartstrings pulled.

Prior to this, Das had performed a solo recital, organised by 'Shadthona' last month.

## Child actors stage Gaan-er Pakhi in Tangail



Child actors of Sonar Tori Cultural School stage the play "Ga'an-er Pakhi."

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A lively cultural function and a play, performed by children, were staged in Tangail last Friday.

Sonar Tori Cultural School and Anandapath Shishu Bikash Bidyalay in Tangail jointly organised the function at the former's campus in the town.

At the function, child artists of Sonar

Tori Cultural School staged the play "Ga'an-er Pakhi," an adaptation of a Hans Christian Andersen story by Abul Momen.

Teachers of Sonar Tori Cultural School, Bidyut Chandra Saha and Sujan Ahmed, did the background music for the play.

Students of Anandapath Shishu Bikash Bidyalay performed songs at the venue. Renowned economist Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya attended the event.

function and spoke as the chief guest.

Among others, Nasrin Awal Mintu, Debapriya's wife Dr. Irina Bhattacharya, former principals Sikander Hayat and Shamsunnahar Shanti, Syed Aminul Haque Kaiser and Sanjida Yasmin (director and principal of Sonar Tori Cultural School and Anandapath Shishu Bikash Bidyalay respectively) attended the event.

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## Houston, ready for a comeback



Pop diva Whitney Houston's first album in seven years is set for release in August, her record company has announced.

The new record, which is being produced by Akon and the Black Eyed Peas' Will.i.am, is as yet untitled.

In recent years, Houston hit the headlines for her divorce from singer Bobby Brown and stints in rehab.

In February, she performed at a pre-Grammy Awards party and presented a prize at the US ceremony.

The 45-year-old singer, whose self-titled debut record became a hit in 1985, has sold some 170 million records around the globe.

She has won a slew of awards during her career, including six Grammys and 23 American Music Awards.

Her 2002 album entitled "Just Whitney," failed to generate much interest though.

Source: Internet

## Drama serial Bhangon on Desh TV

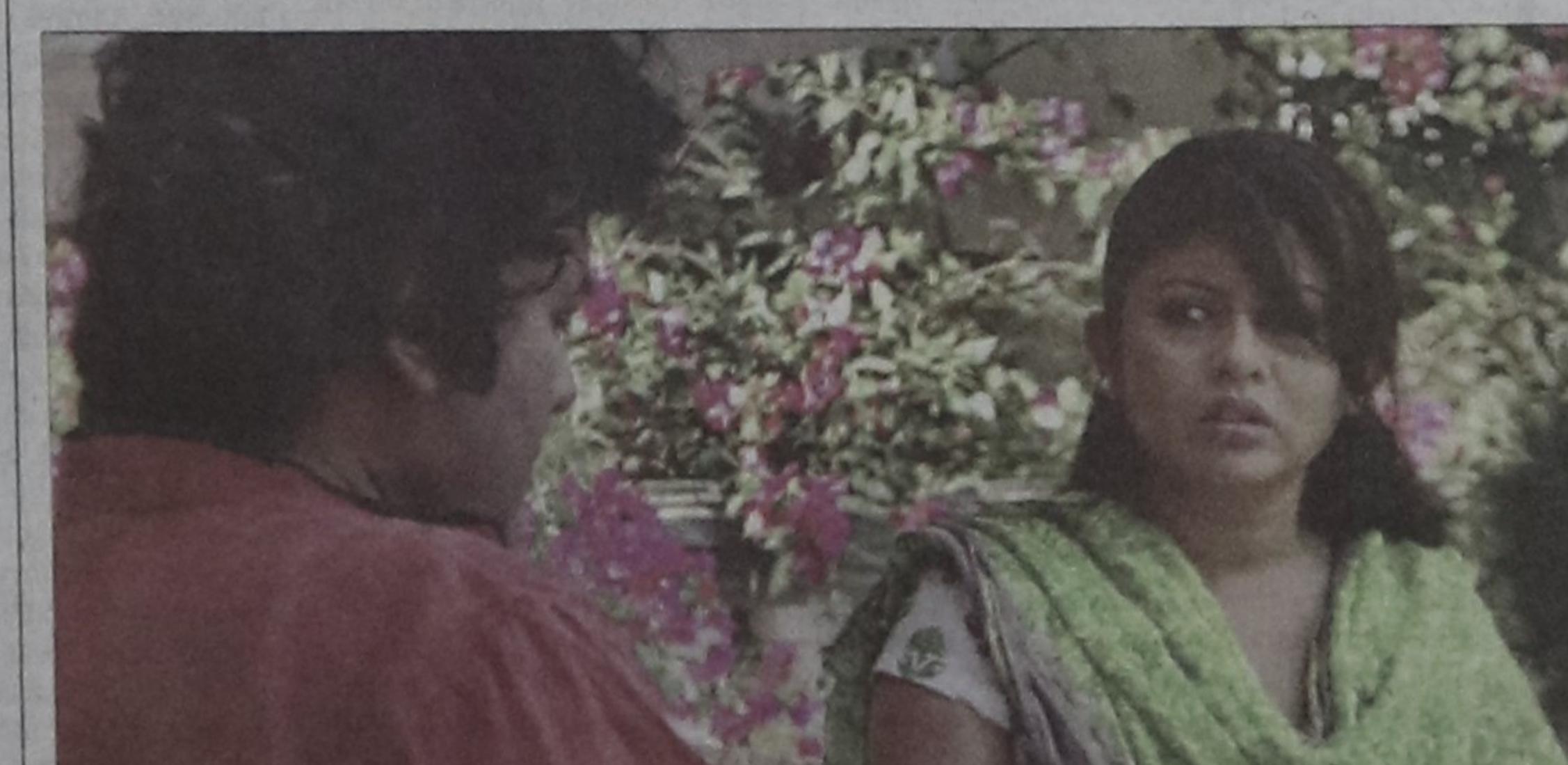
CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama serial "Bhangon" will be aired tonight on Desh TV at 9:30pm. Written by Touhin Hasan and directed by Parvez Amin, the serial is aired every Sunday and Monday.

At the centre of the serial is an octogenarian man, Rahman. Once a government official, he has been bedridden for twenty years because of paralysis. All his savings went to building a house and he is now cared for by his sons. Mobin is the eldest, who is now the decision-maker of the family. A middle-aged man with a strong personality, Mobin has no child. Shafiq,

the second son, has been missing since his wife Nira, married his younger brother, Rafiq. Rafiq and Nira left the country, leaving Topu and Tithi -- Nira's children with her former husband -- behind. Mobin looks after Topu and Tithi as his own children. Asgar, the youngest son of the family is a workaholic, which causes issues in his conjugal life. Romana is the only daughter of Rahman, who is married to a well of family. Romana often visits the family and likes to lecture her brothers on taking care of their father.

The cast includes Afroza Banu, Azad Abdul Kalam, Chandni, Hillol, Tinni, Shojol, Elora Gauhar, Shamsul Alam Bakul and others.



Chandni in a scene from "Bhangon."

## "Slumdog" child star to publish life story



AP, London

One of the child stars of the Oscar-winning movie "Slumdog Millionaire" is to publish her life story.

Transworld Publishers says Rubina Ali's book will tell the story of her life in the shantytown where she grew up.

Danny Boyle cast 9-year-old Rubina in the film about an orphan from Mumbai's slums who wins a quiz show.

The filmmakers set up a trust aimed at ensuring that the children who acted in the movie get proper homes and a decent education but relations have grown tense amid disagreements over money.

Madeline Toy at Transworld Publishers said Friday that "Slumdog Dreaming: My Journey to the Stars" will be published in Britain in mid-July.

She said all royalties will go to Ali and Médecins du Monde, a French medical aid organisation.