

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Art Exhibition
Title: 18th National Art Exhibition
Venue: National Art Gallery, Shilpakala Academy
Date: May 24-June 12
Time: 11-8pm (3-8pm on Fridays)



Exhibition
Title: Sound of Weaving
Organiser: Anjans
Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattashali Gallery, National Museum
Date: June 8-16



Musical Soiree
Organiser: Dakkhini Rabindra Sangeetangan
Venue: National Music & Dance Centre, Shilpakala Academy
Date: June 13
Time: 7pm

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

APPOINTMENT
2009

The fading rhythm of handloom

Anjan's exhibition at National Museum



PHOTO: MUMIT M

The exhibition, titled "Sound of Weaving," is on at the Nalinikanta Bhattashali gallery, National Museum.

KARIM WAHEED

Much has been written on the glorious past of Bengali (particularly Dhaka and surrounding regions) handloom. Locally produced cotton and advanced skills of 'taanti' (weavers) attained worldwide acclaim in the form of 'Muslin' during the Mughal era. But where does Bangladeshi handloom stand now? Once known as the "Manchester of Bangladesh" for its handloom textiles, Narsingdi district is going through a very difficult phase. About 70 percent of the handloom units in the area have closed down over the last three decades, according to statistics. More and more power-looms are taking over. Despite bleak conditions, Bangladeshi handloom is striving to survive in some areas -- Narsingdi being one. Devoted weavers and traders, with the support of some local fashion houses (like Aarong, Anjan's, Aranya and Jatra) are trying to popularise hand-woven fabrics.

To generate interest in the handloom industry and inform on the production process, Anjan's is holding an exhibition, titled "Sound of Weaving" (concept and suggestions by Chandra Shekhar Saha and Habibur Rahman) at the Nalinikanta Bhattashali gallery, National Museum.

The exhibition traces the initiation of handloom in Narsingdi region. Supposedly, use of 'thak-thaki' (named so for

the sound it produces) looms and 'charka' (spinning wheel) in the area started in pre-Mughal/ Mughal era. The Jogi community (who were later known as 'Nath') became skilled weavers during the era. Weaver villages grew in the 'char' (river shoals) on the Old Brahmaputra. Horizontal ground looms evolved into pit looms. Handloom factories emerged subsequently in areas like Madhabdi. In the 1600s 'Aaranga', a port on the Old Brahmaputra River, became a major trade centre -- exclusively boosting the local handloom industry. Flows of the Old Brahmaputra have withered, taking Aaranga into oblivion. Comparative study reveals the current state of handloom industry in the region. Handloom units in different areas have drastically diminished. Cases in point:

Meherpara:	5,000 units (before)-150 units (now)
Radhanagar:	2,000 units (before)-100 units (now)
Anandit:	300 units (before)-none (now)
Meskan:	1,000 units (before)-none (now)
Nilakhya:	4,000 units (before)-300 (now)

Four handlooms have been set up at the centre of the gallery. Seasoned weavers are at work. Yarn processing, which includes shedding, picking, battenning and taking-up operations, is also on display. Curious visitors, closely observing the process, were seen making queries. The exhibition, seemingly, has attained its objective.

Mostly, cotton fabrics are on display. Some plain and some carefully adorned rolls of fabrics with indigenous motifs -- in vibrant crimson, regal purple, lush green and more hues -- are suspended from the ceiling.

Anjan's has also honoured three individuals on the occasion. Swahadeb Bishwas (of Tatakanda village, Narsingdi) has been honoured for his dogged determination. Threatened with rising prices of raw materials, aggression of power-looms and hardship day in day out, Bishwas' lone pitloom is still on.

Mohammad Sirajuddin has been recognised for his mastery over the Jacquard loom (used in manufacturing fabrics with complex patterns). Locally known as the "design master," Sirajuddin has been working tirelessly in Narsingdi and Pabna for over 70 years to develop motifs and patterns used in hand-woven fabric.

Mohammad Zahurul Haque has been lauded for his innovative ideas and endeavours to popularise handloom. In 1992 he started with renting two handlooms at his village Amdia. In the last 17 years, Haque hasn't given in to the lure of power-looms. His passion for handloom continues, as he develops new designs and patterns.

The exhibition (ending on June 16) can be an eye-opener to many. More such initiatives are necessary to reinstate the dwindling handloom industry in Bangladesh.

Tête-à-tête

"I am a workaholic"

-- Sara Zaker



"My daughter Sriya says that I always have an agenda," says a laughing Sara Zaker on a relatively relaxed day. The grouse of her family is that the media personality never takes a break.

In a freewheeling interview with The Daily Star, she took time off to talk about her professional and personal life. Excerpts from the interview:

The Daily Star (TDS): Any humorous experience you want to share?

Sara: This happened in Phuket few years ago. I went smack into a swimming pool at a hotel. Was I embarrassed! Fortunately the hotel staff was very courteous and saw me out of the water.

When my son Iresh was living abroad, he'd call me often and talk to me in a fake voice. It was a game we both enjoyed. Once, I had a call, which I thought was from him and told him to quit joking. Much to my discomfiture, he turned out to be someone else.

TDS: What memories regarding your profession remain etched in your mind?

Sara: While shooting for the film "Antarjatra," the filmmaker duo Tareq and Catherine Masud gave me a makeover. They gave me brown contact lenses (I have green eyes) and a new haircut. I resembled my sister Sajeda. Even Catherine was surprised when she saw Sajeda in New York.

TDS: What makes you tick?

Sara: I am a workaholic. My work keeps me going. I enjoy working for causes such as education, public health and child rights, among others. In theatre I combine the roles of actor and director.

TDS: Have you slowed down?

Sara: Well people think that I have opted out of theatre.

TDS: What are your favourite colours?

Sara: I usually go for black and red. In addition, I opt for khaki and beige. I feel comfortable in these colours; I cannot carry off pastel colours. I also like earth colours.

TDS: Who are your role models?

Sara: I am a great admirer of social activists such as Hamida Hussain, Shireen Haque, Ayesha Khanam and the late Salma Sobhan. The social aspect of my work dates back to 1973.

TDS: What/who inspires you?

Sara: My husband Aly Zaker and I complement each other. We have common interests in advertising, theatre and social causes. The inspiration comes largely from our social venture.

TDS: What do you do in your free time?

Sara: After a day's work, I like to watch movies, eat out and enjoy 'adda.'

TDS: Do you believe in the zodiac signs and palm-readings?

Sara: I am gullible but I don't go to fortune-tellers because I feel I might fall into a trap.

TDS: Future plans?

Sara: My dream is to be No 1 in the social communications arena. I would like to remain in theatre. This medium has become a part of me and I see my future in theatre.

Indian theatre icon Habib Tanvir passes away

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Playwright Habib Tanvir, a legend of Indian theatre who brought folk drama on the stage, died on June 8, bringing about the end of an era. He was 85.

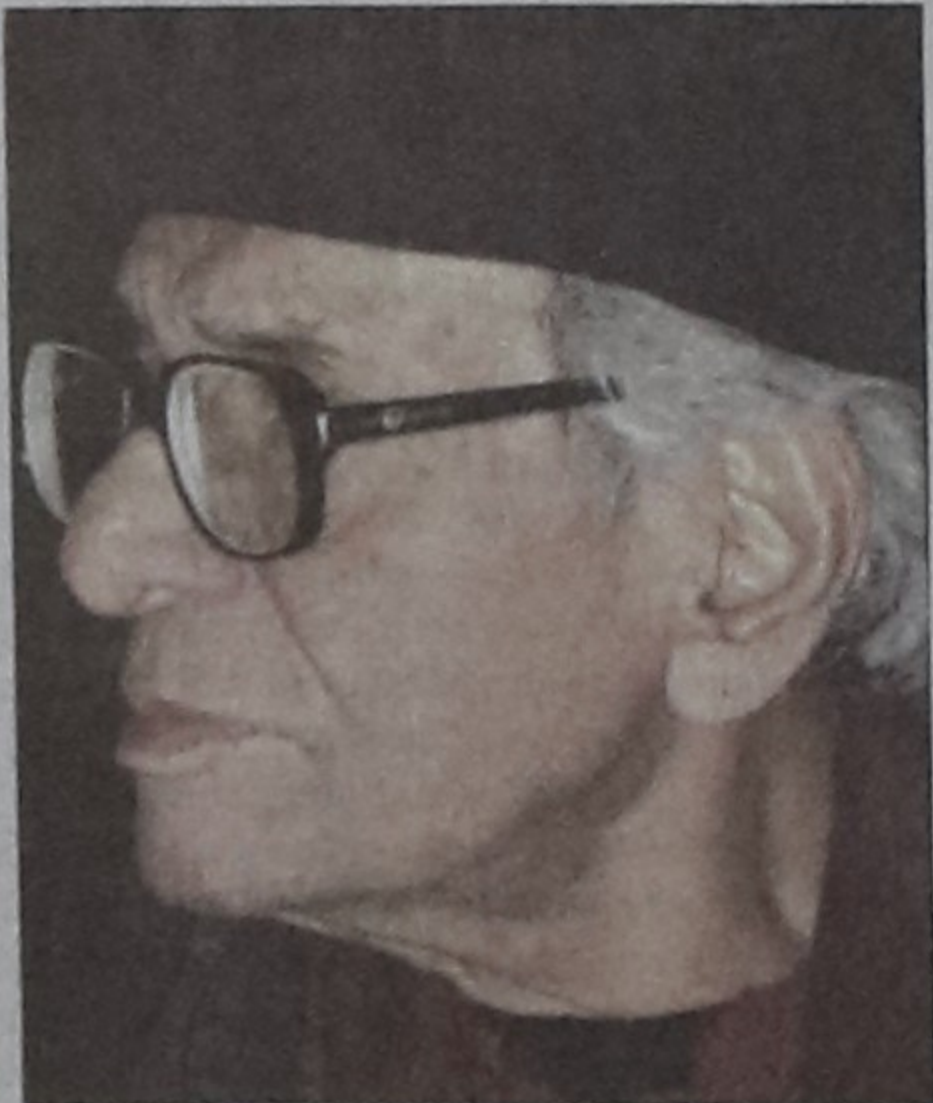
The end for Tanvir came at a hospital in Bhopal city of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh on June 8 morning after he was admitted there with breathing troubles three weeks ago.

A multi-faceted personality, which saw him donning the roles of poet, lyricist, actor and a playwright during a career spanning more than five decades, Tanvir was born on September 1, 1923 as Habib Ahmed Khan in Raipur, which is now the capital city of central Indian state of Chhattisgarh.

He adopted the pen name 'Tanvir' when he began writing poetry at an early age.

After doing his graduation from Morris College in Nagpur in 1944, Tanvir pursued Masters degree for a year at Aligarh Muslim University before he shifted to Bombay (now Mumbai) and joined All India Radio (AIR) as a producer in 1945. It also provided him an opportunity to write songs for Hindi films and even acted in a few.

He also joined the pro-left Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and became an integral part of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) as an actor. Later, when



most prominent IPTA members were imprisoned for opposing the British rule, he was asked to lead the organisation.

He penned plays like "Agra Bazar" in 1954 and "Charandas Chor" in 1975 which earned him not only wide popularity in India but also international acclaim. "Charandas Chor" was later made into a film.

The playwright was a recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1969, Padma Shri (the prestigious civilian award conferred by Indian government) in 1983, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1996 and the Padma Bhushan in 2002.

Angelina Jolie tops Oprah on Forbes "Celebrity 100"

Move over Oprah, a movie star takes the number 1 spot on Forbes "The Celebrity 100," a power ranking list the magazine brings out annually to show the most powerful and influential celebrities. Angelina Jolie tops the list that takes in to account not only financial factors, but also how much the celebrities have been in the media, and how much general influence they have.

Jolie has earned about US \$27 million over the past 12 months having huge success with her two recent films: "Kung Fu Panda" and "Wanted." Her publicity has been near an all-time high with the birth of her twins and constant news about her and Brad Pitt (who is number 9 on the list). Oprah's earnings are still huge, at about \$275 million, but she has experienced a slight decline in the publicity realm losing some viewers from her show. She also did not increase her earnings from last year's list, which resulted in her dropping to the number 2 spot.

The power rankings are based on the following taken from Forbes.com: "The Celebrity 100 is a measure of power based on money and

fame. Earnings estimates, which include income from films, television shows, endorsements, books and other entertainment ventures, are calculated between June 2008 and June 2009. Figures were rounded off where appropriate. Sources include Billboard, Pollstar, Adams Media Research, Nielsen SoundScan, Nielsen

BookScan, Nielsen Media Research and SNL Kagan. Fame is calculated using Web hits on Google Blog Search, TV/radio mentions on LexisNexis, overall press mentions on Factiva and the number of times a celebrity's image appeared on the cover of 25 consumer magazines."

Source: Internet



Angelina Jolie

Udichi observes Rabindra-Nazrul anniversary in Faridpur

REZAUL KARIM, Faridpur

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, Faridpur district unit observed the birth anniversaries of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam at Eshan School recently.

The programme included discussion, recitation of poetry and rendition of Rabindra and Nazrul songs.

At the discussion prior to the programme, speakers said that we should aim to create a secular and humanitarian society following the ideologies of poet Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. The literary works of the poets are the assets of Bengali literature. In every sphere of our life, the literature and the spirits of the poets should be exercised, they added.

Abu Sufian Chowdhury Kushol, vice president of Faridpur Udichi, chaired the function.

Among others, Advocate Touhidul Islam Stalin; secretary of Faridpur Udichi, Ahmed Jalal; organising secretary, Abdul Motaleb and executive member Mintu Chowdhury spoke at the function.

Lutfunnahar Lata, Shajib Sharif, Shib Shankar, Yasmin Akhter Sonia, Dola Chakraborty, Jesmin Ara Jemy, Mondira Roy, Eshita Dutta, Puja Rani Singh and Turja Halder rendered songs of Rabindra and Nazrul. Kawser Hasan Khokon recited poems.