

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Lecture
Topic: Ramadan between Folklore and Contemplation
Lecturer: Barrister Cynthia Fard
Venue: Goethe-Institut, Bangladesh, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: August 31
Time: 5:45pm



Werner Herzog Retrospective
Organiser: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Venue: Goethe-Institut, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: September 2
Time: 5:30pm onwards



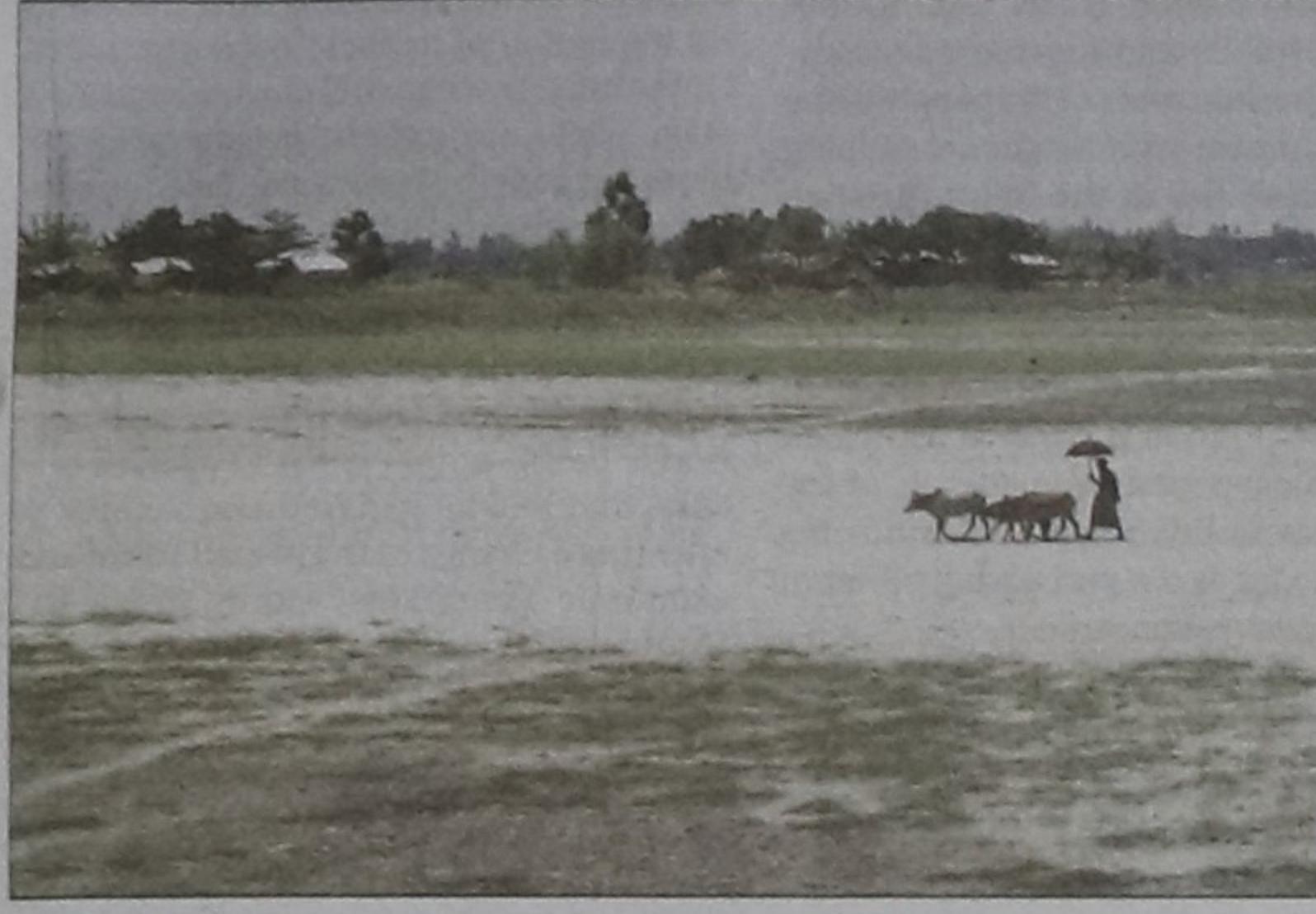
Film Screening
Film: Leila
Director: Darush Mehrjui
Venue: Alomgir Kabir Film Centre, 62 Science Laboratory Road
Date: September 4
Time: 4pm



Film Show on Hena Das
Organiser: Ranesh Dasgupta Film Society
Venue: Maitree Auditorium, Mukti Bhawan, Purana Pahar
Date: September 4
Time: 3:30pm onwards



Bangladeshi filmmaker Anwar Chowdhury's documentaries to be screened in India



"Ruddho Koishor" features life in 'char' areas.



Farida Zaman explains her fascination with rivers in "Joler Shilpomanjuri".

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Two Bangladeshi documentaries "Ruddho Koishor" (Barren Dreams) and "Joler Shilpomanjuri" (Waterworks) have been selected for the 4th International Film Festival on Water '09. Titled "Voices from the Water," the festival will be held in Bangalore, India

from September 4 to 7.

The festival will be inaugurated with the screening of "Ruddho Koishor" on September 4. The director of the documentaries, Anwar Chowdhury informed that both films would be screened at four different venues during the festival.

"Joler Shilpomanjuri" zooms in on noted Bangladeshi painter Farida

Zaman. In the documentary, Zaman analyses her works and describes how her childhood memories of boats, fishing nets, fishermen, fish, water and other aspects reflect on her canvas. On the other hand "Ruddho Koishor" features lives of adolescents in Patlibari-Dighalkandi 'chars' under Gaibandha district. Heavily depending on the Jamuna River, children

from this region are often deprived of fundamental rights and modern facilities due to poor communication system. They are isolated from the mainland and are helpless against nature. But still they have their dreams.

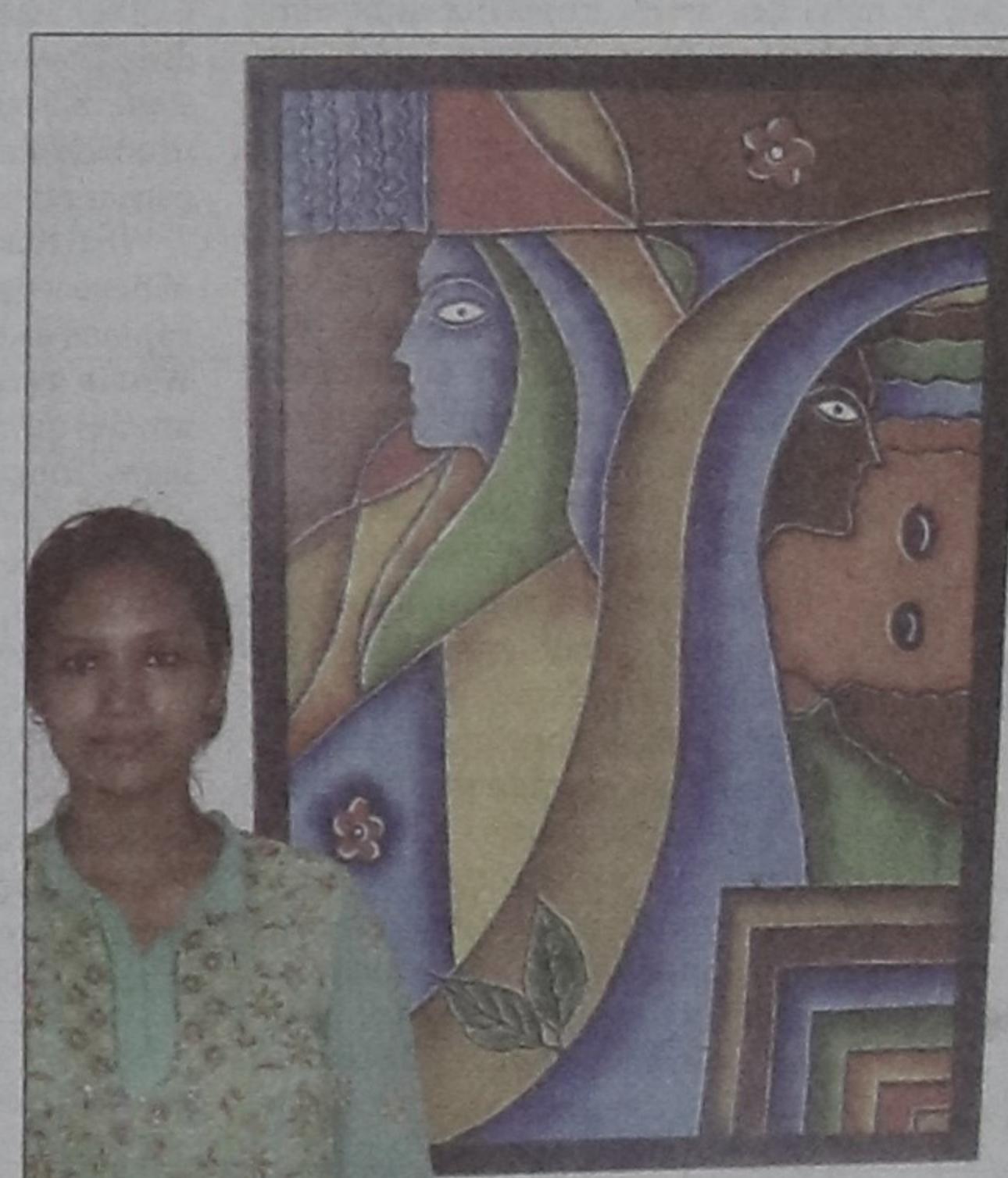
Both films have been screened at several international festivals, informed Chowdhury.

Exhibition by the differently-abled: A cut above the rest

KAVITA, New Delhi

This was no run-of-the-mill art exhibition. What made the event stand apart was that the 19 artists who displayed their 51 artworks were disabled, largely with hearing and speech impairment. From paintings of Ganesh, the Hindu elephant God, to scenes from rural Bengal, to works capturing Buddha and the zodiac signs, the artist's paintings revealed that disability need not spell an end to life -- instead it can spawn imagination and creativity. The exhibition, aptly titled 'Beyond Limits,' was organised by the Delhi-based NGO Family Of Disabled (FOD). The aim was to provide a platform for the talented artists so that their work could catch public notice despite their disability.

Artist Beetan Goswami, in his watercolour on paper, effectively presented vignettes from rural Bengal -- there was 'One Togetherness' which depicted fishermen at work with their boats in the forefront. Past and Present' displayed what must have been a magnificent mansion reduced to a derelict building.



Neha, one of the participating painters, with her art at the exhibition.

The third painting, 'Shelter,' had a typical village scene -- a thatched hut, a tree, a plant and people in the background.

Another noteworthy

painter was Rajesh Maheshwari, who presented his works in poster colour and metallic ink along with pen

and ink. Two of his paintings were dedicated to the zodiac signs and two coupled zodiac signs with Hindu mythology. Thus in one of the latter was a woman (in the shape of Aries) with a goat's head. To his credit, Rajesh is a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Delhi College of Fine Arts and has a

degree in desktop publishing. Next came Mukti Uppal, with an interesting tale to tell. A Bengali (with the maiden name of Das until she married her Punjabi photographer husband, also hearing impaired) her late maternal grandfather was from Chittagong. He was apparently a *hakim* (ayurvedic doctor) and Freedom Fighter who died at the ripe old age of 99 years in 2001. Among her professional looking works was 'Shakuntala' (from Kalidas' eponymous book), which was acrylic on canvas.

Two other Delhi-based artists were Shilpa Gupta and Neha Agarwal: The former in the poster colour medium, with mostly hues of black, white and grey, had painted works 'Sisters,' 'Intimacy' and 'Sharing Secrets'. Shilpa's mother, Santosh Gupta, who interpreted for her, pointed out that she was hearing impaired from birth but had made the most of her artistic talent after she went in for Camlin (a brand of paints) coaching classes.

Neha, in turn, had done a superb painting of Buddha (oil on canvas), deep in medi-

tation. Why Buddha? Her caretaker said that she was inspired to do this painting after she saw the image in a Buddhist temple in Uttar Pradesh.

A Madhubani artwork of Radha-Krishna, made by a Madhubani (Bihar)-based artist by the name of Chaturanjan Jha, also caught the eye of the viewer. Made with natural colours on paper with bamboo sticks, Madhubani painting is a family tradition, said Preeti Johar Basra, CEO, FOD.

If there was a lacuna in the exhibition it was that it was too low key -- not preceded by sponsorship, invitation cards, an inaugural ceremony or media publicity. However, Preeti clarified that the gallery was given free of cost and had to be booked at such notice that this could not be organised. Besides, she went on to add, "It is very difficult to rope in the media in a cause that doesn't give them *masala* news." There are exceptions, of course.

For more information contact: preeti.johar@familyofdisabled.org.

Madonna booed in Bucharest for defending Gypsies

AP, Bucharest

At first, fans politely applauded the Roma performers sharing a stage with Madonna. Then the pop star condemned widespread discrimination against Roma, or Gypsies -- and the cheers gave way to jeers.

The sharp mood change that swept the crowd of 60,000, who had packed a park for Wednesday night's concert, underscores how prejudice against Gypsies remains deeply entrenched across Eastern Europe.

Despite long-standing efforts to stamp out rampant bias, human rights advocates say Roma probably suffer

more humiliation and endure more discrimination than any other people group on the continent.

Sometimes, it can be deadly: In neighbouring Hungary, six Roma have been killed and several wounded in a recent series of apparently racially motivated attacks targeting small countryside villages predominantly settled by Gypsies.

Roma, or Gypsies, are a nomadic ethnic group believed to have their roots in the Indian subcontinent. They live mostly in southern and eastern Europe, but hundreds of thousands have migrated west over the past few decades in search of jobs and better living conditions.

Romania has the largest number of Roma in the region. Some say the population could be as high as 2 million, although official data put it at 500,000. Until the 19th century, Romanian Gypsies were slaves, and they've gotten a mixed response ever since. While discrimination is widespread, many East Europeans are enthusiastic about Gypsy music and dance, which they embrace as part of the region's cultural heritage. That explains why the Roma musicians and a dancer who had briefly joined Madonna onstage got enthusiastic applause. And it also may explain why some in

the crowd turned on Madonna when she paused during the two-hour show -- a stop on her worldwide "Sticky and Sweet" tour -- to touch on their plight.

"It has been brought to my attention... that there is a lot of discrimination against Romanies and Gypsies in general in Eastern Europe," she said. "It made me feel very sad."

Thousands booed and jeered her.

A few cheered when she added: "We don't believe in discrimination... we believe in freedom and equal rights for everyone." But she got more boos when she mentioned discrimination against homosexuals and others.

Madonna did not react and carried on with her concert, held near the hulking palace of the late communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Nearly one in two of Europe's estimated 12 million Roma claimed to have suffered an act of discrimination over the past 12 months, according to a recent report by the Vienna-based EU Fundamental Rights Agency. The group says Roma face "overt discrimination" in housing, health care and education.

Many do not have official identification, which means they cannot get social benefits, are undereducated and struggle to find decent jobs.

Last episode of Nodi Bachao, Dhaka Bachao on Channel i tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The last episode of "Nodi Bachao, Dhaka Bachao, Pradhanmantri Shomipey" -- a five-episode talk show on recovering the rivers around the capital -- will be aired on Channel i tonight at 11:30 pm.

Tonight's programme will feature a discussion on the topic 'Life and River'. Architects Dr. Khadem, Salma Shafi and Nizamuddin are guests on tonight's show. The guests will share their views on the topic. They will be joined by Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star and moderator of the show.

"Nodi Bachao, Dhaka



(From left) Mahfuz Anam, Salma Shafi, Nizamuddin and Dr. Khadem on tonight's episode of the programme.

Shomipey" is a joint initiative of saving the rivers surrounding Dhaka. Shihab Shumon is the producer of the programme.



Shamsuzzaman Khan, director general of Bangla Academy, speaks at a programme marking the 33rd death anniversary of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on August 27. Held at academy seminar hall, the event featured a vibrant discussion on the poet. At the programme Professor Khondokar Ashkar Ashraf Hossain, chairman, Faculty of English, DU presented an essay on Kazi Nazrul Islam's anti Raj poems. The discussants seen in the picture (L-R): Ferdous Ara Alim, Professor Khondokar Ashraf Hossain, Professor Mohammad Abdul Quayyum, Professor Rafiqul Islam and Professor Ainun Nahar.

Nazrul Shena School pays tribute to the National Poet



AMINUL ISLAM from Mymensingh

On the 33rd death anniversary of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Nazrul Shena School, an institution run by Nazrul Shena central unit,

arranged a daylong programme at its auditorium in the district town on August 27.

The memorial programme included placing wreaths at the portrait of the poet, discussion on his life and works, recitation of Nazrul's poetry and rendering of Hamd and Naat-e-Rasul (PBUH) composed by Nazrul.

GEN FARUQ, principal of the school and also the secretary of Nazrul Shena central unit presided over the discussion. Among others artiste Mustafa Kamal and Sanwara Khanur took part in the discussion.

The speakers were of the view that Nazrul enriched Bengali literature with his diverse range of writings -- poems, prose, songs, plays and so on. He spoke boldly for those who were oppressed and wronged, the speakers added.

Study on Nazrul at all levels should be introduced and encouraged so that the future generations can learn more about the great poet and be inspired to become better citizens they suggested.

Later students of the school rendered Hamd and Naat-e-Rasul (PBUH).

Naksha on ATN Bangla

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Written and directed by Mamunur Rashid, the 47th episode of drama serial "Naksha" will be aired on ATN Bangla tonight at 9:20pm.

The serial zooms in on an Old Dhaka resident, Lalchan Sarder. Lalchan married thrice and has 18 children. None of them has had higher education. But his granddaughter, Nuri, studies at a university and grandson, Chan, is an architect. But Lalchan is not a fan of modern architecture. So, he argues with his grandson often. The serial focuses on the gap between generations.



ATM Shamsuzzaman (right) and co-actor in the serial.

The cast includes ATM Joyraj, Golam Farida Chhanda, Shashi, Azad Abul Hasan Chunki, AKM Hasan, Kalam and others.