

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

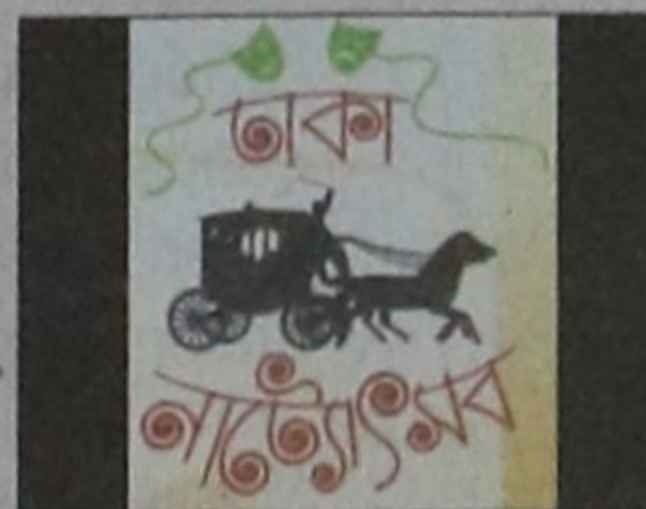
Musical Soiree
Title: Pran-er Khela
Artistes: Naqub Khan and Tanvir Alam Shawjeeb
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhanmondi
Date: October 29



Solo Painting Exhibition
Artist: Mustapha Khalid Palash
Venue: Asiatic Art Gallery, Nimtoli, Ramna
Date: October 23 - November 22
Time: 10am-8pm



Theatre Festival
Title: Dhaka Natyashab '09
Organiser: Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation
Venue: Zahir Raihan Cultural Centre, Shurapur
Date: October 15-31
Time: 7pm everyday



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Shudurer Mita
Artist: Mustaque Ahmed
Venue: Gallery Chitrak, H 21, Rd 4, Dhanmondi
Date: October 23 - November 5
Time: 10am-8pm



Preserving an age-old tradition

Madhupur Garos celebrate Wanggala



PHOTO: STAR

Through music and dance Garos make offerings to their deities during the 'Wanggala' festival.

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The indigenous Garo community of the Madhupur Garh region (located in Tangail and Mymensingh districts) recently celebrated their biggest annual festival 'Wanggala'. The traditional event -- observed by the indigenous community to dedicate their crops to their Gods -- had a unique touch this year with a large turnout

as the festival could not be observed last year due to unstable political situation in the country.

As per an age-old tradition, the Garos never enjoy their crops until these have been dedicated to the Divinity. They offer their crops to the gods 'Tatara' (believed to be the creator of the earth), Sushumi (who cures diseases and showers them with wealth) and Saljang (who has blessed them with crops) on

the day of the 'Wanggala' festival every year. This year thousands of Garo (also known as 'Mandi') people and other locals joined the daylong programme at Pirgachha St. Paul High School premises under Madhupur upazila in Tangail district last Friday.

The first session of the festival featured 'Rugala' (puja and the other religious formalities of offering the crops to the gods) where the

Garos pray and implore their gods to receive the crops.

Turned out in traditional attire, young Garos embarked on the programme in the morning by singing religious songs and welcoming the guests with wreaths.

Later, a discussion was held, presided over by Father Ugin Homrik, the main priest of the Pirgachha Dharmapalli. Babul D Nokrake, Mrigen Hagidak, Mebul Monalisa Daru and Graner Nokrake were the speakers at the discussion.

Among the guests were Madhupur upazila chairman Abdul Gafur, vice-chairman Jashtina Nokrake, Professor Mesbah Kamal, Philip Gain and Rakhi Mrong.

During the second session of the festival, Garo artists participated in a colourful cultural function that included songs and dances. They performed their traditional 'Goreuera' dance to express their gratitude to their gods. The Garos perform this dance not only in the course of the 'Wanggala' festival but also at their puja or other formal domestic programmes. 'Grikka' -- a

traditional dance articulating joy, victory and war -- was also performed. A veteran Garo dancer, armed with 'millam' (sword) and 'nsfi' (shield), expressed the community's joys, woes, appreciation and anger through a riveting performance.

The once-popular 'Nanggori' (jari gaan) song narrates the Garo history and milestones. As the art form is in danger of dying out, local Garo artists chose to perform the song at the festival this year.

Following this, 'Dellang Mangpina', a symbolic song and dance act to repay the debts of Garos who have passed away, was performed. Young Garos performed the humorous 'Amak Balgong Malla' (jumping of monkeys) dance this year to celebrate the local wildlife.

Based on a folk legend of love triumphing over all, the song and dance act 'Serenging' entertained everyone. Waljan and Serenging are the hero and heroine of this story. The act was performed to perfection this year.

A Garo artiste and her one-year-old son performed another attractive song-dance 'Bi Sa Dimdima'. The performance shows how the women sing lullabies based on the glory of the Garos to lull their babies to sleep.

On the occasion of 'Wanggala' this year, the Madhupur forest area came alive as a large number of outsiders, including intellectuals, journalists, NGO representatives as well as foreigners, came to Pirgachha to witness the festival. The Garos welcomed them with 'chu' (homemade beverage).

Several stalls of Garo handicrafts, including traditional items, were also set up near the festival venue, which attracted a large turnout.

A book, titled 'Mita', written by Fidel D Sangma, on the indigenous people of Madhupur, was also launched at the festival.

'Meridian Channel i Khudey Gaanraaj' to go on air soon

Humayun Ahmed to be a judge on the show



(From left) Tinni, Humayun Ahmed, Shaon, Faridur Reza Sagor and Kohinur Kamal at the programme.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

'Meridian Channel i Khudey Gaanraaj' is back on Channel i. The launching ceremony of the second season of the musical talent hunt for children was held at Winter Garden, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Faridur Reza Sagor, managing director, Impress Telefilm Ltd and Channel i; Kohinur Kamal, chairperson, Meridian Foods Ltd and others were present at the event.

The first season of 'Khudey Gaanraaj' was aired in 2008 by Channel i in association with Meridian Foods Ltd. The first musical talent hunt for children and adolescents, the programme attained huge popularity among the TV audience.

Inspired by that success, this year's instalment of the show aims at giving the

audience more.

The primary selection round of 'Khudey Gaanraaj 2009' is already over. Through nationwide auditions a total of 70 contestants have been selected.

This year's contest will be judged by noted literature and music enthusiast Humayun Ahmed and his wife actress-singer Shaon. The show will be hosted by actress-model Tinni.

Speaking on the occasion, Humayun Ahmed said, "I became an ardent admirer of 'Khudey Gaanraaj' when I saw the programme last year. The concept of 'a talent hunt only for children' caught my attention. It is a very good initiative. I'm elated to be a part of this show."

Shaon said, "I hope this year's programme will be as beautiful as the last season."

'Meridian Channel i Khudey Gaanraaj 2009' will go on air soon.

Theatre at a Glance



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi staged its latest production "Half Akhrai" at Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on October 24. Written by Ratan Siddique and directed by Azad Abul Kalam, the play narrates the historic conflict between Ramnidhi Gupta -- the originator of Bengali 'tappa' songs -- and his once-favourite disciple Mohan Chand. The play uses this historic incident as the focus and expands the scope of the context through several imaginary characters and events. The inspiring love affair between Ramnidhi Gupta and a courtesan named Srimati also comes into the limelight.

A legend lives on in her hometown

Suchitra Sen Film Festival begins in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

A weeklong film festival in honour of screen legend Suchitra Sen began last Friday. It was the first such festival dedicated to the memory of the actress in her ancestral hometown of Pabna. The organisers are the Pabna district administra-

tion and the Suchitra Sen Smriti Parishad. The event was inaugurated by Kabir, noted film actress and law-maker. A colourful rally, beginning from Pabna Town Hall premises, paraded the main streets of the district headquarters to mark the start of the festival.

Thousands of people, including cultural activists and students, enthusiastically

cally joined the procession.

At the inauguration of the festival, Kabir demanded the restoration of Suchitra Sen's ancestral home in Pabna and freeing it from illegal occupation -- thereby preserving it for future generations.

Later a discussion, focusing on the life and works of Suchitra Sen as well as on Bangla films in general, was

held at the Pabna Town Hall. The president of the film festival organising committee and also the Deputy Commissioner, Pabna, Dr. AFM Monjur Kadir chaired the discussion while veteran film director Soovas Dutt was the chief guest.

"Culture and cinema, in particular, are some of the best tools for social reform. It is essential that we patronise quality films," said Dutt.

Among others, Sabbir Ahmed, a film critic; Nibash Chandra Majhi, Pabna Police Superintendent; secretary of the film festival organising committee, Mohammad Saidul Haque Chunnun and Advocate Shafiqul Islam Shibli spoke on the occasion. Speakers voiced the demand to free the ancestral residence of Suchitra Sen in Pabna town and turn it into a museum or archive.

The festival kicked off with the screening of "Harano Sur" one of Suchitra's prominent films. Eight films, including "Agni Parikkha", "Deep Jele Jai", "Shilpi", "Shath Pakey Bandha", "Shap

Mochon" and "Shagorika" will be screened in the course of the festival.

"The huge turnout on the first day of the festival is an encouraging sign that people want to see quality films," said Mohammad Saidul Haque Chunnun, secretary of the film festival organising committee.

A discussion was also held at the festival premises on Saturday evening. Additional Deputy Commissioner (general) Bijoy Bhushan Pal chaired the discussion while former adviser to the previous Caretaker Government Tapan Chowdhury was the chief guest. Among the speakers were former MP Advocate Amjad Hossain, educationist Mohammad Kamruzzaman, and vice president of Pabna Chamber of Commerce Mahbulul Alam.

Bangla films have a glorious past; however this heritage is rapidly being lost, expressed the speakers, adding that Suchitra Sen had made a huge contribution to Bangla cinema.



PHOTO: STAR

Kabir (3rd from left) and Soovas Dutt (centre) inaugurate the film festival in Pabna.



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

As part of Aranyak Natyadal's ongoing theatre festival, titled 'Mayur O Shangkrantir Utsab' at National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, the troupe staged "Ebong Bidyasagar" on October 24. Written by Mannan Hira and directed by Mamunur Rashid, the play is set in the mid-nineteenth century Calcutta. This was an era of transition, often described as the "Bengal Renaissance". The central character of the play is Ishwar Chandra Bidyasagar, eminent scholar, philosopher and social reformer -- one of the key figures of the Bengal Renaissance. The play particularly focuses on the challenges the reformer faced when trying to introduce the practice of widow remarriage to the mainstream Hindu society.