

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Painting Exhibition

Painter: Biren Shome
Venue: Shilpakala Academy, H 26, Rd 3, Dhanmondi
Date: December 20-January 5
Time: 10am-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition

Painter: Rejaul Karim
Title: Twilight Zone
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27, Dhanmondi
Date: December 8-19
Time: 12pm-8pm



Christmas Carol

Organiser: Incarnation
Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Ramna
Date: December 11
Time: 4pm



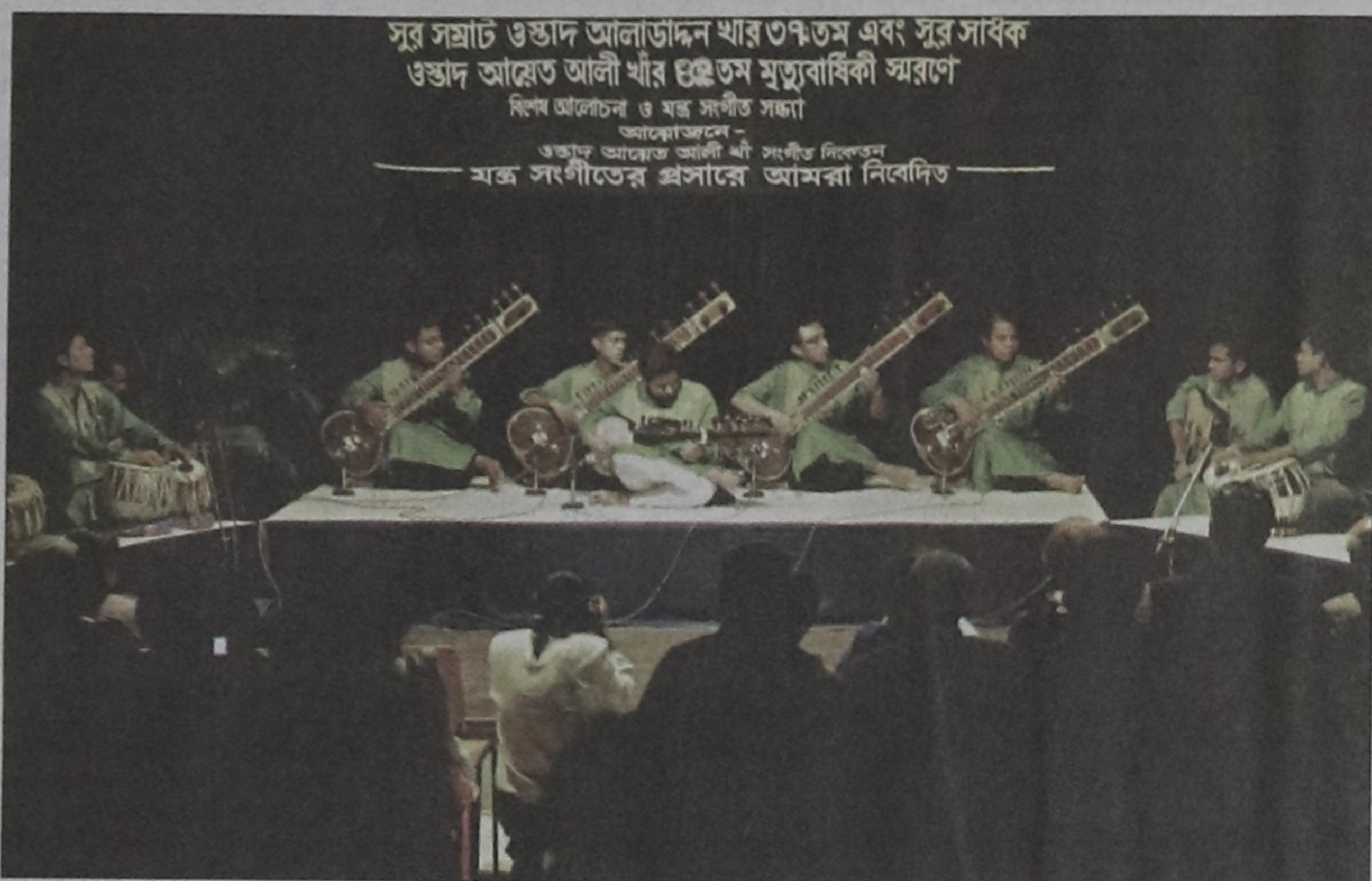
Film Screening and Discussion

Organiser: Steps Towards Development
Venue: Chhayanaut Shangkri Bhavan
Date: December 5-6
Time: 4:30pm onwards



Family ties

Performances by scions of the Khan family



The programme featured classical instrumental music.

CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of 37th death anniversary of *sarod* legend Ustad Alauddin Khan and 42nd death anniversary of renowned Indian classical musician Ustad Ayet Ali Khan, Ustad Ayet Ali Khan Sangeet Niketan held a concert featuring classical instrumental music on December 5 at the auditorium of German Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi.

Dr. Justin Lee, the Australian High Commissioner, was the chief guest

while Mobarak Hossain Khan, president of Ustad Ayet Ali Khan Sangeet Niketan, presided over the programme.

Distinguished instrumentalists of the Khan family performed a composition, titled "Brindaban". The performance was led by noted classical musician Ustad Shahadat Hossain Khan. Then the youngest member of the family, Shaptak Khan, presented "Raaga Emon" on the guitar. Sitarist Reenat Fauzia performed "Raaga Bhupali". The moving performance was received warmly by the audience. Fauzia is the daughter of music

exponent Mobarak Hossain Khan.

Flutist Masum Billah played "Raag Hangsho Dhwani".

Another famed member of the family is Sheikh Sadi Khan, who has carved a niche in playback music in Bangladeshi films as a composer. Sheikh Sadi Khan performed a piece based on "Raaga Gaboti" on violin.

Veteran *sarod* player Ustad Shahadat Hossain Khan performed with his daughters Rukhsana Khan and Afsana Khan. Shahadat Hossain Khan is the son of noted musician Ustad Abed Hossain Khan.

'Arangetram': Coming of age of Bharatanatyam dancers

Moving performance at Shilpakala Academy

JAMIL MAHMUD

Dhrupad Kala Kendra, one of the leading Bharatanatyam dance schools, arranged a programme at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on December 5. The programme marked the on-stage debut of two Dhrupad Kala Kendra students.

Naziba Bashar and Farhana Mahmud Kashfi are the two dancers, who completed their extensive training in Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of noted artiste of the genre Shukla Sarkar.

Eminent cultural personalities including dancers and theatre activists attended the programme as guests. The guests lauded Shukla Sarkar's passionate endeavour to uphold the dance form, and welcomed both the emerging artistes into the cultural arena.

The graduation programme is formally known as 'Arangetram'. It refers to the debut stage performance of a Bharatanatyam dancer, after going through years of training.

Most take Bharatanatyam as a hobby; the training usually begins from a very young age. Very few make it their career, as Bharatanatyam is extremely demanding and complex in terms of dedication and daily practice. Both students and teachers cherish the 'Arangetram' event, as it is a recognition of their devotion.

At the National Theatre Hall, both Shukla Sarkar and her students seemed elated. The seasoned dancer informed that as a guru it was her fourth 'Arangetram'.

She also admired her students' passion for the difficult dance form. "Both Naziba and Kashfi are like my own chil-



Naziba Bashar and Farhana Mahmud Kashfi perform at the programme.

dren," said Sarkar about her students at the programme.

'Arangetram' is also a test for the student as well as the guru, as the teacher's knowledge and the student's talent are evaluated by the audience. So 'Arangetram' is held only when the guru feels that the student is capable and talented enough to perform in front of an audience.

Eminent dancers Rahiza Khanam Jhunu, Zeenat Barkatullah, Shamim Ara Nipa and Amanul Haque were present at the programme. Noted theatre personalities Nasiruddin Yousuff, Shumil Yousuf and media personalities Afzal Hossain, M. Hamid, among others, congratulated

Nazib and Kashfi on the occasion.

After completing some formalities to prepare for the performance, Naziba and Kashfi took the stage. They took part in a series of dance performances, which were staged in two parts, highlighting the different elements of Bharatanatyam.

Naziba, an A-Level student and Kashfi who completed her B.Sc in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, demonstrated the *mudra* and forms of Bharatanatyam including 'Alarippu', 'Stuti' and 'Tillana'.

With the mingling of *bhava* (expression), *raaga* and *tala* (rhythm), the performances seemingly enthralled the audience.

Bangladesh Shishu Academy to implement Sisimpur Outreach Project

The Government of Bangladesh and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) recently signed an agreement to expand pre-school education in Bangladesh. Under this agreement, Bangladesh Shishu Academy will implement a venture named Sisimpur Outreach Project, says a press release.

Under this project, Bangladesh Shishu Academy will distribute early learning materials to pre-schools and will train pre-school teachers through its 64 district offices. Considering the importance of parents' role in expanding pre-school education, the project will also provide training support to the parents. Parents will learn how they can help their children in early learning through interactive The Sisimpur team will support Bangladesh Shishu Academy's childhood education project by developing content for materials that will be distributed in more than 3,000 learning centers in Bangladesh. The resources include books, puzzles, games and teacher and parent training material.

In addition, Sisimpur and BSA will work together to generate awareness in the importance of early childhood education.



Sesame Workshop works with Nanyanta Communications to produce Sisimpur in Bangladesh. The show airs on BTV and BTV World.

Italy police seize secret stash of masterpieces

AP, Rome

Italian tax police said Saturday that they had seized works by Van Gogh, Picasso, Cezanne and other giants of art in a crackdown on assets hidden by the disgraced founder of the collapsed dairy company Parmalat.

Authorities estimated the 19 masterpieces stashed away in attics and basements were valued at some 100 million euros (\$150 million).

Parma Prosecutor Gerardo Laguardia said that, based on wiretapped phone conversations, officials believed at least one of the paintings hidden by Calisto Tanzi was about to be sold.

"We got lucky. We learned that there were negotiations under way to sell one of the paintings" and raid three apartments in the area of Parma, near Parmalat's headquarters, Laguardia said in an interview on Italy's Sky TG24 TV. He didn't identify the painting.

Bologna-based tax Police Col. Piero

Iovino told The Associated Press that investigators believed the entire batch of paintings, watercolours and drawings were up to be sold. The prospective buyer was a Russian, possibly living in Italy, Iovino said.

No arrests were announced as part of the art seizure.

Tax police said Parma prosecutors are opening a probe into alleged concealing of assets in Parmalat's bankruptcy case.

Parmalat, the dairy conglomerate known for its long shelf-life milk grew from a small dairy distributor in Parma, into a diversified, multinational food company by 1990, but collapsed in 2003 under 14 billion euros in debt -- eight times what it had previously acknowledged -- in what remains Europe's largest corporate bankruptcy. Many small investors who lost their life savings were among some 40,000 defrauded bondholders.

Italian courts have already ruled that Tanzi bore the brunt of responsibility for the collapse. Tanzi was con-

victed by a Milan court last year of market-rigging and other charges in one of multiple probes. He is currently on trial for alleged fraudulent bankruptcy.

For years after the collapse, Tanzi was rumored to have had a "hidden treasure" somewhere. On November 29, a state TV show alleged that Tanzi had hidden a collection of artwork to try to shelter himself from the effects of looming collapse of Parmalat.

Police showed some of the paintings to journalists near Parmalat's headquarters Saturday.

Among the masterpieces was a pencil on paper portrait of a ballerina by Degas, two Van Goghs, including a depiction of a trunk of a willow tree and a still life, a watercolour by Cezanne and a pencil-work by Modigliani.

Tax police official Massimo said some of the paintings were carefully wrapped for protection, but that other paintings, including a Picasso, were left open in the storeroom.

"Drishyakalpo": A behind-the-scenes look at films, TV shows



Morshedul Islam speaks with Manzare Haseen Murad on the show.

CORRESPONDENT

"Drishyakalpo" is a discussion-based programme, highlighting cinema, TV plays and various aspects of the visual media. Aestheticism, cinematography, art direction, lighting and other issues will also be discussed on the show. Manzare Haseen Murad is the anchor of the programme, which will be aired today on Rtv at 11:30pm.

The programme has been directed by Syed Shabab Ali Arzu.

"AIDS Jaago": Films that awaken

KAVITA, New Delhi

What could be more opportune on World AIDS Day (December 1) this year than a series of short films by well-known Indian film directors that combine a socially relevant theme with gripping storylines?

That's a brief rundown of "AIDS Jaago" (AIDS Awaken), a series of four short dramatic films, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on HIV-AIDS, which were screened at the American Centre in New Delhi.

The films: "Migration" (directed and produced by Mira Nair, of "Monsoon Wedding", "Mississippi Masala" and "The Namesake" fame), "Blood Brothers" (directed by Vishal Bhardwaj the award-winning filmmaker behind "Omkaara"), "Positive" (by Farhan Akhtar, a most prominent young filmmaker) and "Parambha" (The Beginning) by renowned cinematographer and director Santosh Sivan.

What binds the films together is that each of them



A scene from "Migration", directed and produced by Mira Nair.

convey their message forcefully, without the didactic droning that such works are prone to. In "Migration" we have a star cast of Shiny Ahuja, Irrfan Khan, Sameera Reddy and Raima Sen (grand daughter of legendary actress Suchitra Sen). This Mira Nair film reveals the criss crossing of rural and urban India through the rural protagonist Shiny Ahuja who migrates to Mumbai in search of work. His life is changed forever after an encounter with a bored homemaker (ably played by Sameera Reddy) whose husband (Irrfan Khan) is a closet

gay. He returns to his village and his young wife (Raima Sen) only to discover that he is HIV positive and that his newborn child has also contracted the deadly virus.

The films carry nuances not only of agony and despair but also of hope and courage. Take "Blood Brothers", for example. With Siddhartha (of "Rang de Basanti"), Pavan Malhotra, Ayesha Takia and Pankaj Kapur in the cast, we get to see how a young man with a positive HIV diagnosis (which turns out to be negative later) allows his life to fall to pieces, while another man

whose file has got mixed up with the former, knows that his is HIV positive, yet carries on with optimism and courage.

More than rallies and long-winded discussions, films of this calibre can go many miles in dealing with the stigma and discrimination that are conjoined with the disease.

Director Mira Nair, the brain behind the "AIDS Jaago" project, has been quoted as saying, "We cannot underestimate the potential of films to change behaviour and transform the world." Needless to say, more such films that raise awareness on this blight and demolish the numerous myths that surround the disease are necessary.

As recent figures indicate, an estimated 33 million people live with HIV/AIDS worldwide. India and Bangladesh are regarded as the hotspots for the disease. The "AIDS Jaago" series could strike a responsive chord in audiences in the subcontinent. They could also act as a clarion call to a complacent public that believes that HIV/AIDS is a distant threat and all victims pariahs of society.