

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Dhaka Int'l Film Festival
Festival
 Organiser: Rainbow Film Society
 Venue: National Museum & Central Public Library premises
 Date: January 14-22
 Time: 10:30am onwards



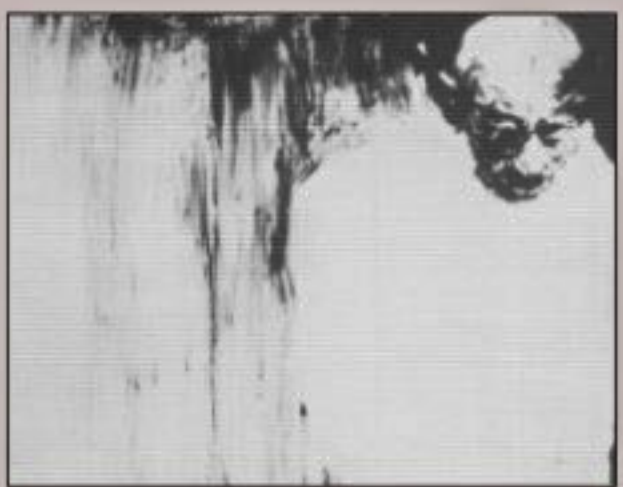
Painting Exhibition
 Title: Language Movement
 Raving into Liberation War
 Painter: Biren Shome
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H 26, Rd 3, Dhanmondi
 Date: January 4-20
 Time: 10am-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition
 Title: Staring Women
 Artist: Nazia Andaleeb Preema
 Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
 Date: January 15-26
 Time: 12pm-8pm



Solo Drawing Exhibition
 Title: The Surge of Emotion
 Artist: Shahabuddin
 Venue: Saju Art Gallery, F/40-41, North Super Market, 2nd Circle, Gulshan
 Date: January 4-19
 Time: 10am-8pm



CULTURAL PERFORMANCE

Upcoming SA Games to highlight Nachol Rebellion



Santals are known for their unique traditions and culture.

ZAHANGIR ALOM

As part of the inaugural ceremony of 11th South Asian Games (SA Games), formerly known as SAF Games, a dance-drama titled "Geeti Naksha" based on the historic Nachol Rebellion will be held at Bangabandhu National Stadium on January 29.

Bangladesh has a history and heritage of communal harmony and cultural diversity. The multilingual and multicultural aspects of indigenous communities living in Bangladesh add a dimension to the national identity. Among the indigenous groups, Santals are known for their unique traditions and culture. Santals played a key role in the Nachol Rebellion.

For the big performance rehearsal is on at the Nachol Degree College in Chapainawabganj. Almost 900 people (561 men and women from Santal community and 315 students from the local schools) will take part in the dance-drama.

Syed Ohiduzzaman Diamond, director of the film "Nachol Rani", is overseeing the rehearsals. Starting from January 4, the session

will continue there till January 20. After reaching Dhaka on January 24, the huge troupe will attend a demo session for three consecutive days.

"Actually, the performance will enact a compact form of my film 'Nachol Rani'," says Diamond.

Renowned dancer Munmun Ahmed is choreographing the dance performance while noted musician Shujey Shyam is directing the scores for the event.

"Ei Samhalo Dhan Ho, Kastey Ta Dao Shan Ho", a popular song from the Tebhaga Movement and another written by Diamond for his film "Joy Joy Joy Hok" will be used in the drama.

Ila Mitra, who led the Nachol Rebellion, left her 16 month-old son at home to join the movement (in the early 1950s). Mohan Mitra, the son of Ila Mitra is expected to join this year's SA Games inaugural ceremony.

It is worth mentioning that Ila Mitra was selected to represent India in athletics in Olympic games scheduled to be held in 1940 in Japan, which however could not be held because of World War II.

The realisation of a long cherished dream...

Faridur Reza Sagor

Despite his profession in Bangladesh, Mohammadullah was passionate about culture. When he moved to Queens in New York 20 years ago, he was fascinated by the New York Auditorium. In Manhattan, real estate is as valuable as gold, so he never bothered to ask what it would cost to rent the auditorium. But dreams cost nothing, and many a time, while looking through the glass of the auditorium from the sidewalk, he dreamt of holding cultural programmes there.

Eventually Mohammadullah retired and started publishing a newspaper for Bangladeshi expats in New York. By this time, he knew the terms and costs of renting the auditorium. Bangladeshi events were already being organised at different auditoriums in the city, even at the Madison Square Garden, where George Harrison and Ravi Shankar performed 'The Concert for Bangladesh' in 1971. But for some reason, it was not the Madison Square Garden, nor the Lincoln Centre, but the New York Auditorium that was stuck at the corner of this man's eye.

Renowned artiste Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya performs in the US almost every year. Mohammadullah sought to organise her solo perfor-

mance at the New York Auditorium. Like other Bangladeshis, Bannya holds Mohammadullah bhai in high regard, and agreed instantaneously to his proposal. However, the auditorium authorities were not prepared to budge on the rental fees. Many potential sponsors retracted once they considered the budget required for the performance. To top it all, organisations laid down numerous conditions for sponsorship.

Mohammadullah and Bannya discussed the prospect of the event on and off. In an attempt to reduce the fees charged by local musicians, Bannya decided to visit each musician personally and rehearse with them one-on-one. She worked tirelessly with Mohammadullah in making arrangements. By this time renowned tabla player Tapan Modon decided to join the duo.

Unfortunately, they found out that the auditorium was fully booked throughout 2008. They started to work around the earliest date in mid-2009. Fifteen years had gone by since Mohammadullah had originally dreamt about this event, and he was not about to give up his dream. He had a say in every element of the show, the leaflets, the making of the stage, he nearly hand-crafted everything from scratch! Although a few



Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya performs at the New York Auditorium.

outlets in Jackson Heights were to sell the tickets, Mohammadullah was seen selling most of the tickets himself.

Imdadul Haque Milon, popular Bangladeshi writer and television host, came to New York to host Bannya's programme, adding to the show's prestige. This event was unique in the heart of NYC, and New Yorkers were seen flooding the auditorium alongside Bangladeshis on the day of the performance. The event was to kick off at 7pm, and Mohammadullah had discussed every nitty-gritty with the host. The time came for Imdadul Haque Milon to call Bannya on

stage. But to the host's utter surprise, and 10 minutes before the show, the microphone of the auditorium and the lights on stage had been turned on and someone was speaking! Mohammadullah just hadn't been able to hold himself back. His emotions diffused the room as he spoke. He couldn't keep himself from seizing the moment and telling the room full of listeners how far back this all went, and how happy he was that his dream was about to be realised. Eventually, he called Milon and Bannya on stage.

And it wasn't just Mohammadullah bhai's, but also the dreams of hun-

dreds of Bangladeshis in the audience that was being transformed into reality as Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya sang for three hours. The orchestration was phenomenal, owing to the fact that Bannya had rehearsed with the musical team extensively. Topon and his team's tabla were added delight.

After the programme ended, Mohammadullah bhai was seen sitting on stage, basking in the afterglow of the grand show. As he smiled, his face lit up with the satisfaction of having realised his 15-year-old dream.

The writer is Managing Director of Impress Telefilm Ltd.

"I can barely act, how can I direct"-- Big B



Amitabh Bachchan

He is among the creme de la creme of Bollywood. Yet, megastar Amitabh Bachchan says he can hardly act and doesn't find himself capable of donning the director's hat any day.

"I am often asked when I would direct a film and my standard answer to that has always been that I can

barely act, where am I going to get the acumen to direct," Amitabh posted on his blog www.bigb.bigadda.com.

"To me it (direction) has been an enormous task that can only be fulfilled by those that have passion and desire to want to tell a story. I guess sometime or the other we have all wanted to do that - to

narrate a credible story. But to convert it into film is indeed another matter," he added.

The 67-year-old says he is content with his acting career.

"I am most happy when I do not have to worry about the aspects of film making than with those connected to a performance. Prepare, perform, and push off! It may sound too selfish a thought, but really what else could I ever contribute to it," he posted.

Amitabh feels that though it's a major task to direct a film, directors are not often given their due credit.

"Directing a film is an enormous task. Every aspect of it has to be understood and envisioned before any serious claim can be made on this. Which is why I think the respect and admiration and acclaim that should have rightfully been the director's is sometimes destroyed by a complete misunderstanding of what his or her contribution, in the field of direction is," he added.

The actor, who turned film producer in 1996, will be seen next in Ram Gopal Varma's Rann and in Leena Yadav's Teen Patti.

Urban interpretation of folk songs

In conversation with 'Trimatra'

A CORRESPONDENT

The Charukala (Faculty of Fine Arts, DU)-based musical troupe "Trimara-Ekti Gaan-er Dol" has been immersed in acoustic music and Baul songs for the last six years. Chandan, a student of Oriental Art at FFA, leads the seven-member troupe.

Inspired by his guitarist father Khandakar Rezaul Alam and two sisters Sojol and Komol (both singers), from a very early age Chandan began learning music formally from his uncle Shopon Bibagi.

"Observing the loopholes of metal music, we decided to go into acoustic music, that means taking the musical notation just after playing it instrumentally so that music can be kept at its purest form," Chandan explains.

Chandan is the main vocalist, composer and lyricist of the troupe.

The other members are Palash, a student of Drawing and Painting, who contributes with his vocal, dhol and banshi; Tarek, a student of Print Making, lending his voice to Baul songs; Sumi (a "Naton Kuri" gold medalist), an MBA student in the Faculty of Business Studies, DU, contributing with her vocal; Sagor, a student of Ceramics and a theatre activist of Nagarik



"Observing the loopholes of metal music, we decided to go into acoustic music, that means taking the musical notation just after playing it instrumentally so that music can be kept at its purest form."

Natyangan Ensemble, who plays gypsy and octopad; Rajon, (a "Naton Kuri" gold medalist), who plays tabla and AB Jony plays mandira.

The troupe performs at concerts in and around

Dhaka. Apart from songs of their own, they perform Tagore, Nazrul and folk songs at the concerts.

"We like singing of morality and humanity," says Sumi.

An album titled "Agamikal-er Shurjo" featuring nine original songs under the label of Agniveena is in the pipeline. The titles of the songs are "Agamikal-er Shurjo", "Ditam Ditam",

"Swapno Mela", "Jhumur Ghungur", "Shubidhabadi" and so forth.

"Folk music is the essence of our culture. We'll continue to work with folk songs," Tarek says.