

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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



Theatre
Play: Punarjanmo
Troupe: Prachyanato
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 24
Time: 6:30pm



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



Sharmin Shila post "Uttaradhikar" win

A CORRESPONDENT

"Uttaradhikar" was the first reality show in Bangladesh where celebrity contestants remained isolated for three weeks, and performed certain tasks.

"Uttaradhikar" saw 10 celebrities locked up in a luxurious palace, where cameras keep a relentless eye on their every move and record their conversations. Each participant had a different attitude, thought process, behaviour and lifestyle but required the ability to survive individually as well as a cooperative team member in order to carry on the game and come out as the winner.

Gradually, each housemate was evicted from the palace and the last contestant remaining was Shila. As part of the win, she received Tk 10,00,000.

The Daily Star talked to the winner after her return from the reality show.

What was the experience like?

Shila: Amazing! When they announced my name I could hardly believe it, as I wasn't expecting this at all. I screamed and everyone around me screamed as well!

Interesting incidents...

Shila: There were so many. Like there was this *tabiz* (amulet), which only one person would get and a parrot was to decide who gets it. The bird picked up my name.

Waking up every morning during the show was unusual.



We had to get up at the vibrating sound of the alarm early morning. On the whole it was a disciplined 21 days.

Was it a tough three weeks?

Shila: We couldn't leave the house. We were completely isolated. Nobody spoke to us - the directors or even the organisers. Only there was this cook who brought our meals and we could ask for tea and such, but that was it. We could only talk to other contestants. It was like living in a fancy prison. The worst part was that I couldn't see my daughter throughout the whole time. And there were

times I wanted to quit the game and come back. There were just so many new experiences, everything was new there, and that's the reason I signed up for it.

Has life changed since you returned?

Shila: The first few days, I wouldn't want to go outdoors, as I got used to that life, but slowly I adjusted. And now I am back to shooting, back to work.

What are you working on now?

Shila: Several TV plays, some new serials like "Utshob" and "Manpower".

Jessica Simpson travels the world to explore 'The Price of Beauty'



Jessica Simpson (C) along with Ken Paves and CaCee Cobb in "The Price of Beauty".

When Jessica Simpson was lambasted by the tabloids last year for an apparent weight gain, her dad, Joe Simpson, wanted to go on the offensive.

Jessica, however, had other plans.

Simpson, with her two best friends, Ken Paves and CaCee Cobb, instead set off around the world, to meet everyday women and examine their views, traditions and practices of beauty. Their experiences in Japan, Thailand, France, Brazil, Uganda, Morocco and India will air as VH1's series "The Price of Beauty," in March.

"It's very hard to watch what's said about [Jessica] and to not want to fight," said Joe Simpson, who also serves as an executive producer on the series. "When we had a big tabloid thing happen last year, her mother and I wanted to go immediately on 'Oprah,' but Jessica was very strong and

said, 'I'm not going to do that. I'm going to wait until I can say something positive.'

"And this show is that," Joe added.

Jessica has also seen a change within herself as a result of her travels.

"Outward beauty is an easy thing to become obsessed with in our society," she said. "I haven't always had an inner confidence. I haven't always looked at my reflection and loved it, because there was always something I wanted to fix, because someone always looked better. This journey was about finding something that was beautiful inside of me and knowing that I own it. And it's unique and rare."

While it all sounds very serious, and a lot of it is, it wouldn't be a Jessica Simpson series without some laughter and light-hearted moments, including her being attacked

by a moth, getting in a fight about short shorts and throwing up, more than once.

Paris was the most intimidating.

"I had to walk a runway with all of these tall, skinny models," Jessica said. "I almost puked, I was so nervous to walk out there and be judged, especially standing next to people who eat just salad."

She doesn't bother reading tabloids anymore, mostly because "they make up my life for me." But she is grateful to be in a position where she can be a role model for young girls and women.

At the very least, she's now confident in one thing.

"You can't let anyone else [define] beauty for you. I carry myself differently [now]. And any man I find, they are going to be darn lucky."

Source: Internet

Writings on the wall 3rd National Wall Magazine Festival ends

A CORRESPONDENT

The 3rd National Wall Magazine Festival ended yesterday with a discussion followed by a prize giving ceremony among the winning schools at Bangla Academy premises.

Starting on January 15, the three-day festival focused on Liberation War, trial of war criminals, agriculture and indigenous people of Bangladesh.

Judges of the festival -- Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury; Professor Mustafa Noor-ul Islam; artist Hashem Khan; human rights activist Sultana Kamal; theatre personality Dr. Biplob Bala and secretary of National Wall Magazine Council Motahar Akand evaluated the entries based on artistic forms and standard of writings.

This year wall magazines "Shikor", "Mukti" and "Anweshon" -- prepared by Saint Gregory's High School, Dhaka; Azim Uddin High School, Kishoreganj and



(From left-front row) Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, Sultana Kamal, Professor Mustafa Noor-ul Islam and Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury with the winners.

Viqarunnisa Noon School, Dhaka -- received first, second and third award respectively.

Other awarded magazines (4th to 10th) were "Arunodoy", "Anuprash", "Grash", "Rong Berong", "Ichchhey Dana", "Palli Mayer Kol" and "Srijani" prepared by Saint Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Dhaka; Sabuj Kanton School, Sirajganj;

Victoria High School, Sirajganj; Shaheed Fazlul Haq Puro High School, Pabna; Shishu Palli Plus, Gazipur; Rebeke Habib Girls' High School, Gaibandha and Adiyabad Islamia School and College respectively.

First, second and third prize winners received Taka 20,000, 10,000 and 5,000 respectively along

with a certificate and a crest each.

Apart from this, National Performance Evaluation Awards were given on the occasion among students based on their skills on drama, extempore speech, quiz and other extra curricular activities. Tazria Shehbar Shinjon from Premiere Ideal High School, Mymensingh;

Manjurul Kaiyum from Kalokakoli High School, Kushtia and Sabrina Sultana Lova from Azim Uddin High School, Kishoreganj respectively won the first, second and third awards.

Prior to the award-giving programme, chief guest of the programme Mustafa Noor-ul Islam, and special guests Sultana Kamal, journalist Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul spoke at the discussion presided over by Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury.

In his speech Mustafa Noor-ul Islam said, "This effort deserves applause. It would work from the roots, producing creative generations in the days to come."

"The unwanted wall emerged through the ill-practices of communalities and ignorant beliefs must be shattered by writings on the wall," said Sirajul Islam Chowdhury.

Bangladesh Deyal Patrika Parishad with Ain O Shalish Kendra arranged the programme.

Varanasi becoming a Hollywood hotspot?

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Indian pilgrimage town of Varanasi seems to be a favourite of Hollywood filmmakers for shooting.

The bathing 'ghat' of the town recently played host to the shoot of Hollywood film "The Experiment" starring actress Maggie Grace and actor Adrien Brody.

A 12-member crew of the shooting unit did its work on some of the famous 'ghat' along the river Ganges for four days for the film being directed by Paul Scheuring capturing the daily life of the people there.

One of the shots was that of an astrologer making predictions.

The shoot went off smoothly as there was no rush to see the Hollywood actors because people in the town failed to recognise them.

Now, reports have it that Hollywood's celebrity couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are expected to visit Varanasi for the shoot of a commercial there sometime in March this year.

Grace told The Times of India in an interview that this was her first visit to India and she is carrying back memories of a happy experience.

The actress seen in movies like "The Fog", "The Jane Austen Club" and "Suburban Girl", said she would particularly cherish the boat cruise the shooting unit had on the Ganges on an evening.



The city of Varanasi has been drawing a lot of attention from Hollywood of late.

Readers' column

When the sarod enchants

SAMIRA ABBASI, BOCA RATON, Florida

It was raining incessantly that evening, almost like *Malhar* in *Druta Ektaa!* I was torn between many things, many emotions. But somehow, as if by the sweet call of destiny, I heard a faint but enchanting tune calling me to the concert at the premises of Broward Public Library in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Dr Rajeeb Chakrabarty on *sarod* and his sister Reena on *sitar* accompanied by Pandit Subhen Chatterjee on *tabla*, that was the agenda for this special evening. The concert was recently arranged by Bharti Chokshi of the Indian Association of Performing Artists. As I arrive with my father, the esteemed music exponent Mustafa Zaman Abbasi and my son Armaan Sobhan, the budding musician, the mellifluous tunes of Rajeeb entice me. I thank my lucky stars I fought with the weather and other calamities to be there at that moment in time. It was pure bliss!

This was my first encounter with Rajeeb, and I must say I was pleasantly impressed. Standing six feet tall with a very pleasing smile adorning his face, Rajeeb appeared to be a musician with depth, understanding and compassion. He spoke very articulately to the West-

ern audience explaining to them in simple yet poetic ways of how the Indian Ragas progress.

Being a self-proclaimed poet myself, I was quite mesmerised by his description of how Indian classical musicians discipline themselves in the cyclic orders of *taal* while enjoying enormous freedom of expression within the raga. He also explained adeptly how a *jugalbandi* works. He drew an analogy between three friends conversing; while one is talking the others are subdued, but still very much part of the conversation. As Rajeeb and Reena were taking turns in dominating the

music, this was perfectly displayed as well, and was the same for Subhenda's incredible *tabla*.

The evening started with Raga *Yaman*. Reena's strokes on *sitar* were soft and sweet, almost heart breaking. Rajeeb's strokes were bold, expressive and he seemed to be deeply engrossed in a sort of *dhyaan* (meditation). He was totally into his raga to the point that he seemed oblivious of his surroundings... it could be the caves of Himalayas... it could be on a boat on the Nile... it could be the Miami Stadium packed with thousands of fans... but his intense concentra-

tion was admirable.

The brother and sister duo interacted well in taking turns to complement each other; many times Reena took the lead. After all, they are both well deserving children of Pandit Rabi Chakrabarty, a leading exponent of the *Maihar Gharana*.

Rajeeb trained under his father from an early age and started performing at nine. He is not only a talented performer but also a distinguished scholar and has his doctoral degree in music, exploring the role of computer in learning and teaching North Indian Classical Music. He has lectured and taught at some of the leading universities in the USA and Europe. He is also a composer and conductor.

Rajeeb's *sarod* sings more than just the ragas. It sings of humanity, it sings of love. He is deeply involved in various international philanthropic activities, helping disadvantaged children. This impresses me even more than music itself. That sublime evening ended with the sweet melodies of *Raga Jog*, enlightening my soul like a soft candle. As we started on our journey home, notes of his *sarod* were still playing in my mind. Just as I thought before, it was pure bliss!

The writer is a musician, poet and environmental engineer.



Dr. Rajeeb Chakrabarty (right), the writer (c) and Reena at the programme.