

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: Prachyanat
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 24
Time: 6:30pm



Film Screening
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society
Venue: Auditorium, Iranian Cultural Centre, H 54, Rd 8/A, Dhanmondi
Date: January 21-22
Time: 3pm onwards
Today: 'Two Women' & 'The Colour of Paradise'



Exhibition
Title: Rang
Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattashali Gallery, National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: January 15-25
Time: 9:30am-4:30pm & 4:30-8:30pm (Fridays)



Homage

Sayed Ahmed: A cultural icon

CORRESPONDENT

Noted dramatist and art critic Sayeed Ahmed passed away yesterday at Labaid Hospital in the city. He was 79. He has been unwell from age-related illnesses for a while and was admitted to Labaid Hospital recently.

Ahmed began his career in London as a musician for BBC. His immense contribution to Bangladeshi theatre and art will be remembered with great honour. He wrote several books on drama and art. He regularly wrote for a number of leading newspapers and journals. Ahmed was closely associated with internationally renowned painters, writers and dramatists.

Ahmed was born on January 1, 1931 in Dhaka. Among his most provocative plays are "Kalbela" (1962), "Milepost" (1965), "Trishna-e" (1968), "Ek Din Protidin" (1974) and "Shesh Nawab" (1988). His plays have been translated into English, French, German and Italian. Ahmed received the Bangla Academy Award in 1974 and the Legion d' Honneur from the French Government in 1993. He has delivered lectures at prestigious universities and theatre academies in Brazil, China, France, Germany, The

Netherlands, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Norway, Thailand, Turkey, USA and Russia.

Ahmed was well known to the BTV audience for his "Bishwa Natok" where he introduced and directed plays of international fame. His own contributions include five unique plays, but his impact on our theatre is overwhelming,

Sayed Ahmed's impact on our theatre is overwhelming, and his knowledge of the performing art form is boundless.

and his knowledge of the performing art form is boundless. His plays were staged in the US, Italy, Germany, India and Pakistan.

Noted painter Murtaja Baseer recalled Sayeed Ahmed: "I first met him in 1959, in Dhaka. He was very close to poet Shamsur Rahman. Rahman introduced me to him. However, I knew of him as the brother of noted journalist Nazir Ahmed and renowned sculptor Hamidur Rahman.

Sayed Ahmed was very congenial and a great conversationalist. During the '50s, '60s and '70s, Ahmed was very close to noted painters, poets and journalists of the country."

Renowned painter Monirul Islam said, "Few years ago, Ahmed visited Madrid and stayed at my house. He was very knowledgeable on western paint-

ings. During his stay in Madrid, he visited Prado, Rania Sofia and Thyssen -- three largest museums in the city. He had this ability to quickly become the centre of attention at social and cultural gatherings. Last year, he announced an award in honour of his elder brother Hamidur Rahman. I received the first of that award."



PHOTO COURTESY: GUNJAN



Treading a different track

Meet the painter Anthony Hopkins

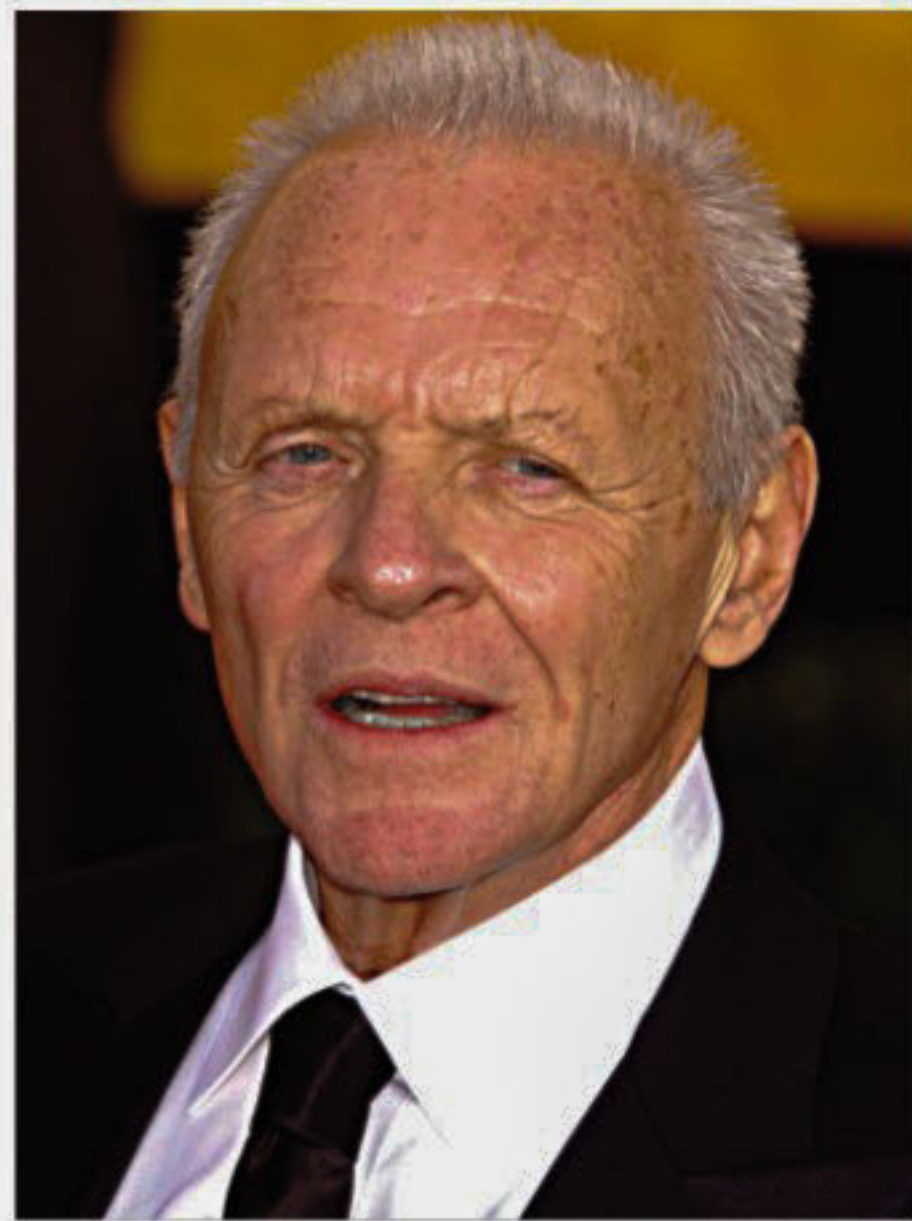
Actor, director, screenwriter, composer -- and now painter. Anthony Hopkins has been busy.

Next month the first British exhibition of Sir Anthony Hopkins' art will open in London, followed by another show in Edinburgh. In recent years, the 72-year-old actor has become something of a renaissance man: in 2007 he wrote, directed and scripted a film called "Slipstream". Last year, his composition "The Masque of Time" was given its world premiere by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Now there's the painting.

Hopkins's paintings are varied and variable -- ranging from traditional landscapes, to much darker and more garish images. There's an idyllic scene with corn fields, white-blue skies and reds blobs that could be cattle or haystacks. It's all very calm. Well, yes, Hopkins says, so it should be. He has everything he wants: his lovely third wife, Stella, success, health. "Over the years, you settle into a calmness. I suppose what you're observing is my state of mind or state of being."

The Welshman has played pretty much every kind of role there is, during a long career on stage and film. But there are two roles he excels in: the quietly repressed (the butler Mr Stevens in "The Remains of the Day"), for which he was Oscar-nominated; and the hammy monstrous (Hannibal Lecter, for which he did win an Oscar). Perhaps it is not surprising that he does these two extremes so well. Hopkins, who left his first wife when his only child was tiny, has implied in interviews that he is a little emotionally stunted; he claims that, because he went to boarding school, he never really understood the nature of family or the role of a father. And, as he will freely admit, he has been monstrous in his time. There are myriad stories of him raging against light and dark in his alcoholic years, improvising on stage because he had forgotten his lines -- sometimes brilliantly, often appallingly. But he stopped drinking a long time ago, in 1975, and for now there is the calm.

"Oh, I had a grand old time. I was a wild boy, yeah! Van Gogh type. I wouldn't have missed it. It was a lot of fun. I lived it up a storm. But it would have killed me. Over the years you get a



Anthony Hopkins

little smarter. You slow down a bit, but I'm in full vigour. I'm on the treadmill every day and I lift weights and I'm very strong and powerful."

A few years ago, it was reported that Hopkins was giving up acting. "No, I didn't actually say that," he says gruffly. "I was doing 'Titus' [with director Julie Taymor], which was a very complicated film. We were working at 4am and I was sitting in the freezing rain, covered in mud, and I said to someone, 'I think I've had it with this business, I'm a bit too old for this.' And someone said, 'Are you going to retire?' and I said, 'No, it's just a bit tough.' The Mail got hold of it and said, 'We hear you're retiring.' I said no, and it was in the press the next day. I was tired. Actors say this sometimes."

Actually, he says, his passion for acting has returned since he started composing and painting. "When it comes along, I enjoy it more because I'm laid back. My mind is clear, my body is clear. I'm fit and well, so I can apply all my strength and power to the movie."

Source: The Guardian



Country life...detail from a painting by Anthony Hopkins.

'Jasim Mela' abuzz with visitors

Fair in honour of poet Jasimuddin at his village

REZAUL KARIM, Faridpur

'Jasim Polli Mela' by the Kumar river at Ambikapur in Faridpur resonates with the footsteps of thousands of visitors everyday.

The two-week long fair has been jointly organised by the Faridpur District administration and Jasim Foundation on the occasion of the 107th birth anniversary of poet Jasimuddin.

The traditional fair offers visitors a variety of entertainment, including folk songs such as *jari gaan*, *kobi gaan*, *Lalon geeti*, recitation, traditional dances, *jatra*, puppet shows, illusion and raffle draw.

At 'Jasim Macha' (stage) on the eastern part of the 'Jasim Udyan' (park), well-known artistes and cultural groups from different districts perform every afternoon at programmes that draw a sizeable audience.

The thrilling 'circle of death' ride (motorbikes and cars) erected in the middle of the fair ground, a puppet show and performances by young dancers also attract attention.

The raffle draw, offers

items including a motor cycle, colour television, furniture, bicycle, keeping visitors up to midnight in exchange for a mere Taka 10.

At the *jatra* stage erected on the southern part of the poet's homestead, a section of enthusiastic visitors spent the night watching traditional *pala* -- "Beder Meya Jyotsna," "Phulan Debi" and so on.

The final resting place of the poet Jasimuddin, under a pomegranate tree, decorated with lighting is the greatest attraction for visitors who strive to recall the verse...

Ei khoney tor dadir kobor dalim gacher toley, Tirish bochor bhijaey rekhechi dui noyoner joley...

Besides literary works, photos of and items used by the poet are exhibited at 'Moni Mala', in the poet's house.

Two hundred and seven stalls display handicrafts, everyday items used by rural folk, agricultural tools, delectable sweets, cakes, scented betel leaf and nuts.

Asma Akter Mukta, an entrepreneur visiting the fair said, "As Jasimuddin is



Young singers perform at the mela.

PHOTO: STAR

our pride, the 'Jasim Mela' should be popularised and entrepreneurs should be encouraged to exhibit their products."

Azmal Hossain, a teacher of a secondary school in Faridpur who attended the fair with his wife and six-year-old daughter said, "We enjoyed the fair but my daughter was sad as she was not allowed to watch the

puppet show in which girls dance instead of dolls."

A second year honours student of Govt. Rajendra College who chose to remain anonymous, said that the arrangements of the fair were fine except for "unseemly dances" in the name of *jatra*. "This really mars the spirit of the fair," he said.

However, enthusiastic

visitors from different districts of the country along with the locals flock to the fair everyday to acquaint themselves with the pastoral beauty of the villages as Jasimuddin beckoned in his verse --

Tumi jabey bhai jabey mor shathey amader chhoto gaye.

The mela will continue till January 24.

"Ityadi" anchors at Chittagong seaport

Popular entertainment show "Ityadi" shifted outdoors recently. The last few episodes of the show were shot at popular and historic spots in and outside Dhaka like the National Parliamentary Building premises, in front of Nagar Bhaban, Lalbagh Kella, Shalban Bihar in Comilla, Ahsan Manzil and in front of Bardhaman House of Bangla Academy.

The latest episode of the show will be telecast from Chittagong seaport. The show was shot in the presence of thousands of spectators. The episode will be aired on January 29 on Bangladesh Television at 9pm.

Like others episodes, the Chittagong episode will



The show is hosted by Hanif Sanket.

feature common and regular skits. A feature on 60-year-old Kazi Monwar Hossain of Baghapara, Jessore is the highlight of the show. Monwar Hossain has been tirelessly working to teach poor and underprivileged children over the years.

Kumar Biswajit will sing a solo, Rabi Chowdhury and Shakila Zafar will sing a traditional song of Chittagong.

Written, planned, directed and hosted by Hanif Sanket, "Ityadi" is produced by Fagun Audio Vision.



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