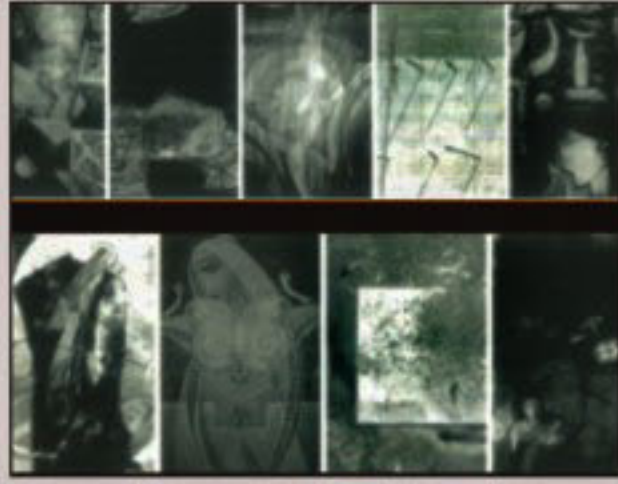


## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

### Group Art Exhibition

Organiser: Gallery Chitrak  
Venue: Gallery Chitrak, H-21, R-4, Dhanmondi  
Inauguration: April 3 at 6pm  
Date: April 3-12  
Time: 10am-8pm



### Solo Painting Exhibition

Artist: Syeeduzzaman Sumon  
Title: Rural Life  
Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi  
Date: April 3-17  
Time: 3pm-9pm (except Sundays)



### Solo Painting Exhibition

Artist: Murshida Arzu Alpina  
Title: Drinking Bottle Water and Breathing Dust Only  
Venue: Goethe Institut Bangladesh H-10, R-9, Dhanmondi  
Date: April 5-22  
Time: 10am-8pm



### Boats Exhibition

Title: Traditional Boats of Bangladesh  
Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattashali Gallery, Bangladesh National Museum  
Date: March 23-April 19  
Time: 10am-5pm



## Countdown to Pahela Baishakh



Preparations are on: FFA students making masks, painting and working on bamboo frames.



PHOTO: MUMIT M.



### MAINUL HASSAN

With *Pahela Baishakh* (first day of the Bengali year) -- the biggest celebration in secular Bengali culture -- just days away, one of the hubs of the *Baishakhi* celebration in the city, Faculty of Fine Arts, DU, is abuzz with preparations. The *Mongol Shobha Jatra* brought out by the students and teachers of FFA is one of the major attractions of the *Baishakhi* celebration in Dhaka.

Students of FFA are racing towards finishing their preparations for another vibrant rally on *Pahela Baishakh*.

FFA students are raising funds for the *Shobha Jatra* through sale of watercolour paintings, traditional pottery, masks and more. At the FFA

premises students can be seen working on the paintings and the pottery -- mainly traditional dolls and well decorated *shora*, T-shirts and more.

What also draw one's attention are the huge bamboo frames on which students are busy working. They were working on replicas of an elephant, a horse and a *kakatua* -- which will be among the main attractions of this year's rally.

"When finished each of these structures will be 23 feet in height," informed Jayanta Kumar Talukder, a student of the ninth batch, FFA. This year the ninth batch is leading the preparations for the *Mongol Shobha Jatra*.

Speaking of this year's rally, Jayanta said, "The rally will feature replicas of traditional modes of transportation. We'll also have dragonfly, butterfly, *chorka*, masks and more in the rally."

"Even through the ninth batch is leading the preparations, we are joined by all students and former students as well as teachers of FFA for the *Baishakhi* preparations.

"We don't have sponsors. We're trying to raise funds through sales of paintings, masks and other artworks prepared by the students," said Jayanta.

Prices of paintings range from Tk 200 to 5000, while prices of painted *shora* start from Tk 150.

"Paintings by teachers are also being auctioned, which should fetch larger amounts," Jayanta added.

Like every year the students will paint the walls of FFA on *Pahela Baishakh*.

"This year the theme is traditional stories. The wall paintings will feature characters from *Gazir*

*Pata* and traditional *Shokher Hari*," said ASM Rashedul Alam, a former student of FFA and a member of the group who will be painting the walls this year.

The 'Zainul Shishu Niketon' also known as 'School Ghar' at the FFA will also be decorated with colourful paintings of birds, elephants, horses and other animals in the *Shokher Hari* (a clay pot decorated with paintings of animals, mostly used to contain gifts, in the Rajshahi area) style.

This year the *Mongol Shobha Jatra* will go around the Doyel Chattar, Shahid Minar and Jagannath Hall and then return to FFA.

"This year we hope that we will be able to hold a rally which will truly highlight our culture and traditions," said Jayanta.

## Tagore dance dramas

# Kalavati Devi at her creative best



Warda Rihab (centre) and fellow dancers in a scene from "Bhanusingher Padavali".

KAVITA, New Delhi

With their fine-tuning of dance, song and music, Tagore's dance dramas are an elevating experience for audiences anywhere. More so when the choreographer is Kalavati Devi, famous Manipuri performer and senior lecturer at the Kolkata-based Rabindra Bharati University. Presenting excerpts from "Bhanusingher Padavali" "Taasher Desh" and "Chitrangada" in the Indian capital recently, the 62-year-old Kalavati Devi was clearly at her creative best.

The three young dancers in the three lyrical dramas slipped into their roles with ease. Obviously, says Kalavati Devi, a lot of hard work went into the Rabindra Bharati University production. "The chore-

ography is very challenging because my students perform from the diverse Manipuri, Kathakali, Bharatnatyam, Manipuri and creative dance streams," she says.

Explains Tarit Bhattacharya, teacher and music director at the University who is also a vocalist in the dance performances, "In 'Bhanusingher Padavali', you see Manipuri dance, in 'Taasher Desh', there is a bit of Manipuri but you also get to see a large element of creative dance. In 'Chitrangada' there is a blend of Manipuri, Kathakali, Bharatnatyam and creative dance."

The three dance dramas performed recently, says Kalavati Devi, have the central theme of "Muktir Path" (The Road to Emancipation). In the devotional dance drama, "Bhanusingher

Padavali", for instance, Radha's intense love for Krishna sets her soul free, while "Taasher Desh" is an indictment of social restrictions. "Chitrangada" is a celebration of the emancipation of women.

The choice of the dance form, says Kalavati Devi, has to be determined carefully. "There are slow moving songs in 'Chitrangada' for which Manipuri dance is suited to the hilt. However, there are other songs in the same dance drama, such as Arjuna songs, which demand a fast tempo. Obviously Tagore didn't want to have Manipuri dance there and introduced Kathakali dance for that portion."

Kalavati Devi is quick to give credit to her team of nine dancers for the superb performance. Each one of them, she says, deserve a mention: There's Warda Rihab, well-known Bangladeshi dancer and student of Kalavati Devi, (in the two major roles of Chitrangada/Krishna); Diptangshu Paul (Arjuna/Rajputra); Biplab Ghosh (Madan/Saudagarputra); Piali Banerjee (Raja/Radha) and Sweetie Das (Rani/ Chandrabali). Four other dancers, (Saheli Mitra, Anusree Mitra, Tanusree Mitra and Paromita Sinha) essay significant parts in the dance dramas.

The singers too present some intensely moving Rabindra Sangeet.

Kalavati Devi's late husband was the famous Manipuri dancer Guru Bipin Singh, who she says introduced the *Cholom* style and martial arts to the dance form. She also takes immense pride in her daughter Bimbavati Devi, a renowned Manipuri dancer. "Bimbavati Devi has been trying to break Manipuri dance out of the monotony and ennui that it induces in the audience," says Dr. Utpal K. Banerjee, a reputed scholar-commentator on art and culture."

Clearly fusion has well and truly arrived in the world of Manipuri dance.

## Updates on Morshedul Islam's new film "Amar Bondhu Rashed"

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filmmaker Morshedul Islam is busy with his upcoming film "Amar Bondhu Rashed". Based on Mohammad Zafar Iqbal's story, this is a story about a brave adolescent boy. Shooting for the film has been completed. At present the director is busy with the post-production work at Prasad Film Laboratories in Chennai, India. According to Manan Chalochchitra (Islam's production house) sources, the film will have Dolby Digital surround sound effect.

The film, set against the backdrop of the Liberation War, is expected to be released on the coming Victory Day.

Shooting was done at different locations in Mymensingh, Dinajpur and Mongla. The crew also took help from Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Navy for some particular

sequences.

The film features a group of teen actors in the lead roles. Chowdhury Jawata Anfan played the role of Rashed. The cast also includes Rayan Ibtisham Chowdhury, Rifayet Jinnat, Faiaz Bin Zia, Likhon Rahi and Kawzar Abedin.

Alongside the young artistes, seasoned actors Parvez Murad, Humaira Himu, Raiful Islam Asad, Pijush Bandopadhyay, Wahida Mallick Jolly and Enamul Huq have donned the other central roles. L. Opu Rosario is the cinematographer of the film.

Previously, Islam had adapted Zafar Iqbal's story "Dipu Number Two", which is considered to be one of the most acclaimed children's films of the country. Islam's other notable film for children is "Duratto". It should be mentioned that "Amar Bondhu Rashed" received a government grant.



A scene from "Amar Bondhu Rashed".