

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Boishakhi Celebrations & Folk Festival

Organiser: Pizza Hut and KFC
Venue: Transcom Digital Showroom and Pizza Hut Premises
Time: 12pm-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)



Chaitrosankranti Festival

Organiser: Gulshan Youth Club
Venue: Gulshan Youth Club, Gulshan-2
Date: April 13-14
Time: 8am-10pm



Boats Exhibition

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



"Cholo Lathi Kheli": A move to save an indigenous performing art form



Lathials from Manikganj perform at the programme.

MAINUL HASSAN

"Cholo Lathi Kheli" is a yearlong project jointly organised by Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA) and Shadhona -- a centre for advancement of South Asian dance and music. The project aims at promoting and popularising "lathi khela", a traditional Bangladeshi martial art/performance art form, in a new way. The project will begin with a five-day camp -- from May 1 -- at Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA), Dhaka and would be attended by dancers, martial art enthusiasts, researchers and 'lathial'. The announcement was made at a press

conference on April 11 at the Coffee House premises, BSA.

Among others, Lubna Marium, general secretary, Shadhona; Sara Ara Mahmud, director, department of theatre and film, BSA and Bidyut Kumar Basu; chief marketing officer of Robi were present at the conference. The project is being sponsored by Robi.

"Lathi khela" has a remarkable history. But at present the popularity of the art form is on the wane," said Lubna Marium, speaking at the conference.

"While working on indigenous performing art forms, I came to know of 'lathi khela' from Saymon Zakaria. It was he who actually motivated me

to take interest in the art form.

"We hope that through this year-long event we would be able to regenerate interest in this traditional art form.

"The participation of dancers, martial art trainers and 'lathial' from across the country will enrich the genre further. We hope that youngsters will take interest in this art form and learn 'lathi khela' which will ensure its continuity," Lubna Marium added.

Speaking on the occasion Bidyut Kumar Basu, CMO, Robi said, "We feel fortunate to be a part of this event which aims at saving a traditional art form."

Basu also thanked the 'lathial'

present, for keeping 'lathi khela' alive.

The project will include 'lathial' from across the country and train them. For this purpose a camp for trainers will be held at BSA, Dhaka from August 1 to 10. Twenty 'lathial', ten dancers, martial artistes and researchers will take part in the camp.

Countrywide training of 'lathi khela' will start from Khulna (September 15-25). Other camps will be held in Rajshahi (September 26-October 5), Sylhet (October 6-15), Barisal (October 17-27), Chittagong (October 28-November 7), Rangpur (November 8-17) and Dhaka (November 18-27) at the divisional BSA headquarters. On the concluding day of divisional training camps, vibrant 'lathi khela' demonstrations will be held.

From December 2-16, 2010, a two-day countrywide 'lathi khela' event will be held in all seven divisions, which will be followed by a grooming camp at BSA, Dhaka (December 15-20).

"The event will end on April 14, 2011 on the Bengali New Year 1418, with a national event titled 'Jatiyo Lathi Khela'," said Lubna Marium.

A spirited demonstration of 'lathi khela' followed the press conference. Accompanied with tabla and cymbals, a troupe from Manikganj demonstrated several aspects of the art form -- with a series of simulated combative duels, using small sticks and then switching to bigger ones.

Mohammad Kabirul Islam, a trainer working on the project, also demonstrated samples of several forms.

The forms included 'Ashor Bondona', 'Dolathi', 'Upar Nichey' and more, informed Kabirul Islam.

Channel i, The Daily Star and abc radio are media partners of "Cholo Lathi Kheli".

Banglar Utshab-e Shurer Dhara

Live programme of Chaitra Shongkranti on Channel i

A CORRESPONDENT

To bid adieu to the past year and usher in the Bengali New Year, Channel i will air a live programme of Chaitra Shongkranti titled "Banglar Utshab-e Shurer Dhara" at 5:30pm, 9:35pm and 11:30pm. Cultural organisation Shurer Dhara will perform in the programme.

The Chaitra Shongkranti programme will feature colourful traditional festivals of Bengal aka the festivals of "Baro Mashey Tero Parbon".

Planned by Rezwana Chowdhury Bonya, Amirul Islam produces the programme.



Rezwana Chowdhury Bonya

"Shuprabhat Bishonnota": Sabina Yasmin's latest solo album



Sabina Yasmin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of Pahela Baishakh, Laser Vision offers an exclusive album of renowned singer Sabina Yasmin to music lovers. Titled "Shuprabhat Bishonnota", the album was released on April 11.

Ten songs, consisting of genres such as melody and romantic, feature in the album. The songs are written and composed by another renowned musician Kabir Sumon.

Some of the songs from the album are "Bohukal Ei Pothey Chola", "Elomelo Hoye Jai", "Shuprabhat Bishonnota", "Bondhur Chithi", "Chhelebel" and "Jakhon Durey Thako".

Yasmin shares her take on the album. In her words, "The release of the album has fulfilled one of my cherished dreams. I worked hard for the album."

"I especially want to thank Kabir Sumon for his tireless support and Laser Vision for bringing out the album in the market."

Wearing Deshi on Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is widely acknowledged that Pahela Baishakh is the biggest secular Bengali festival. What makes this celebration remarkable is that every Bengali -- regardless of class and religion -- gear up to usher in the (Bengali) New Year. Though New Year's festivities are closely linked with rural Bengali life, in the last four decades major cities like Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi have been witnessing mega celebrations on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh. Homes are beautifully decorated; special dishes are cooked to be shared with near and dear ones and people make it a point to wear nice clothes. What many may not realise is that a silent revolution has manifested itself over the years throughout the country -- and it has to do with attire.

The growing number of fashion houses and retail outlets indicate the rise of Bangladeshi apparel. What does Pahela Baishakh have to do with the fashion industry? On Bengali New Year, everyone wants to wear new clothes, and it has to be deshi (local). According to their means, people spend on new clothes and the fashion houses -- big and small -- present their Baishakhi lines that vary in price range and materials. One aspect is common here -- it's all deshi.

Here's what some of the fashion houses are offering this Pahela Baishakh:

The Banglar Mela Baishakhi line involves silk, half silk, endi and khadi mixed cotton. Designs in hand-woven sarees feature block print, spray and hand frame print, tie-dye, batik, vegetable dye with karchupi, machine embroidery and more. This season the fashion house is introducing rickshaw painting, pitha and indigenous motifs. These have been used on silk sarees. Colours of this season are red, orange, yellow and lime.

Highlights of Kay Kraft's Baishakhi collection are hand-woven sarees from Manikganj, Narsingdi Sirajganj and Tangail. A noteworthy creation is a combination of endi (from Manikganj) and Bolaka silk (from Chapainawabganj). These hybrid sarees feature block and screen prints, applique, hazaar buti, sequin, beads and kantha stitch. Motifs include fish, folk art, owls, kites, elephants, horses etc. Experimental use of metal and patchwork is also noticeable. White, maroon, crimson, brick red, orange and magenta are dominant colours in the Baishakhi line.

Fashion house Bibiyana has used motifs that are traditionally seen on pakha (hand-fan) for its Baishakhi attire. Green, purple and yellow dominate the motifs that are executed on mainly red and white dresses. Bibiyana has used cotton for their outfits, as it is comfortable in the scorching summer heat.



The growing number of fashion houses and retail outlets indicate the rise of Bangladeshi apparel.

Festival of India in China and France

Original paintings of Tagore to go out of India for the first time

The Festival of India in China and France were announced by Virendra Gupta, director general Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) in the presence of Jerome Bonnafont, the Ambassador of France to India and Xei Fei, Cultural Counsellor of China, says a press release.

Gupta announced the six-month long Festival of India in China, which was inaugurated on April 7 in Beijing by the Minister of External Affairs in China. Dr. Karan Singh, President ICCR inaugurated the 14 month long Namaste France, which would have its formal opening in Paris on April 14.

"There is a lot of interest about India and the idea is to create a balanced presentation of its rich cultural heritage. The original paintings of Rabindranath Tagore would go out of India for the first time and negotiations are on with museums in Paris for space to exhibit 100 paintings. The Chinese Embassy in India and the Indian Embassy in China have expressed a preference for Bollywood and contemporary Indian performances. The Shanghai Expo would feature 40 dancers showcasing Bollywood Awards Nights on television," according to Virendra Gupta.

The Festival of India in China is to be inaugurated at the prestigious auditorium situated within the grounds of the historical Forbidden City. The opening event is a theatre presentation, "Uttar Priyadarshi" based on the life of Emperor Ashoka and choreographed by the eminent theatre director Shri Ratan Thiyam. The remaining months of the Festival will witness a series of carefully chosen presentations of various Indian dance and music forms by eminent artists.

Festival of India in France to be inaugurated by Dr. Karan Singh, president ICCR.

Namaste France is the reciprocal Festival for Bonjour India. A festival of India in France is taking place after a hiatus of 25 years.

Namaste France would open in Paris on with a folk dance performance by the well known danseuse Mallika Sarabhai. Many other prominent artists are to feature at the Festival.