

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

ITI Theatre Festival
Organiser: Bangladesh Centre of ITI & BSA
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: April 15-21
Time: 7pm onwards

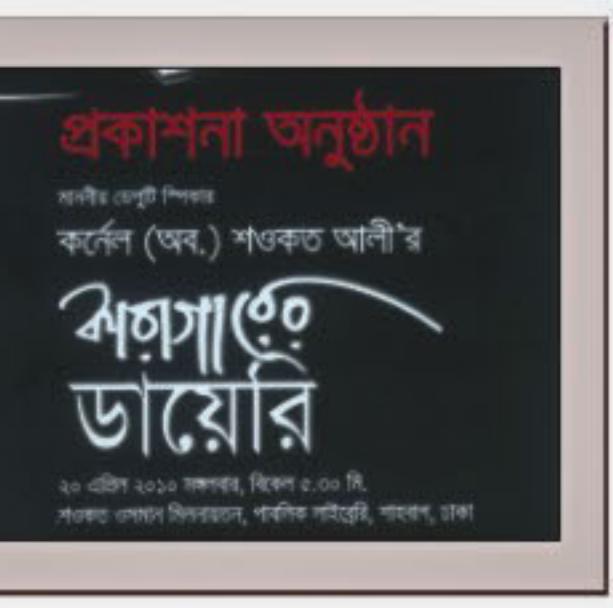


Group Art Exhibition
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, 275/F Road-16, Dhanmondi
Date: 16-30
Time: 12pm-8pm



Film Screening
Organiser: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre
Films: Documentary on Pather Panchali and Apur Sangsar
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, R-24, Gulshan-1
Date: April 24
Time: 6pm onwards

Book Launch
Book Title: Karagarer Dairy
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Public Library, Shahbag
Date: April 20
Time: 5.30pm



Dhamrai Metal Crafts

A paean to a dying art form



Images of receding glory.

A CORRESPONDENT

If you went down a typical alley of Dhamrai decades ago, you would have seen and heard hundreds of craftsmen and businessmen hard at work. A resounding sound came from metal being beaten to check for purity. "Before there were more than 200 workshops for mainly metal crafts of households just in Dhamrai, now there may be only 10 here and some in Savar. I used to help my uncle Shakhi Gopal Banik until he passed away and in 1993 and then I took over the business. I have about 22 young artisans working with me. This is the fifth generation of my family, in this trade beginning with my great grandfather Sarat Chandra Banik," says Sukanta Banik, proprietor of Dhamrai Metal Crafts.

There stands a 10-headed Vishnu in the showroom. Vessels made of copper and tin, bell metal (Kasha), that serve an array of cuisine, dazzle the visitor. A traditional Indian chess

set that extends to almost a metre rests at the centre of the room. It has a camel as a bishop, a castle as an elephant, a horse in its own avatar, and there is a king complete with ministers and foot soldiers. "When you move these characters, it appears to be a real battle," says Sukanta Banik. The chess set is priced at Taka 1,55,000. The ivory chess set is now in the museum.

There is a metal crafted familiar Nataraja statue of the Hindu God Shiva, the Lord of Dance. One of the brass pieces of around half metres stood out.

A statue of the wedding rituals of Shiva and Parvati stands at one corner. This is a replica of a statue kept in the Museum. There is Durga with two of her daughters, Lakshmi and Saraswati and sons Ganesh and Kartikeya killing the demon that had disguised itself as a buffalo.

Sukanta demonstrates a singing bowl. "When you are depressed and in

much labour, as for instance a finely etched brass pot to store rice that took 10 months to fashion. "It is very special as it can only be made once. The craftsman has to focus on his work a great deal and it hurts his eyes over a long period. It should be given sometime before another such work is taken as it hurts the artisans eye," adds Sukanta.

However, the future looks hazy for the metal craft business. Says Sukanta, "Most entrepreneurs have given up the business because it seems to have no future. If the government doesn't come forward, in the next five to 10 years, there will be no metal crafts industry left."

Given the waning fortune of the metal craft business, it is only natural that exports of metal crafts from Dhamrai have been put on hold.

All is not lost, however. There is a possibility of this craft developing a sizeable market in North America and Western Europe and India. Some of the crafts are sold to big showrooms in Dhaka.

He is exploring other avenues as well: the documentation of the metal craft, an exhibition in Dhaka and overseas, and finally a museum at Banik Bari, the family's 100-year-old mansion, which stands as a proud reminder of the family's once thriving business. All these are yet dreams for Sukanta as well as for Dhamrai metal crafts.



"Kochi Smarak Padatik Natya Utshab '10"

Padatik to hold weeklong theatre festival at BSA



Abu Mohammad Murtayish Kochi
 MAINUL HASSAN

Theatre troupe Padatik Natya Shangsad, Bangladesh, is to hold "Kochi Smarak Padatik Natya Utshab 2010," from April 24 at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. The troupe members are busy fine tuning last minute arrangements.

"Padatik will stage the 48th show of their production 'Jaalbalika' on the inaugural day of the festival," said Selim S. H. Chowdhury, chief executive, Padatik Natya Shangsad.

"The festival is being held in memory of Abu Mohammad Murtayish Kochi, one of the founding members of Padatik, Kochi played a lead role in organising the group and writing the troupe's constitution, and on other fronts, till his untimely death at the age of 45, on September 13, 2002. He was an active theatre activist, who contributed a lot to the theatre scene," added Chowdhury.

The festival will continue till May 1. The inauguration programme will be held at the National Theatre Stage, BSA.

The theme of the inauguration ceremony will be the Liberation War. The event will be inaugurated by Liberation War heroes. The inauguration programme will include dance performances by Nrityam and Spondon based on the theme of the Liberation War and a light and sound show, informed the organisers.

Apart from five theatre troupes from Bangladesh -- Theatre, Desh Natak, Shobachan, Dhaka Theatre and the hosts Padatik Natya Shangsad--two Indian troupes -- Ha-Ja-Ra-La from West Bengal and Mohakaran Binodan Shangstha from Tripura will stage their productions "Obogunthan" and "Rajendra Dhakir Golpo", at the festival.

"BSA should keep its hall open during a theatre festival, as in Dhaka people don't have many alternatives of quality entertainment. Keeping the hall closed due to a holiday hampers the normal pace of the festival, The hall can be kept open under special arrangements on holidays which will be helpful for all the theatre groups. BSA will be holding a programme at the Experimental Hall on their holidays but why we are being deprived of holding the festival on the day is not very clear," said Chowdhury.

On April 29, the festival will be held at the Experimental Hall because of World Dance Day.

"I am optimistic about the success of the festival, which will contribute to generating interest in theatre. I invite theatre enthusiasts to come to the festival and enjoy the performances," concluded Chowdhury.

Kareena yet to sign Madhur's Monroe film

There is a buzz that Kareena Kapoor is playing the lead role in director Madhur Bhandarkar's next film inspired by the life of legendary Hollywood actress Marilyn Monroe. But the director reveals that the actress is yet to give her consent.

"We know each other for years. We both admire each other's work. In 'Page3' we wanted to work together but there were some economic problems because of which we couldn't. I met her and we have spoken on it, but we need to sit for couple of times. Once it's decided we will make the announcement," said Madhur.

Asked if the economic problem was Kareena quoting a very high price, he said, "It's not because she was quoting a very high price. It was because our budget of the film was very less. The dates were also clashing. I think she was doing 'Chameli' at the time, I wanted to start my film."

"I am starting two films. I will speak about it later," said Madhur.

Source: Internet



Kareena Kapoor

Dhaka rocks to his tune

Heart to heart with Ali Azmat

NUSRAT JAHAN PRITOM

Body, voice and form of a rocker, heart and mind of a sage. Ali Azmat came to rock Dhaka for the sixth time on April 16 for the concert 'Djuice turns 5', organised by Rupkotha Events and Communications. "Dost", one of his earliest numbers that he wrote when he was in the band Jupiter, shook the world, long before he had joined Junoon. When he recorded the song after joining Junoon, the blend of instrument and poetry made him a rock phenomenon. In 2005, Azmat left the band to pursue a solo career. His first album as a lone ranger was the "Social Circus" after which he released "Klashinfolk".

This international artist (from Pakistan), who turns 40 today (April 20), shared his views with *The Daily Star* on music, society and individuality.



PHOTO: MUMTAZ M.

Excerpts from the interview:

How does it feel to be in Bangladesh again?
 Ali Azmat : Great. It's a very musical nation and the bands are just amazing.

Who inspired you in your early days? What was the rock scene like at that time? How has your musical career evolved?
 Ali Azmat : Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan had a lot to do with it. Rock was cornered at that time. We figured we could put a twist on it and induce a *deshi* flavour. The earlier reaction was, "What happened to Junoon!" but it became a hit gradually. I am still experimenting with sounds. It's going to take

some time to realize for me what the fresh sound is going to be.

What is your view on the South Asian (specifically Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian) rock scene?
 Ali Azmat: I would put Indian and Bangladeshi rock in one bracket as there still exists the essence of the '70s, '80s rock. However, the Pakistani rockers have moved on to experiment with sounds and fusion. There is a bit of jazz, funk. This messing around has gotten popular that part of the region, but at the end of the day it is still rock.

"Na re Na" from "Social Circus" got around 13

awards for best video, best costume, etc. This video has very thought-provoking lyrics, surreal images. Your comment on this and the third album?
 Ali Azmat: "Social Circus" was a multi-layered album with emotions overlapping. All the complexities of human nature--greed, lust intertwined in one frame. There is no single emotion, but a mixture. It's up to you to recognise. Working on a third album. Songs are ready, but haven't selected a name for the album yet.

Any motto:
 Ali Azmat: What you don't know will be used against you.

Readers' Column || Homaira's oil paint and pottery



The tri-state Bangladesh Association presents a crest to Homaira (3rd -R).

MASUDUR RAHMAN

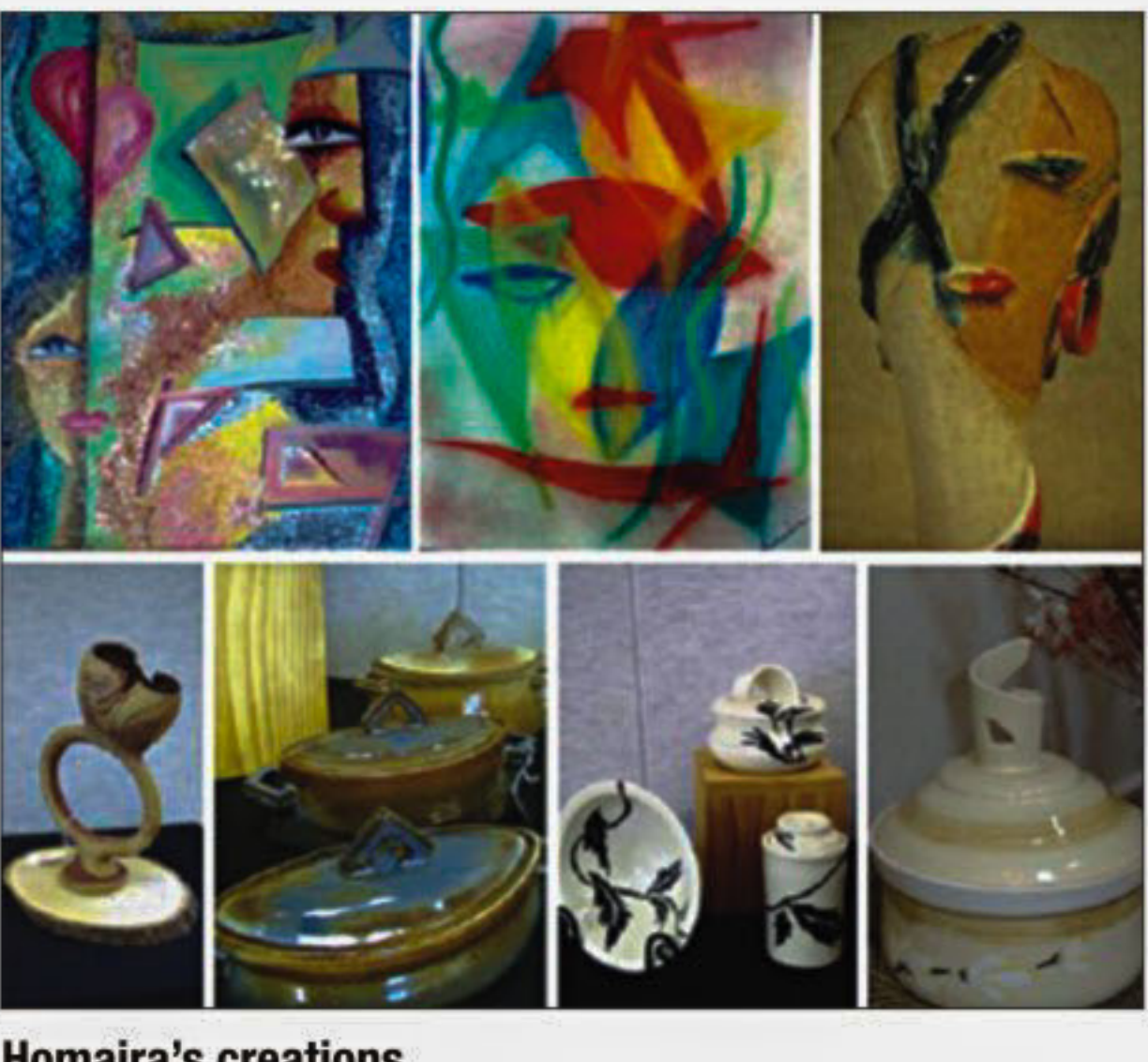
Beauty and symmetry are the main themes of Homaira Ahmed's current exhibition. Her work expresses the influence of ethnic culture and art. As an Architect, her artworks have two-dimensional and three dimensional effects with perspective lines and forms. She uses different media: pencil, charcoal, pastel, acrylic and oil. She is most comfortable working with clay in three-dimensions.

Homaira Ahmed is originally from Bangladesh. After her Bachelors in Architecture in 1983 from BUET, Bangladesh, she went to USA in 1986.

Since then she also started taking classes in art and sculpture. She trained in clay art and pottery, attending different international workshops including Arrowmont

School of Arts and Crafts. Homaira is finishing her Fine Arts Major from University of Charleston, WV. She also likes to write poetry. Her noteworthy publications are

"Ami Ta Ami Noi" and "Anno Rakam Maye". The tri-state Bangladesh Association presented a crest recently for her art and pottery exhibition.



Homaira's creations.