

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Calligraphy Exhibition

Calligrapher: Najib Tareque
Venue: Impressions Gallery, 67, Gulshan Avenue
Date: August 19-September 19
Time: 9:30am-2:30pm and 4-5pm (Sunday-Thursday) and 10am-1pm (Saturday)



Cultural Programme

Organiser: Russian Centre of Science and Culture and Bangladesh-Russia Friendship Society
Venue: Auditorium, RCSC, H 510, Rd 7, Dhanmondi
Date: September 16
Time: 6pm



Film Screening

Film: Lucky Luke
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi
Date: September 17
Time: 6pm



Photo Exhibition

To mark Int'l Day of Tourism
Title: Tourist Sights of Moscow and Moscow Region
Venue: Modern Language Institute, DU
Date: September 2-28



In Focus

Mymensingh Museum in a derelict state



AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Once a popular draw for the public, the Mymensingh museum is fast losing its appeal. Due to the sheer apathy of the concerned authorities, the museum manages to get just 10-20 visitors a day.

Many rare and unique relics collected from various parts of Mymensingh region are now

displayed in three damp rooms of the museum, putting them at risk of ruination. The museum has no proper preservation system, or adequate space for some 200 items collected from the zamindars' (landlords) palaces, mainly from the Muktagacha Zamindars.

To preserve the relics, including sculptures, metal and wooden works and differ-

ent objects collected from zamindars' palaces, the then Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh established the museum at the garden house of Zamindar Madan Babu on Amrita Babu Road in the district town in 1969. Since the establishment of the museum, it was run by Mymensingh Municipality. The Department of Archaeology took over charge in 1995.

Office Assistant Mohammad Saiful Islam, now also Assistant Custodian-in-Charge, said that due to space constraints, it was not possible to display ancient coins and manuscripts. When the renovation started in 1999, some 150 coins of the Victorian era were handed over for safe custody to Department of Archaeology but these coins are yet to be put on display due to space constraints, he added.

To compound matters, the post of Assistant Custodian has been lying vacant since February 2008.

The valuable collections from the palaces of Muktagacha, Gouripur, Atharabari include showpieces, skulls of elephants (the

only collection among all the museums of the country), heads of deer, flower vase, candle stands, a sofa set made of wood and, statues made of white and black stone by Italian sculptors, among others.

Many items like earthenware, a stuffed peacock, coins of different eras, a big umbrella used for hunting, ancient bricks with artistic designs and calligraphy on paper and palm leaves found here earlier are now missing from the museum, for reasons best known to the concerned authority, lamented Ashit Chakrabarty, a retired bank official. There is not even a list of all the relics displayed at the museum, he added.

According to museum insiders, the museum has no plan of action to collect more relics to enrich the collection. Meanwhile, the Regional Director of the Department of Archaeology Mohammad Abdul Khaleque told The Daily Star that the problem of space constraint could be minimised after shifting the museum to Shashi Lodge, another building formerly owned by the Muktagacha landlords, now being used as Teachers Training College (Female) office.

Following an inter-ministerial meeting between the Ministry for Cultural Affairs and Education Ministry in 1995, it was decided that after completion of the alternative buildings for the training college, Shashi Lodge would be handed over to Cultural Affairs Ministry so that the lodge and the rare



PHOTO: STAR

Many items like earthenware, ancient coins and calligraphy on paper and palm leaves cannot be displayed due to space constraint.

relics could be preserved. However, there are no indications that it will be handed over soon, said museum sources.

There is a definite lack of political will to improve the situation. Though the museum is under the Cultural

Affairs Ministry, the State Minister for Cultural Affairs Advocate Promod Mankin, MP from Mymensingh has not yet visited the museum. The minister was unavailable for comment, despite repeated attempts by this correspondent.



Hard Rain: Headlong Collision with Nature

Mark Edwards' exhibition in Delhi

KAVITA, New Delhi

Believe it or not, Bob Dylan's music is alive and well even in the inhospitable Sahara desert. Ask British "environmental communicator" Mark Edwards who was lost on the edge of the desert in July 1969. Rescued by a Turareg nomad who lit up a fire with two sticks, he was stumped to see the former produce a cassette player from which Bob Dylan belted out his famous political song, "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall".

Edward is quoted as saying, "Bob Dylan's song of love and death is burning into me. As Dylan piles image upon image, I have the idea to illustrate each line of the lyric." In the following years, the photographer travelled around the world on assignments that allowed him to take photographs that would mirror Dylan's powerful lyrics.

The outcome is the "Hard Rain: Headlong Collision with Nature" display which has



been viewed by over 15 million people in the world at city centres, botanical gardens, universities and even the United Nations headquarters.

The Hard Rain exhibition was recently on in New Delhi. The display was a merger of disturbing images with Dylan's lyrics, among the few

such endeavours in India.

A look back at the lyrics which Dylan's many fans are familiar with:

"...Oh, what did you see, my blue eyed son?"

And what did you see, my darling young one?"

I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it

I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it

I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin'

I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'

I saw a white ladder all covered with water

I saw ten thousand takers whose tongues were all broken

I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children

And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, and it's a hard

It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall."

As the viewer goes around the exhibition, the images unfold, each coupled with an environmental message. One of the shocking photographs is that of a Bangladeshi refugee carrying his cholera-stricken wife across to safety in Calcutta during the Bangladesh war of 1971. The photographer also asserts that if climate change caused the sea level to rise by just one metre, it would render 20 million people homeless in Bangladesh and India alone.

Another photograph: an oiled seabird is the lucky survivor of an oil tank disaster off the coast of Brazil that polluted miles of coastline and killed thousands of seabirds.

"Each photograph has its own story to tell," says Dr. Sudhanshu Sinha, head of British Council's Climate Change project in India and Sri Lanka, which presented the exhibition.

Dylan and Edwards couldn't have been better storytellers.



Photos from the "Hard Rain: Headlong Collision with Nature" exhibition.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebration

Boat race in Magura

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

A boat race was held on the river Gorai last Monday on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. Golabaria Jubo Sangha of Dariapur union in Sreepur upazila arranged the traditional competition in conjunction with the adjoining villagers.

A total of 16 boats from Magura, Jhenidah, Faridpur and Rajbari took part in the event, which attracted thousands of people. A boat named 'Jai Bangla' of Jagadish Mondal from Kuchiamora union in Magura sadar upazila captured the first prize. The boat of Kanai Lal Biswas of Baliakandi upazila sadar called 'Chokher Polok' emerged second while the boat 'Ma-er Doa' owned by Ramesh Biswas from Akpotra village from the same upazila



PHOTO: STAR

A total of 16 boats from Magura, Jhenidah, Faridpur and Rajbari took part in the event. bagged the third prize in the competition.

With Mohammad Rois Khan, secretary, National

Board of Revenue (NBR), in the chair; Dr. Nuruzzoha, director of Sky-view group

gave away the prizes as the

chief guest, while the executive engineer of Roads and

Highway, Faruk Ahmed was the special guest.

