

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Sarod Recital

Artist: Shahadat Hossain Khan
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, Rd-24, Gulshan-1
Date: November 13
Time: 7pm



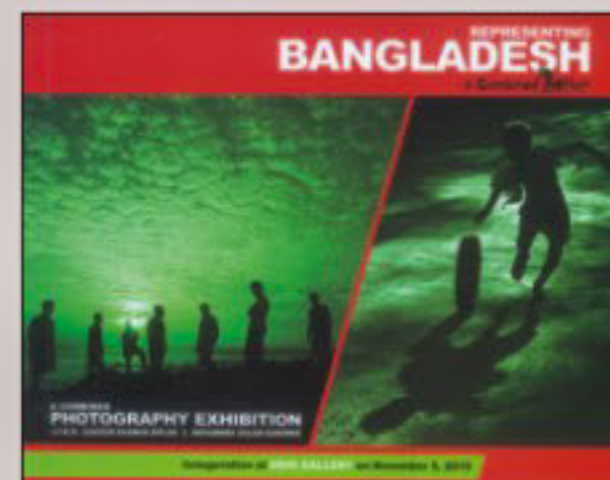
Duet Art Exhibition

Artists: Tajuddin Ahmed and Syed Iqbal
Venue: Tivoli Art Gallery, DCC Market, Gulshan-2
Date: November 5-15
Time: 10am-8pm



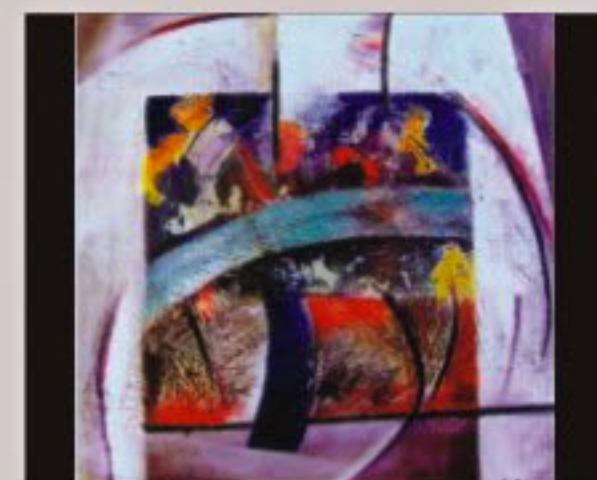
Photography Exhibition

Title: Representing Bangladesh
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, Rd 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: November 5-11
Time: 308pm



Solo Painting Exhibition

Artist: Khurshid Alam Saleem
Venue: Shilpangan Art Gallery, H-26, R-3/A, Dhanmondi
Date: October 31-November 10
Time: 10am-8pm



Out of sight, not out of mind

Jayasree Kabir keen on returning to Dhaka cinema



A CORRESPONDENT

Though she had isolated herself from the world of cinema for over two decades, her face remains ever familiar to the Bangladeshi audience, thanks to the song "Bimurto Ei Ratri Amar" (composed by Bhupen Hazarika) featured in Alamgir Kabir's film "Shimana Periy". Jayasree Kabir, seen lip-syncing, in the song became part of a classic.

The former Miss Calcutta (1968), who got her first break from Satyajit Ray through the film "Pratidwandi" in 1969, was married to filmmaker-producer Alamgir Kabir. Alamgir Kabir passed away on January 20, 1989. Jayasree and he divorced before that and the former moved to London with their son Lenin Saurav Kabir. During her stay in Bangladesh, Jayasree had done several films, of which "Shurjokonya", "Rupali Shoikotey" and "Mohona" are noteworthy.

Though living in seclusion, Jayasree has not completely severed her ties with Bangla cinema. During a recent phone conversation, she revealed that she keeps herself updated on Dhaka and Kolkata films.

Jayasree, who currently teaches English at a college in London, said, "I had cut myself off from acting and the media when I was finding it difficult to juggle a demanding career and bringing up my son as a single parent." She did however give occasional voice-overs for BBC and Channel 4, attended workshops on cinema and represented Satyajit Ray in film festivals.

"Now, with my son settled in his career, I can consider projects which have long been buried in my mind," she said.

Jayasree is keen on checking out the facilities in the Bangladeshi film industry, where she worked for a decade and has enduring memories.

"It shouldn't be difficult to improve the standard of Bangladeshi films, with the aid of technology," she said. "Young filmmakers need to take the initiative towards that end."

Obama praises Aamir



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Hollywood superstar Aamir Khan is in cloud nine.

The reason: visiting US President Barack Obama told him that he has heard a lot about his work.

Aamir, who attended a private dinner Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh hosted for the American first couple here on Sunday at his 7, Race Course Road residence, was cornered by the waiting media persons as soon as he came out of the power-packed event at around 10 pm.

Replying to a question about what Obama told him, Aamir said, "President Obama said he has heard a lot about my work and my films."

Aamir, who was clad in a cream coloured kurta pajama, said the President's wife Michelle told him that she had danced to the title number of his 2006 superhit film "Rang De Basanti".

According to the actor, the dinner "was an opportunity to meet big personalities. I am a big fan of Manmohan-ji and I am happy that he called me up."

Besides Aamir, Bollywood lyricist Javed Akhtar and his actress-activist wife Shabana Azmi and Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman were also present at the dinner.

One of the Hindi film songs played at the dinner was "O Meri Zohra Jabin Tujhe Maloom Nahin" sung by Manna Dey in the 1965 movie "Waqt" featuring Balraj Sahni.

Rabindranath as a protagonist

Palakar premieres new play "Banglar Mati Banglar Jol"

JAMIL MAHMUD

Over the years, Dhaka theatre enthusiasts have seen several adaptations of Rabindranath Tagore's works. But for the first time Tagore himself emerges as the protagonist of a play -- Palakar's innovative production "Banglar Mati Banglar Jol".

The play had its premiere at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, on November 7.

Eminent author-playwright Syed Shamsul Haq has written the play based on Tagore's "Chhinnopatro". Veteran theatre activist Ataur Rahman -- who has successfully directed adaptations of Tagore plays previously -- is the director of the new production.

The timeline selected for the play spans between 1889 and 1895. During these years, Tagore stayed at different places in Bangladesh such as Shilaidaha, Shahjapur and Patishar to look after his family estates. This period is also known as "Shadhona Parjay", as during this time he wrote and edited the journal

"Shadhona".

"Chhinnopatro" was also written during the era, and it elaborately highlights the rustic beauty of this region. Tagore observed rural Bengal closely during his stay here, which many believe, significantly enriched his writings.

The play is a rough sketch of how the Nobel laureate poet might have seen Bangladesh and how that splendour comes alive in his writings.

The play begins with Tagore stepping down from his palanquin at his Shilaidaha residence. Though Tagore had previously come here, this arrival differs from other short visits. A warm reception by the estate staff and villagers suggest his popularity as both an employer and a noble man.

In the play, Tagore's impressions of Bangladesh are narrated by the character [played by Shamim Sagar]. The poet-landlord tells the audience about his love for this land. At times, these impressions are narrated through recitation, and at others, through singing or just usual conversations.



The play is a rough sketch of how the Nobel laureate poet might have seen Bangladesh and how that splendour comes alive in his writings.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.



A boat has been symbolically used in the play. The poet used to love sightseeing from his boat during his stay here.

The nearly two-hour play also highlights his notable literary works that he wrote during his stay in East Bengal. For example, while Tagore talks about how he was inspired to create characters -- based on real life -- for "Shamapti", the next sequence brings the story to the stage. This way, "Chitrangada", "Khudhito Pashan", "Postmaster" and "Chhuti" also came under the limelight during the play.

According to the play, after seeing a new bride at a ghat in Shilaidaha, Tagore wrote "Shamapti". He wrote "Chhuti" after meeting a young boy and penned "Postmaster" after coming across the local postmaster.

His association with Bauls, especially with Gogon Harkara, has also been significantly portrayed in the play. The last sequence of the play shows Tagore leaving East Bengal, and the poet tells Harkara that he is

carrying Harkara's and other Baul tunes with him. It is widely believed that Tagore was inspired to compose "Amar Shonar Bangla" -- National Anthem of Bangladesh -- after he heard Gogon Harkara's "Ami Kothay Pabo Tarey".

The character of Indira Devi -- Tagore's niece, whom he promised to write about everything during his stay in East Bengal -- also comes alive on stage. Shahana Bappi enacted the role. The character mostly follows the protagonist and recites letters sent by him.

The cast also included Aminur Rahman, Shahriar Khan, Nahida Sharmin, Aniket Paul, Rashed Khan, Selim Haidar and Fahmida Mallick.

Nasirul Haque Khokon was the light designer of the play. Ajay Das has directed music, and Lucy Tripti Gomes designed costumes. Aniket Paul was the set designer and choreographer.

"Banglar Mati Banglar Jol" is a homage to the Nobel laureate poet by Palakar prior to his 150th birth anniversary next year.

Saleem's impassioned observation on nature

TAKIR HOSSAIN

New York based Bangladeshi artist Khurshid Alam Saleem's solo painting exhibition is now on at Shilpangan Contemporary Art Gallery, Dhanmondi in Dhaka.

The painter has drawn inspiration from nature and its various manifestations. Strong brushstrokes and bold colour configuration define the highly abstract work of the painter. As an abstract expressionist, Saleem concentrates on pure forms and compositions where deep red, emerald green, bright yellow, burning crimson and soothing sapphire have been applied in thick overlapping layers.

Saleem represents nature, with surging colours like ash, azure, white, shades of chocolate-brown and mauve. Large and tiny bars, circles, dashes and round shapes -- merging into each other -- suggest the seasons in Bangladesh. Black and white textures add to the drama of the compositions. Both elements of inertia and energy are hinted by Saleem's works. His bars of red, yellow, black and ash and texture in greys -- with orange in the centre -- are vibrant.

"I try to communicate with nature. The nature that surrounds us is an endless source of beauty and mystery. I find inspiration in the finest details, like a drop of rain, foliage, a fragment of white in a blue sky etc. Each of these elements contains a new story for me and an invitation to embark on a new journey," says the artist.

At the exhibition, in his "Image of Nature-40" (acrylic on canvas), one finds amazing shapes seen briefly in many geometrical forms. Looking closely, from various angles, one realises that the subject explores the layer of colours and their simplistic reflection of nature.

"Image of Nature-30", depicts several



Paintings by Saleem.

blue, yellow and white compositions. The compositions look vibrant for the use of varied colours simultaneously. Black is also highlighted in the work with some blurred forms.

"Image of Nature-60", shows some fragmented compositions in black, yellow and white. Some horizontal and vertical lines



crisscross over the paintings.

Born in 1951 in Mymensingh, Saleem graduated in drawing and painting from the Institute of Fine Arts (now Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka). He took a special course in advanced colour print at the Department of Art and Art Education, New York University. He has held several

solo and group exhibitions in different parts of the world and has received a number of prestigious awards. Saleem was awarded Olympic medal and torch as an invited artist from the US at the Beijing Olympic 2008.

The Shilpangan exhibition ends on November 11.