

WHAT'S ON



Amar Ekushey Book Fair 12
Venue: Bangla Academy Premises
Date: February 1-29
Time: 9am onwards



Moshedul Islam Film Festival
Organiser: Tapur Tapur
Venue: Moti Mandol
Date: Feb 16-18
Time: 3:30pm



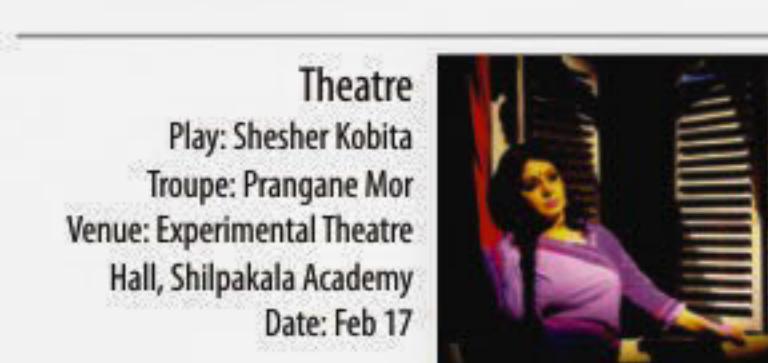
Solo Photography Exhibition
Title: Estates De Bangladesh
Photographer: Dr. Pierre Claequin
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
Date: Feb 17- Mar 1



Three Decades of Shilpkala Academy
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy
Premises
Date: Feb 19-20
Time: 10:30am onwards



Solo Exhibition
Title: Philosophy of Life
Artist: Ruhul Amin Kapil
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhannondi
Date: Feb 9-21
Time: 12pm-8pm



Theatre
Play: Sheher Kohita
Touque: Prongne Mor
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shilpkala Academy
Date: Feb 17



Solo Exhibition
Artist: Kashinath Salve
Venue: Gallery Cosmos, R-6, H-115, New DHOs, Mohakhali
Date: Feb 7-20
Time: 11am-8pm



Group Art Exhibition

Title: Studied Reflections

Venue: Radius Centre, Gulshan-1

Date: Feb 10-Mar 2

Time: 10am-8pm



A CORRESPONDENT

Poplular TV actress Ishita is set to make her debut as an author at this year's Ekushey book fair. Her first book "Nirobe" has been published by Shobdo-Shilpo Prokashoni.

On the book, Ishita says it is the story form of a TV drama that she wrote in 2008. The play was aired then and has four to five characters, she adds.

Ishita began practicing her writing skills during her childhood, with teen magazine Kishor Tarakol featuring several of her stories. However, "Nirobe" is her first serious work, Ishita adds.

Apart from acting, Ishita is busy directing TV dramas and writing new screenplays for TV. So far she has written 11 plays for television and wants to try her hand at more serious forms of writing if she can manage the time. Although the artist is keen to visit the book fair, she is busy taking care of her ailing grandmother. But Ishita asserted she intends to go to the fair whenever she can get time off.

Mahbubur Rahman Khan, Brahmanbaria: Do you remember your performance on the drama "Shomoy Oshomoy"?

Ishita: Definitely. Thank you for mentioning the play. I played the role of Haradhan in the play - which was written

AZIZUL HAKIM @ DS CAFE



Azizul Hakim - once active on theatre with Aranyak - began his journey on television with a small role in the 80s. He earned bigger roles as his career grew more dynamic, dominating the TV screen throughout the 90s. After all these years, Azizul Hakim continues to perform both on TV and the silver screen, along with stints as a director. The veteran artiste recently chatted with The Daily Star (TDS) and his fans at DS Cafe.

TDS: You were once a good football player. Would you choose a career in sports if you did not become an actor?

Azizul Hakim: I had such plans, while it was also my father's dream. He was a football player himself and he always patronized my footballing ambitions. I played football for my school and college as well as taking it to the professional stage by playing for Victoria Sporting Club in Dhaka First Division football. Undoubtedly, I would become a professional football player if I didn't enter the world of acting.

Fardin, Dhaka: Was becoming an actor your childhood dream?

Azizul Hakim: I always had an aspiration of becoming an actor. Cinema was a major source of entertainment at that time, and watching the favorite stars on the screen always inspired me. Anyway, the chance to work on the stage came to me while I was playing football. I joined Aranyak in 1977. Thanks Fardin for your question.

TDS: Does it cause you pain that cricket is more popular than football now?

Azizul Hakim: No there is no such regret. We also had a glorious past in football when players like Salahuddin and Gazi bhai played on the field. They were the star footballers of that time. Football used to be the most popular sport in our country. Cricket earned its place gradually. Hockey also used to be a popular choice before. But I think patronization is a crucial thing in sports. Cricket started drawing more patrons than football at one point. When our cricket team claimed its spot in the international arena, we learned further towards the game. Football, however, is yet to make a major leap. Our football in the global arena has gone stale.

TDS: Are you involved in any social welfare projects?

Azizul Hakim: Anyone can see their parents as complete friends. Friendly relations with parents is always a good thing. All sons and daughters should remember that there is no one as close to them as their parents.

Kamrul Islam Marmun, Dhaka: Our rivers and environment are under threat. What ways are there to escape the impending dangers?

Azizul Hakim: Thank you for asking such an important question. I'm as concerned as you are about the decaying state of our rivers. The environment is also being polluted for many reasons. However, we can be optimistic regarding the works of some pro-environment organisations. But the fact remains that we all have to be aware and cautious on the issue - for protecting the environment.

TDS: What do you do in leisure hours?

Azizul Hakim: I hardly get any time off. The little I get, I choose to spend at home. I give time to my children and wife. I like to watch movies and listen to music. Sometimes I also get the chance to travel.

Sharmi Sultan, Patuakhali: Is acting your passion or profession?

Azizul Hakim: It is both. Nazmul Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka: What is your definition of love?

Azizul Hakim: Everyone has their own definition. The pain of not getting what you want is love.

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TRANSCRIBED BY SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Manipuri Theatre's Kohe Birangana and Shree Krishna Kirtan go to India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manipuri Theatre will hold two shows of its productions "Kohe Birangana" and "Shree Krishna Kirtan" at the International Manipuri Literature and Cultural Festival to be held in Guwahati, Assam in India. The Bangladeshi troupe will hold the shows on February 18 and 19. Moreover, the troupe will hold a couple of more shows of the plays in other places in Assam and Tripura during its ten-day tour.

Chief of the troupe Shuvashis Sinha informed that the local Bishnupriya Manipuri Writers Forum in Guwahati will organise the festival, where Manipuri communities from Bangladesh and India will uphold their ethnic identity through different cultural performances.

Both the Manipuri Theatre productions have been written and directed by Shuvashis.

"Kohe Birangana" is based on Michael Madhusudan Dutt's "Birangana Kabya". The play articulates four verses among 11 from the original text. The play features a group of female characters from the epic "Mahabharata" - Shakuntala, Draupadi, Dushala and Joma.

Jyoti Sinha played the four characters. Other performers, who helped Jyoti in chorus, were Smriti Sinha, Shukla Sinha, Sunanda Sinha and Bhagyolokhi Sinha.

On the other hand, "Shree Krishna Kirtan" is adapted from medieval period poet Baru Chandidas' writing with the same title.

Chandidas wrote "Shree Krishna Kirtan" to highlight the anthropomorphic aspects of Lord Krishna. It was an arduous process as he had to pore over puran and religious books. In the play, Shuvashis worked on only seven episodes out of 13 from the original piece.

Jyoti Sinha and Aparna Sinha play as Radha and Krishna respectively. Shukla Sinha will do another lead character in the play.



A scene from "Kohe Birangana".

PHOTO: MANIPURI THEATRE

GIRIJA DEVI

When eyes sparkle, diamonds gleam...



In Vidushi light (left). Girija Devi has reached unmatched heights of excellence in Indian classical music.

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

I wasn't sure which of the two were shining brighter: her solitaire diamond nose pin or her sparkling eyes as she spoke excitedly about her life in classical music. At 83, Vidushi Girija Devi shows no signs of slowing down in her pursuit of performing classical music as she continues to captivate audiences the world over. She had come to perform for the first time in Dhaka. I was meeting her at an informal setting, to get to know more of her fascinating decades of journeying through the music world.

Girija Devi was born in Varanasi, India in 1929. Well versed in the 18th century classical *khayal*, she is the acknowledged figurehead vocalist of the Benares and Senia gharana classical music. Awarded the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 1989, Girija Devi has been carrying forward the legacy of the Hindustani Classical Music style for five decades at the highest level of excellence. She was also awarded the Padma Shri in 1972, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1977, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 2010, the ITC Award and the prestigious Maharashtra Award this year.

In her own unique way, Girija Devi seems to have bridged the gap between age and youth in her personality. On the stage, one sees her as the virtuous performer rendering complex ragas with an ease that only comes with maturity. Off-stage she still maintains her childhood hobby of collecting dolls.

She says, "I had a tremendous liking for dolls and would readily memorise 2 to 3 songs so that my father would reward me with a one-rupee doll from the fair. By the time I was 5, my interest in music deepened and I started to take lessons from vocalist and *sarangi* player Sarju Prasad Misra in

The urge to extend one's career should not be dictated by monetary reasons but rather by passion for the arts. And the art form itself can survive if there is a healthy bond between the elderly and the young talents so lessons and traditions can be passed on from one generation to the next, she adds.

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In her long career, she has graced the stage with a number of luminous artistes of the era. "I have taken part in the immensely successful *jugalbandi* with the late Shobha Gurru and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. Shobha would address me as her bari didi (elder sister). When I protested (since she was elder to me by 3 years) she said it was not age, but rather one's level of genius and talent that defines seniority," Devi says nonchalantly, almost as if she is remembering someone special rather than something of pride.

I ask the next natural question: who do you see taking up the mantle in the future?

She says, "There are several talented artistes who are putting in a lot of effort and taking talmi with me. From Kolkata we have Dalia Rahut and Rupantar Kar; Surendra

reached its heights in the eastern kingdom of the Nawab of Oudh at Lucknow. The *thumri* found a second home on the banks of the holy Ganga in the city of Benares where the sentiments of this music found roots that have given it its distinctive genre.

"In my opinion, a woman reaches her peak potential to sing classical at 60, while for men it could extend to around 80 plus," she says. "But by the grace of the Almighty I still love to sing and render live performances."

The queen of *thumri*, *khayal*, *kajri*, *chaiti*, *hor*, *tappa*, *jhulan* and *bhajan*, Girija Devi effortlessly sings *khayal* of Benares gharana but performs the *thumri* in *purabi ang* typical to the tradition. When asked about her *parapara* or *gharana* (school of thought), Girija Devi elaborates on the Senia and Benares gharana. The *alaap* of *drupad* and *taankari* of *kheyal* is presented in a shorter form. *Tappa* can be presented effortlessly for five minutes and not more. This is so because the style holds back variations. *Rezwaj* makes the breathing in process easier, and along with it comes clarity, she says.

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