

WHAT'S ON

Group Drawing Exhibition
Title: His Light, His Shadow
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H-42, Rd 16 (new), Dhamondi

Tagore Dance-Drama
Title: 'Mayar Khela'
Organiser: Shadhona
Venue: National Auditorium, Shilpakala Academy
Date: December 23

Theatre
Play: Mahajoner Nao
Troup: Subachan
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: December 21
Time: 6:30pm

Remembering Soovass Dutt
Film Screening
Venue: Dance and Music Auditorium, Shilpakala Academy
Date: Dec 22-27

Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Journey of Ali Akbar
Artist: Ali Akbar
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, H-60, R-7A, Dhamondi
Date: December 14-21

Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Kazi Anirban
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, H-60, R-7A, Dhamondi
Date: December 19-29
Time: 3pm-8pm

Classical Music Fest
Organiser: Chhayanaut
Venue: Chhayanaut Auditorium, Dhamondi
Date: Dec 20-21
Time: 1st day from 6pm; 2nd



Alif Laila's expressive ragas

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

The elegant Alif Laila, nicknamed Kunkum, in a maroon Jamdani took the stage with her sitar on the last day of the Bengal ITC-SRA Classical Music Festival in Dhaka. She has been instrumental in initiating the festival. She has plans to perform soon at the prestigious Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London where she will be presenting her music -- her expressions of the ragas -- with her watercolour paintings. Alif Laila is one of the very few, internationally performing, star artists of Bangladesh today.

This year has been particularly productive for Alif. In her recent CD, "I Am a River", combining sitar and jazz-saxophone she was accompanied by Tanmoy Bose, an icon in world music. She also composed an Indian classical piece with the sitar and the cello, which was performed at the Bangladesh Embassy, Washington DC in April this year to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh-US relations.

She recently received an 'Award of Excellence' from Asha, a Washington-based women's rehabilitation organisation, for her cultural contribution and instilling positive energy among women. Her dream, she says, is to spread the message of peace through her music on sitar and generate global cultural harmony.

Alif has released seven CDs and two DVDs of Indian classical sitar.

She was initially trained in Indian classical music (sitar) in Dhaka, Bangladesh by the late Ustad Mir Qasem Khan, nephew of legendary maestro Ustad Allauddin Khan. During her final years of training, she attended the College of Fine Arts in Dhaka, where she graduated in 1981 with a bachelor's degree and received several awards for her watercolour paintings.

In 1988 she moved to the United States. Her intense study of Indian classical music, on sitar, continued with teachers, Partha Chatterjee, Krishna Bhatt and Kushal Das.

Alif Laila has taught sitar at the University of Maryland and now teaches privately in the US.

"It is obviously difficult to create a mahol (environment) for North Indian classical music in the West. However, there is a definite revival and I am happy with the response from the audience," says Alif.

Her artistic and creative energy has resulted in direct and producing numerous audiovisual recordings highlighting classical sitar. Her DVD "Hridayaragam" was featured in the Women's History Month at the Smithsonian in 2008 and "Strings of Resonance" was nominated for the 'Best Classical Music Awards' in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2010.

Talking about memorable performances she says, "My performance at the Shaheed Minar in 2004 was a momentous occasion for me. Playing Palash Kafi, a mixture of Bhangpalesri and Kafi, I was quite apprehensive about how people would respond to semi-classical

instrumentals because until then, only street plays, songs and dances were performed annually as part of the homage to our Language Martyrs."

"To my astonishment the crowd seemed to sway to the melodious dhun (tune) followed by requests for an encore. I could feel the pulse of the people blend with the endless emotion of the raga Palash Kafi particularly in the month of February, when Polish flowers are in full bloom," she said.

"Another eventful day was in October 2004 when I had the opportunity to play raga *Desh* exclusively for Sur Samrat Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Though the performance was brief, it was a unique experience to train for a week in instrumentals and vocals along with other top artists like Shishir Kona Dhar and Tejendra Mitra among others," Alif added.

On her preparation for concerts, the talented sitar player says, "Before I take on a concert, I set my own target and study the subject religiously. Playing a raga deserves total concentration and devotion."

Alif Laila is a dreamer. She imagines playing the sitar on the stairs of Taj Mahal and weave delicate designs with ragas close to her heart such as Malkaus, Bhairavi, Khamaj, Darbari and Abhog some day. "It is an artistic piece of architecture where bliss and pain merge into one; very much similar to the ragas," she added.

Knowing Alif as intimately as I do since our school days, I would not be surprised if her dreams come true.



Tagore singers at their melodious best.

Chirokaaler Rabindranath - Timeless Rabindranath

KAVITA, New Delhi

Music, recitation and songsreputed Rabindra Sangeet singer Lily Islam brought this interesting mix of art forms to Delhi with her production, "Chirokaaler Rabindranath" (Timeless Rabindranath). The multi-media presentation encompassed the period of 1880-1941 in Tagore's life, when his creativity was at its peak.

So there were interesting bits from his early days in the musical environs of the Jorashanko Thakur Bari in Calcutta where his talent flowered under initial classical music teachers like Bishnu Chakraborty and Jadu Bhattacharya. There were allusions to his muse and confidante sister-in-law Kadambari who inspired him to create his timeless poetry. Included too were major milestones like "Valmiki Pratibha" and "Bhansingher Padabali".

"Timeless Rabindranath" was conceived and directed by Lily, director of cultural organisation Uttarayan who brought along a team of her students--11 vocalists from Dhaka. The four Kolkata-based musicians backed up the singers. The music director was famous Kolkata-based violin maestro Durbadal Chatterjee. The two practiced reciters were Bhaswar Banerjee and Dahlia Ahmed.

"Tagore left behind a vast body of literature, music and art. It is impossible to touch upon everything so we have compressed the production into visuals that are relevant with the music," said Lily who describes her 11 years at Shantiniketan as the "golden period" in her life. "Shantiniketan cast its spell on me--it made me imaginative, romantic and creative," she says on a lyrical note.

"Chirokaaler Rabindranath" had all the makings of a fine production--the gentle melody of Rabindra Sangeet that was alternately contemplative, joyous and full of longing, combined with great music and recitation. However, the end result was far from perfect as the pre-recorded music tended to drown and detract from the singing. The violin, tabla and sitar too were barely audible.

Hopefully, a future multi-media production to be staged in May in Dhaka is able to iron such irritants. Based on Tagore's great affinity for flowers this new creative venture by Lily offers the audience a chance to glimpse a less known facet of the great bard.



Miss USA, Olivia Culpo (L), reacts as she is crowned 2012 Miss Universe by Miss Universe 2011, Leila Lopes (C).

PHOTO: AFP

REUTERS, Las Vegas

A 20-year-old beauty queen who plays the cello and is a breast cancer advocate was crowned Miss Universe on Wednesday, the eighth time an American has won the pageant where the world's most beautiful women parade.

Olivia Culpo, 20, a brunette from Rhode Island, was chosen by a 10-judge panel from 89 contestants representing countries ranging from India to Kosovo and Britain.

Culpo, wearing a red, long-sleeved dress for her final look, was the eighth winner from the United States in the contest's 60-year history, and the first Miss USA to take the title since 1997.

Miss Philippines, 23-year-old Janine Tugonon, was the runner-up and Miss Venezuela, Irene Sofia Esser Quintero, came third after the top five answered brief questions posed by the judges.

Culpo takes the place of last year's winner Leila Lopes, who was the first ever Miss Universe from Angola.

12th Int'l Short Film Fest ends in Dhaka "720 Degrees" receives Tareque Shahriar Best Independent Short award

JAMIL MAHMUD

Ishtiaque Zico's five-minute film "720 Degrees" received the "Tareque Shahriar Best Independent Short" award at the 12th International Short and Independent Film Festival. His film is among five winners that the organisers announced at the closing ceremony held at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library on December 19.

The weeklong festival started on December 13 simultaneously at four different venues and saw over 200 films from around 30 countries.

Zahidur Rahim Anjan, one of the jury members for the category, said that they selected "720 Degrees" for its "successful experimentation on reaching an apparently abstract subject to a newer height".

The film is an audiovisual journey to unmask the layers of relationships and our perceptions of reality. Made in 35mm format, the film participated in Venice Film Festival in 2010.

Danish filmmaker Ole Bendtzen's 52-minute documentary "Football is God" received the Best Documentary award for portraying the inner-emotions of three Argentine football fans.

Croatian film "Then I See Tanja" [directed by Juraj Lerotic] received the Best Fiction award. Nestor Jardin, Filipino film scholar and one of the jury members for the category, explained "The film is a successful portrayal of human relations".

This year the organisers have initiated a new award named after filmmaker Tareque Masud and the first award goes to Polish film, "A Piece of Summer". Jardin said that the film, directed by Marta Minorowicz, is a touching documentary set against the backdrop of nature.

The Special Jury Mention award goes to "Nasty Bitter Sweet", a film by Belgian director Alice de Vestele.

Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu handed over credits and certificates to the awardees. N. Rasheed Chowdhury, convener to the festival committee, gave the vote of thanks. Hasnat Abdul Hye, chairman, festival committee announced the end of this edition of the biennially arranged festival.

Organised by Bangladesh Short Film Forum, the weeklong festival started on December 13. BSFF has been arranging the festival biennially since 1988. It is one of the oldest film festivals in the country.

The festival also included seminars, a memorial lecture and workshop. Nestor Jardin delivered the Alamgir Kabir Memorial Lecture on "Recent Trends in Asian Cinema". Another seminar emphasised on generating a national film policy.

The organisers held a retrospective on French director Chris Marker. They also screened four of Tareque Masud's films to pay tribute to the filmmaker.

Other features of the festival were: tribute to filmmakers Mani Kaul, Thoen Angelopoulos and Eric Rohmer through screening films; a session on women filmmakers; and screening of selected films from "Travelling Film South Asia '12".

The festival was dedicated to filmmaker Tareque Masud and director of photography Mishuk Munier.



A scene from "720 Degrees".

Game of nerves

Traditional Lathikhela on Victory Day

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

A lively lathikhela (mock-fight with sticks) was held recently at the premises of Satdoha bazaar in Magura municipality area in observance of Victory Day.

Organised by Sonar Bangla Shilpi Goshthi in the area, the participants were lathials from different areas of the district.

Earlier, a discussion was held with Sardar Abdur Rashid in the chair. The discussion was addressed amongst others by the Mayor of Magura municipality Mohammad Altaf Hossain, local community leaders Mohammad Moteleb Hossain Khan, Municipality Councillor Mohammad Mahabub Hossain and Mohammad Aminuddin.

In the evening, a musical soiree featuring 'Bichargaan' was staged at the same venue which continued till midnight.

Vice-chairman from a reserved seat in Sreepur upazila parishad Nargis Sultana; chairman from Sreepur Sadar Union Parishad (UP) Mashur Rahman; UP members Khalilur Rahman and Idris Ali as guests formally gave away the prizes among the winners at function, with Atoar Rahman in the chair.



Lathials engage the crowd.

PHOTO: STAR



Starry eyed ISHANA

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Within a span of just a few years, Lux beauty star Ishana has made her mark in the media. Of late, she's been busy with TV plays, including an ongoing mega-serial "Khonikalo" on Maasranga TV. Ishana spoke to The Daily Star (TDS) over the phone recently, on "Khonikalo", and her busy schedule with other dramas.

TDS: Tell us about "Khonikalo" that is being aired on Maasranga TV.

Ishana: I play the character of Namita. The story revolves around a rather big family, with Pijush Bandhopadhyay as the head of the family. Namita his daughter, is a quintessential modern young girl.

TDS: Where are you shooting for "Khonikalo"?

Ishana: We have been shooting at Uttara, for quite a while now. The house is now known as Khonikalo, and all the cast members have become more like a family.

TDS: Which other TV plays of yours are being televised right now?

Ishana: There's a TV series called "Generation Next Dot Com", on Banglavisoin, directed by Ejaz Munna. Another drama, named "Lonka Kando", is also being aired.

TDS: Are there any works of yours yet to be televised?

Ishana: Yes. A new series, directed by Murad Parvez, named "Ondho Tirondaj"

will go on air very soon. I've also completed shooting for another series called "Nij Grihe Probashi", directed by Azizul Hakim. That one will also be televised soon.

TDS: Tell us about "Ondho Tirondaj".

Ishana: I love the story and my character. In the drama, my father is a clerk, struggling to make ends meet. My sister battles in her own life, and I get frustrated and go astray. I haven't played a role like this before.

TDS: Where are you right now?

Ishana: In Nawabganj, near Dhaka, shooting for a drama series called "Manikgonj er Boro Miya" directed by Idris Haider. I play the character of Iui, which is rather interesting. I'll be off to Dhaka next, to shoot for a new project by Zahurul Islam, named "Shonghat".

TDS: What roles are you inclined towards?

Ishana: I am always looking for challenging roles, where there is a lot of scope for acting, and displaying my talent. I don't want to be a "furniture" actress.

TDS: Aside from acting and modelling, aren't you also involved with anchoring?

Ishana: So far, I have anchored three programmes. One of them, "Celebrating Life", was aired on Channel i. "Utshob Uchhashe" was televised on Bangla Vision. And a programme called "Botanic Aroma Cinema r Gaan" was telecast on ntv.



SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Impress Telefilms latest movie "Pita", a story against the backdrop of the Liberation War, is set to release today in 40 movie theatres across the country. The film, written and directed by Masud Akand and made in digital format, has already premiered. The cast of the film includes Jayanta Chattapadhyay, Bonyia Mirza, Shayla Amin, Shamima Naznee, Upoma, Moyn Durrani and Jewel Rana, while director Masud Akand himself also plays an important role on screen.

The story of the film is based on the Hindu-majority village "Chhoy Ani". Nobody in the village knows of the genocide of March 26 and the wind of the Liberation War has not touched the village yet. No one in the village knows how to operate the only radio in the area. The Pakistani military attacks the village, forcing the Hindu villagers to hide in the jungles. And thus begins the story of a brave freedom fighter father.

Director Masud Akand has been working as an actor in Humayun Ahmed's TV plays for a few years now, including his last venture "Ghetu Putro Komola". When asked why he chose this subject for his directorial debut, Akand said he wanted a memorable start, and no story is bigger for this country than the struggle for Liberation.

Actor Jayanta Chattapadhyay also said he loved working for the film because of its storyline.

Busy actor of the small screen, Kalyan Corraya plays the lead male character in the film. Talking to The Daily Star, he said that the work for his debut on the silver screen has been memorable, because of the story, and the character he played.

An evening of rock music by Chandrabindoo

Indira Gandhi Culture Centre, Dhaka in association with the State Bank of India in Bangladesh and Channel i, is organising an evening of Rock Music by popular rock band from Kolkata, India, says a press release. Chandrabindoo led by Upal Sengupta and Channel i, "Shera Kontho", will perform at 4pm on December 21, at the Fantasy Kingdom at Ashulia, Dhaka and at 4pm on December 22, at Foy's Lake in Chittagong.

Chandrabindoo, a Bangla rock band with 14 albums traces its origins to 1989. The band has performed at more than 100 live concerts each year for the last 12 years.

"Chandrabindoo's music has shades of pop, reggae, calypso, techno and traditional forms. The lyrics are often humorous with serious undertones. Chandrabindoo is the last letter of the Bengali alphabet and thus the name bears an essence of reaching for the ultimate.

The current line-up of Chandrabindoo comprises Upal, Anindya, Chandril, Surajit, Arup, Rajshekhar Sibru, Sourab and Tirthankar.

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10:10 Drama	07:30 Apes
12:05 Phone & Live Studio	09:30 Amageddon 2012
09:30 Concert	
BANGLAVISION	HBO
10:10 Bhalo Thakun	10:35 Scream
11:05 Anasrur Rannaghar	12:35 Choclat
06:25 Gaan O' Fan	02:50 Rush Hour 3
11:25 Ami Ekhon Ki Korbo (Live)	04:35 Paranormal Activity 3
ntv	06:20 Attack the Block
02:35 Tele-film	07:50 Ong Bak 2
06:45 Roogmudhuri	09:30 Batman Begins
09:00 Close Up One	
11:30 Drama	04:30 Revenge
Rtv	09:30 Packed to the Rafters
12:35 Jadur Deshe	10:30 Grey's Anatomy
07:35 Glamour World Dot Com	11:30 Two And A Half Men
08:20 Drama Serial	12:00 Last Man Standing
12:05 Phone Live Music	
Desh TV	National Geographic Channel
03:00 Priyogon-er Gaan	02:30 Tiger Jungles
08:15 Bindu Thekey Britto	05:30 Ultimate Wild
09:45 Drama	08:30 Dangerous Encounters
11:45 Call-er Gaan	09:30 Flying Reindeer
Boishakhi TV	11:30 I Don't Tell My Mother
05:30 Music Train	
08:00 Amar Guitur Amar Gaan	Discovery Channel
08:35 Drama	02:30 Time Warp
	05:30 Mun vs. Wild
	08:30 Curiosity

DRAMA SERIAL	
ATN BANGLA	Boishakhi TV
09:20pm Chhayabrita	06:20pm Bhorasoa Coaching Centre
Channel i	
11:30pm Roshni	BANGLAVISION
ntv	08:15pm Harkiprey
08:15pm Mayagang	09:45pm Gulshan Avenue
ETV	Rtv
09:30pm Dhol	09:55pm Oloshpur

NEWS BULLETIN	
BTV	Boishakhi TV
News (Bangla) at 12pm, 2pm, 5pm, 8pm, 9pm, 10pm, 11pm	News (Bangla) at 10am, 2pm, 7pm, 9pm, 10am, 11am, 12pm
ATN BANGLA	News (English) at 9am, 6pm, 10pm, 11pm
News (Bangla) at 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 7pm, 10pm, 11pm	BANGLAVISION
News (English) at 9am, 6pm, 10pm, 11pm	News (Bangla) at 10am, 2pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm
CHANNEL i	News (English) at 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm, 11pm
News (Bangla) at 2pm, 9pm, 10:30pm	Rtv
ntv	News (Bangla) at 1:45pm, 6:45pm, 10:45pm
News (Bangla) at 2pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm	Desh TV
ETV	News (Bangla) at 2pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm
News (Bangla) at 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm	Maasranga Television
	News (Bangla) at 7pm, 1am

TALK SHOW	
ATN Bangla	11:30pm Maha Shatto Al-Quran
12:30am Lead News	
CHANNEL i	ntv
09:45am Trinio Matra	12:30am Hello America
12:00am Akjer	Desh TV
	Shongbadpatro
Boishakhi TV	Rtv
12:30pm Hridaye Jummabar	10:40am Tarokalap
BANGLAVISION	Gtv