

WHAT'S ON

4th Annual Classical Music Conference
Organiser: Lakshyap
Venue: Convention Centre, N.C., Narayanganj
Date: Dec 26-27. Time: 1st day: 5am-10pm, 2nd day: 7pm-5am

Kathak Dance Festival
Organiser: Kathak Dance Community
Venue: Chhayanand Auditorium, Dharamond
Date: Dec 24-26
Time: 6:00pm

89th Birth Anniversary
Architect: Muzahid Islam
Organiser: Muzahid Islam Foundation
Venue: Bakkulata, Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University
Date: Dec 25

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

Musical Soiree
Artist: Lily Islam
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, R-24, Gulshan-1
Date: December 28
Time: 6:30pm

Group Drawing Exhibition
Title: His Light, His Shadow
Venue: Bengali Gallery of Fine Arts, H-42, Rd 16 (new), Dharamond
Date: December 18-25
Time: 12-8pm

Concert
Artist: Quazi Krishnokoli Islam
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, R-24, Gulshan-1
Date: December 29
Time: 6:30pm

Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: The Story of Darkness
Artist: Rafiqul Islam
Venue: Zameq Gallery, Shahbagh
Date: Dec 21-25
Time: 10am-8pm



FAYZA HAQ

Christmas means joy on earth. It is the Yuletide season when the three kings found baby Jesus with his parents in the stable, following the star -- or so the Bible story goes. Here in Dhaka, the head of the church welcomes Christmas carols. These timeless songs are also heard at hotels and international schools. Having participated in some of these events with my friends, it seems that Yuletide isn't quite complete without these songs. Papers are given to get the right words in the carol singing, and Santa Claus is there at the hotel with his red and white costume, with the inevitable reindeer sledge at the back. Big malls in Dhamondi celebrate the event with bright, glittering posters and letterings. It is not only the Christian community that enjoys the event with cakes and pitha of various size and colour.

Cards from overseas carry the notes of the precious Christmas songs such as "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me" or "Silent night, Holy night". Figures of long limbed deer, coniferous trees and snow-covered

Christmas Revel and rejoice

houses usher in the time from friends and relatives, who live and work across the seven seas. One is also invited to homes, where Christian friends cook delicious polau, firmi and kebabs. Goodies like chocolate and cookies are passed around. In areas like New Market the season is remembered and Christmas trees are lit up in shops. Even at cake shops, cards with Santa Claus images are available with the yummy pastry.

The television, newspaper and magazines all carry special features on this season. Many have dance parties, not only on the New Year but also on December 25. Staying up and going to the church at midnight to watch carols being sung is the done thing. Wine and fruit juice punch is a common drink in large bowls during this season. Roast meat or duck stuffed with seasoning, curried meat pies, or mince pies -- with raisins, chopped up fruit rinds and sugar -- are available at Gulshan market. Connoisseurs and foodies go in for the plum pudding too. Egg nog is sometimes served at elite gatherings. And so the seasonal revelry goes on beyond midnight.



Christmas in rural Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Last minute touches to usher in Christmas are underway in 25 villages in Pabna district. Thirteen churches, including Baptist and Catholic houses of worship have been beautifully decorated with the narrative of Christ's nativity, predominantly in

Pabna Sadar upazila, Chatmohar upazila, Ishwardi upazila, Ataikula and Atghoria upazila. "Special prayers for Christmas and carols will be held in all the churches in the district. As the part of the traditional event, a cake festival, cultural and sports competitions will be organised," said Utam Das, secretary of Pabna Baptist Church.

"Muktijudder Natyatshab-2012" comes to an end

PRANABESI CHAKRABORTY, Chittagong

With a call to all patriotic people of the country to stand united against all communal forces, a three-day drama festival titled "Muktijudder Natyatshab-2012" concluded in Chittagong last Sunday.

Pantomime, a quarterly publication from Chittagong city, organised the festival at the District Shilpakala Academy. KDS Group supported the festival. The first day of the festival featured a mimodrama titled "Freedom" and a monodrama "The Border" -- both presented by Pantomime Movement. Scripted and directed by Rezwana Razan, Pantomime Movement's production "Freedom", through apt expressions and body movement, described how the Pakistan army with the help of their local cohorts brutally tortured the general people of the country. It was the 16th show of the mimodrama. Following the show, the monodrama "The Border", scripted and directed by Raj Ghosh, was staged. The drama zooms in on the relationship of a border guard and a child, who, later is shot by the former's colleague. Theatre troupe Anadikalpo staged the play "1971", written by Humayun Ahmed, on the second day of the festival. Directed by Masudur Rahman, the play narrated the story of Rafique, who was shot dead by the Pakistan army as he helped the villagers and freedom fighters, pretending to be a collaborator.

The festival concluded with the staging of "Kobor", written by Shaheed Munier Chowdhury. The troupe Alor Khonje staged the drama based on the Language Movement. Earlier, former Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiddudin Chowdhury inaugurated the festival as chief guest. KDS Group's Managing Director Selim Rahman; theatre personality M Saiful Alam Chowdhury; cultural activists Pradip Dewanji, Alam Khorshed, Professor Arup Barua and journalist Najmuddin Shyamal spoke on the occasion.

Yuletide memories



Andrew Kishore

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Andrew Kishore, Singer
I was born and raised in Rajshahi, and spent some wonderful childhood years there. Those carefree times make me nostalgic. Every year during Christmas, I look back at those days and reminisce the great moments. When I was young, I used to look for gifts under the pillow on Christmas Eve, as the gifts were always left there by my parents. We were a middle-income family and we would be happy with whatever gifts my father would get us. Interestingly, instead of eating at home on Christmas, we would visit a nearby community center and join the Christmas feast there. Plenty of games were arranged on those days, and I also participated in some of them. I also used to enjoy the special plays being staged on the occasion. Each year I waited for Christmas to come. It was the day for us to celebrate and make merry. Certain responsibilities came with age. Even after moving to Dhaka, I used to visit Rajshahi on Christmas. However, that regular practice changed over the years. The past few years, I've been outside the country, performing at concerts, on Christmas.

My son, who studied in England, has now come back home, but my daughter is now studying abroad. Although the whole family cannot get



Kallyan Coraia

together on Christmas, the day is still a happy occasion for me. My plan for this Christmas is to arrange a get together for the whole family and pray for the welfare of everyone. **Kallyan Coraia, Actor**
I grew up in Lautia village, under Pabna district. A Christmas fair would be at the Christmas celebration in Motharupur Mission, which was near our home. Those days are still fresh in my memory. Each Christmas, I eagerly anticipated new clothes as gifts, which always made me very happy. A Christmas fair was arranged near our village mission. My friends and I made all necessary preparations for exploding firecrackers on the occasion. We also used to enjoy hymns that were performed. Another thing that was very important to us was to collect homemade pitha and cakes from other Christian households. It was a fun thing that we did together. After moving to the capital, everything became Dhaka-centric. I usually do not keep shooting schedules on Christmas day. I spend time with my family, go to the church and spend time with my friends. I've arranged a small get-together on Christmas Eve where all my close friends will come. This Christmas, I will pray for my country and its citizens. I hope Christmas brings good tidings for everyone.

MUSINGS BTV, almost half a century later

SADYA AFREEN MALlick

How BTV has changed! When it was launched in 1964 (under the name of Pakistan Television Corporation), people would excitedly flock in front of their TV sets, waiting expectantly, looking at a blank screen with the words PTC on it. The title music "Apache" by the Beatles was a household tune.

From December 25, 1964, the national TV started to telecast different programmes for the first time. The TV centre was then at the DIT building in Motijheel, Dhaka. With a one-room studio and limited technical hands, the station presented countless programmes, mainly on local culture.

Ten years later, on January 9, 1975, the station was finally shifted to Rampura to modernise the facilities and broadcast technically developed programmes. By 1980, the black and white programmes were replaced by colour.

Surprisingly the big name producers -- the heart and soul of the variety of programmes -- were not always career artists.

There was of course, the ever-innovative Mustafa Monowar famous for his artistic touch with the puppets and directing plays, from Shakespeare to Tagore. Mustafa Kamal Syed, Abdullah Al Mamun, Atiqul Huque Chowdhury, Nawazish Ali Khan and Mustafizur Rahman formed the driving force behind the variety programmes and TV plays. Sakina Sarwar, Musa Ahmed, Kazi Abu Zafar Siddique, Qamrunnessa Hasan and others supervised the music programmes. But there were also famous personalities such as the former Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal and Professor Abdul Matin conducting the quiz programme "Bolun Dekhi"; Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury hosting "Apar Doctor"; Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed anchoring "Shoptoborna" and the popular musical



Remnants of a golden past: Champa, Abdullah Al Mamun and Raisul Islam Asad in *Shahzadiri Kalo Neqab* (left); Asaduzzaman Noor and Dolly Zahur in *Eishob Dintratri*. Courtesy: Ek Jiboney Television by Faridur Reza Sagor.

"Bornali"; and Fazley Lohani in "Jodi Kichu Money Na Koren" to name a few. From April 2004, BTV branched off into a 24/7 international dimension by launching the satellite channel BTV World.

Now that we are open to the world, perhaps it's a good time to evaluate the standards we are projecting to our international audience. It's not secret that the BTV audience has progressively been moving away. And it is not because of the lure of satellite TV. The top private channels enjoy massive popularity, not only for their entertainment shows, but also for documentaries and news programmes. BTV is in the unenviable position of playing catch-up with programme formats, content and style. A closer look would probably reveal that the pioneering BTV producers are decision-makers at private channels.

So where's the bottleneck? Critics complain that there is a dearth of quality performers and musicians. Many eminent musicians who were the heart and

soul of the immortal songs of the yesteryears are no more. Accompanists are mostly untrained and have very little incentive to develop their skills further. Pay cheques don't compare well with private channels'. Technical development has come to a standstill. Many of the musical programmes are supposedly taped in private studios or for those who can afford it, in overseas studios. Some point out that the whole set up for programmes has become like another puppet show, artistes arriving on stage only for lip-synch while the troupe of accompanists listlessly strum their instruments for show. Even the stage decorations are re-used innumerable. So it's down to the make-up crew and the cameraman to make a good show of it all.

Even with the declining audience, BTV has the largest volume of viewers simply because of its network -- viewers not less than 100 million in the country alone, with more than 10,000 registered artistes. Surely advertisement revenues alone could be a major source of funding for the

renovations? The directors of yesteryears could develop a meaningful training institute for the new generation.

Another radical approach could be that BTV cuts its investment in any new developments, and becomes a net purchaser of privately packaged programmes only. With its nationwide and now international audience, that would certainly get the sponsors' attention to fund these programmes. BTV can then be more of a telecaster, and outsource all original content production.

The 48th anniversary of BTV seems to be a jarring reminder that the role of the state run institution needs to be re-evaluated. From its inception, BTV has been the birthplace of talent from all fields of entertainment -- from the charismatic newscasters to actors, dramatists, singers, dancers, sports personalities to the charming announcers. Innovation, skill and sincerity were the buzzwords. At the threshold of mid-life crisis, now seems a good time as to see how that brilliance can be revived.

Shilpakala Academy produces jatrapala Isa Khan



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the year long project to celebrate the declaration of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, as the "2012 Capital of Islamic Culture for the Asian Region" by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in association with Ministry of Cultural Affairs undertook different initiatives and arranged programmes. As part of the initiative, the academy has produced a jatrapala. Titled "Isa Khan", the pala depicts the life and struggles of the mighty ruler of Sonargaon. It is an insight into the history of this region as well. The academy premiered the production on October 17 at the Bangladesh Loko O Karushilpa Foundation premises in Sonargaon, the capital of Isa Kha's Bhati region. The production saw its Dhaka premiere on December 22 at the Experimental Theatre Hall. Written by Bhairavhat Gangopadhyay, the pala has been directed by eminent jatra artiste Milon Kanti Dey.

Isa Khan's conflict with the Mughal emperor and his fight against Man Singh is an off-read story. The two battles as well as internal politics has come forth throughout the pala. A group of jatra artistes including Milon Kanti Dey, Shishir Rahman and Tanmoy performed the major roles in the pala. The traditional ambience of jatra was apparent during the performance. Apart from costumes and set design, the beats of the trumpet, tabla and dhol as well as the non-stop recital by the orator in the background made for a perfect ambience.

Cultural programme at "Manikganj Bijoy Mela"

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj

A cultural function was held at the "Bijoy Mela" (Victory Fair) stage in Manikganj last Saturday night. Manikganj Samity in Dhaka arranged the events where singers Romana Islam, Farzana Chumki, Siddikur Rahman and Russel rendered solo. Artistes of Shilparath performed dances. The artistes of Mirpur Bangla College staged a musical, "Banglar Mukh". Singers Romana Islam and Farzana Chumki were given reception at the function.

Earlier, the organisation honoured 16 high school teachers of seven upazilas and Manikganj Municipality of the district. Manikganj Samity also gave stipend to 324 high schools of the district. Columnist Syed Abul Moksd was present at the function as chief guest. Manikganj Samity's president,



Professor Mahfuza Khanam presided over the function where local lawmaker ABM Anwarul Haque; former lawmaker Mofizul Islam Khan Kamal; Manikganj Zila Parishad's administrator and president of Manikganj district unit of Bangladesh Awami League, Golam Mohiuddin; stipend distributing committee's convener, Aliuzzaman Khan and its member secretary Himel Khan among others addressed the gathering.



06:30	Shubho Borodin	11:30	Bangla Feature Film
07:50	Borodin-e-Amra	08:15	Drama Serial: Bagha Sher
08:20	Drama Serial: Bismillah Collage	09:35	Straight Line
Boishakhi TV			
12:15	The Business Show	05:10	Cars 2
04:15	Shorashori Doctor	07:00	Wall-E
08:00	Drama Serial: Boro Baro	08:40	Home Alone 2: Lost in New York
11:00	Special Talk Show	10:45	Spider-Man
BANGLAVISION			
01:05	Bangla Feature Film	04:25	The Wedding Date
06:30	Shoundarjo Kotha	06:00	Gnomes & Juliet
09:05	Nacho Bangladesh	07:35	Hop
Nacho		09:30	Mr. Bean's Holiday
11:25	Raat Biratey	11:25	Finding Forrester
Rtv			
12:35	Bangla Feature Film	02:30	Grey's Anatomy
09:05	Drama Serial: Boyra	09:30	Packed to the Rafters
	Pariba	11:30	Two And A Half Men
09:50	Look at Me	12:00	Last Man Standing
12:05	Business Talk	Discovery Channel	
Desh TV			
02:30	Gaan R Gaan	05:30	Man vs. Wild
03:00	Bangla Feature Film	08:30	Curiosity
08:15	Drama Serial: Radio	10:30	Gator Boys

DRAMA SERIAL			
ATN BANGLA	Rtv	08:15pm	The Side Effect
09:20pm	To To Company		
CHANNEL i			
11:30pm	Roshni	07:45pm	Sat Kahon
nTv			
09:45pm	Ochena Protimbho	08:50pm	Maasranga Television
ETV			
09:30pm	Karni	08:15pm	Nagark
BANGLAVISION			
08:15pm	Generation Next Dot	09:00pm	Ashin

NEWS BULLETIN			
BTV	Boishakhi TV	News (Bangla) at 12pm, 2pm, 5pm, 8pm, 9pm, 10pm, 11pm	News (Bangla) at 10am, 2pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm
News (English) at 10am, 4pm, 10pm	News (English) at 9am, 6pm, 8pm		
ATN BANGLA	BANGLAVISION	News (Bangla) at 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 7pm, 10pm	News (Bangla) at 10am, 2pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm
News (English) at 9am, 6pm	News (English) at 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm		
CHANNEL 9	Rtv	News (Bangla) at 2pm, 9pm, 10:30pm	News (Bangla) at 2pm, 9pm, 10:45pm
News (Bangla) at 2pm, 9pm, 10:30pm	Desh TV	News (Bangla) at 2pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm	News (Bangla) at 2pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm
News (Bangla) at 2pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm	News (Bangla) at 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm		

TALK SHOW			
BTV	10:25pm	Shombhabonar Bangladesh	12:00am
CHANNEL i			
12:30pm	Tarika Kothor	12:02am	Democracy
12:30am	Et Shomoy	12:22am	Shangrakor
ETV			
12:02am	Ekushey-er Raat	12:55am	Modhastar
12:02am	Ekushey-er Raat	12:55am	Muktakab
Boishakhi TV			
			Gtv