

WHAT'S ON

Zainul Qamrul Exhibition

Venue: Nalini Kanta Bhattacharya Gallery, National Museum

Date: Dec 22-Jan 18

Time: 10am-8pm

In Memory of Sohrab Hossain

Title: Tobu Amarey Debona Bhullitay

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

Date: Dec 28

Time: 6pm

Kathak Dance Festival

Organiser: Kathak Dance Community

Venue: Chhayanaud Auditorium, Dhanmondi

Date: Dec 24-26

Time: 6:05pm

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Return to Eden

Artist: Nasima Khanam Queenie

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

Date: Dec 13-27

Time: 3pm-8pm

Photography Exhibition

Title: Eternal Japan

Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi

Date: Dec 21-25

Time: 12pm-8pm

NEWSbytes

BTV's 49th anniversary



Marking the 49th anniversary (December 25) of Bangladesh Television (BTV), a get together, participated by prominent and promising artistes, and technicians, will be held at 7:30am at the rooftop of Channel i office, Tejgaon in the capital, according to a press release. All well-wishers are also cordially invited to the event.

Bangladesh Television is a state-owned Television network. It started broadcasting as Pakistan Television in what was then East Pakistan on 25 December 1964. It was renamed Bangladesh Television after the independence in 1971. Broadcasts in colour started in 1980. About 2 million televisions receive transmissions from the network's 17 relay stations.

The Merry days of Christmas!!

Jingle-bells... jingle all the way

FAYZA HAQ

Christmas means peace on earth and goodwill to men. 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 to be sung in hotels and at schools. Having participated in some of these events with my friends who have been studying overseas, as in London and Paris -- Yuletide isn't quite complete without this event. Papers are given to get the right words in the carol singing, and Father Christmas is there in the hotel with his red and white costume, with the inevitable reindeer sledge at the back. Big malls everywhere celebrate the event with bright, glittering posters and letterings. It is not only the Christian community that enjoys the event with rice cakes and "pithas" of various size and colour, with "goot" and coconut in some, and certainly sugar in many.

Cards from overseas carry notes of the precious Christmas songs such as "In the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me a partridge on a pear tree", and Beethoven's "Holy night". Long-limbed deer, coniferous trees and piles of snow-covered houses usher in the time from friends and relatives, who live and work across the seven seas--as in Canada and UK. Apart



PHOTOS: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

from trips to hotels etc, with friends and their families, one is also invited to homes, where Christian friend with polau, firni and kebabs. Goodies like chocolate and biscuits are passed around for fun and frolic, apart from a sense of a good and holy time of the three kings and their precious gifts of incense, and myrrh to the child of Mary and Joseph. The Bangla TV ads bring in the essence of Yuletide in the candy in the shape of gnomes--with caps and bears -- that they present. Even in areas like New Market the season is remembered and Christmas trees are lit up in shops. Even in cake

shops, cards with Father Christmas images are available along with the yummy pastry.

As during Eid, there are celebrations all around. Bangladesh being an admixture of Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists, churches and educational institutions run by priest and nuns -- in their flowing robes and hoods or sashes -- are common factors. Those who follow the belief of the four apostles are not hounded. The television, newspaper and magazines all carry the news of this season.

Many have dance parties, not only

in the New Year, but on the 25th. There are gala celebrations in Radisson, Sonargaon. Ruposhi Bangla hotels, where people prefer to eat and make merry--with conical hats with glitters, whistles that roll out, and new clothes--kamiz, kurtas, saris in buoyant colours and worked upon with silk and "zari" threads, in gold and silver. Staying up, and going to the church in midnight to watch carols being sung, is the done thing from Bangladesh to Hawaii, the US and the UK, as well as even the Easter Islands, with their large boulders. Places like Trinidad and the Mauritius islands are in a celebration

mood with dancing and feasting. Wearing fine feathers and masks is routine in Latin America. It was so even in Italy, way back in the days of Romeo and Juliet, and in England in the days of Elizabeth I.

Wine and fruit juice punch is a common drink in large bowls during this season. Roast meat especially the drumstick, and the breast of the chicken, or duck stuffed with bland seasoning, curried meat pies, or mince pies--with raisin, chopped up fruit rinds and sugar are available in the Gulshan market. Connoisseurs and gourmets go in for the plum pudding too. Eggnog too is sometimes served in elite gatherings. And so the seasonal revelry goes on beyond midnight and beyond, the drink of punch, with fruit pieces and juice is welcomed too.

Some leave the place for Bhutan or Kathmandu to surround themselves with nature's beauty, jam and jelly along with pastries oozing with liquor, chocolate nut cakes and biscuit. Since these are international cities, western food is not unknown. Buying embroidered "kurtas" bags and cushions of wool has been common for decades. The embroidery there is loved by many. They surpass the gaudy Indian elements found in the market in Dhaka. So the holiday at Simla or the Hill Tracts of Bangladesh or even moving off to Sylhet in a three wheeler is something looked forward to during the Christmas holidays.



Dance is a form of soul-searching ... Rachel Perris

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Rachel Priyanka Perris is a dancer-scholar who has been studying classical dance for years, and is now a researcher of Gaudiya Nritya, a classical dance form of Bengal. She has won many international awards, performed on stages abroad, and is currently doing her M.Phil in Gaudiya dance. In a conversation with The Daily Star, the bright artist shared her passion, challenges and aspirations.

You have been dancing from a very young age. What still drives you to do more?

Rachel: The credit for that goes to my family. My mother always encouraged me to dance. My parents also took me to films and plays from a very early age, and I developed a liking for my culture. And that I think has led me to focus on Gaudiya

dance, which is a classical dance form of Bengal. I came to know about it when Professor Mahua Mukherjee conducted a workshop in Dhaka in 2004. I took a lot of interest in it, and I'm still continuing my work in this field.

Gaudiya is not as popular as some of the other classical dance forms. What are the challenges and advantages of working on it?

Rachel: There are challenges, definitely. Because people don't know about it, so it takes a little time for them to warm up to it. A lot of people think it's a religious matter; but the word Gaudiya comes from Goor (sweet), and from the Gaur region of Bengal. My guru has revived the dance form. So I have to tell people that this is what it is. But the advantage is that no other traditional dance form is in Bengali. Like, Kathak is predominantly in Hindi, Bharatnatyam is in Tamil, but it is easier for them to extract the essence of it, because they understand the language.

What has been your motivation to pursue higher studies in Gaudiya dance?

Rachel: I have been in love with dance from my childhood. When I found out that you can also study about it and make a profession of it, I was not going to let that chance slip. When I went to India to study, I realised dance is not just entertainment; it's also a form of soul-searching. I strongly

feel that our country is culturally very rich, but people don't know about a lot of it. If we can incorporate all that into one, we can show the world a complete picture of our culture.

The most memorable of your performances ...

Rachel: The tour of Oslo with Nrityanchal will always be special, to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony when Dr. Md. Yunus received the award. The day after, there was a concert that featured celebrities of the stature of Sharon Stone, Angelica Houston, Lionel Ritchie and Rihanna, I'll remember that one too. The other one would be my solo performance at the prestigious Uday Shankar Dance Festival.

Your vision and aspirations with Gaudiya dance?

Rachel: I want people to look at dance as more than an entertainment form, but as an education. There is a lot of influence of the West in our dance and music; there is nothing wrong with that, but knowing your roots is important. If a department of dance is established in our universities, and Gaudiya is a form taught there, it will be a dream coming true. I want the world to know Gaudiya as the dance of Bengal, not of just Kolkata or West Bengal.

Let the joy of Christmas light up life for all!

TV WATCH

A CORRESPONDENT

Maasranga Television

Boro Ananda
On Christmas Day, Maasranga Television will air magazine programme "Boro Ananda" at 8pm. Popular singers Andrew Kishore, Tapan Chowdhury and promising singers Kona and Nancy will be featured artistes. Actors Emon, Nirob, Ishita, Moonmoon and Saju Khadem will also take part at the programme. Hosted by noted singer SI Tutul, the programme is directed by Kabir Bakul.

Khushir Borodin

"Khushir Borodin" will air at 9pm. The programme will feature a musical soiree, dance performance and more. Gabriel Dalim Baroi and Miriam Ray Jui are the hosts, while the producer is Shikriti Proshad Borua.

SATV

Christmas Chimes

On Christmas Day, SATV will air musical soiree "Christmas Chimes" at 9pm. Singers Shuvo, Suman, Amreen, Anita and Mehreen will perform in the programme, produced by Kamruzzaman Ranju.

Banglavisyon

Borodin-e Shantir Barota

On Christmas Day, a special TV programme "Borodin-e Shantir Barota" (hosted by Dina Baidya) will go on air on Banglavisyon at 5:25pm. Apart from a drama on Santa Claus, the programme will also feature music, dance, recitation, interview and documentary.

Following the Passion for Acting: Allen Shubhro

SAURAV DEY

Acting is an art which deals with delicate emotions. The greatness of an actor lies in subtly exposing the character in front of the audience. Allen Shubhro Gomes, a popular face on small screen and a young theatre artiste, believes in the brilliance of acting. Entering into theatre as an enthusiast, Allen, within a short period, gained recognition for his ability to manifest the characters he plays, both on stage and on small screen. His natural acting and lively presence brought him popularity as an actor at a young age. In a recent chat with Star Arts and Entertainment, Allen talked about his career, dreams and more.

How did you step into the realm of acting?

Allen: Having been born and growing up in a Christian community, I was involved with acting from childhood, albeit in a limited space. From then, a passion for acting grew inside me and that passion got fuelled when I saw a play by theatre troupe Prachyanat. Watching the play I discovered the magnificence of acting. Then I got admission to the Prachyanat School of Acting and finished their six-month course. Later, I entered the troupe, and appeared in a couple of plays.

As a new generation actor how would you evaluate our theatre scene?

Allen: Our theatre has immense potential and it is the cradle of our entire acting arena. I think we need to stick to



it for enriching the acting sector. Theatre teaches us how to act, how to be one with a character.

How did you jump into the small screen?

Allen: My first appearance on small screen was in "Icche Holo", a drama serial by Amitabh Reza. Later, I appeared in many single episode dramas, television serials and commercials. Now I'm busy with television plays. However, theatre is also a regular place for me.

Tell us the difference between the two.

Allen: Theatre is difficult since you have to perform live before the audience, while television acting gives you the chances of a second and third or even a fourth take. Still I get nervous before getting on the stage. One has to go through tight rehearsals before playing any role. So theatre and television are quite distinct though they share many common attributes.

What are your aspirations as an actor?

Allen: I always dream of coming to the silver screen. I love to play unusual characters which the audience are not familiar with. I will even play the role of a 60-year-old, if I'm offered. The characters which the audience do not usually see are my favourites. I love what I do. My aspiration is to follow my passion and get more involved with acting so that I can present something brilliant to the audience.

Here's wishing everyone a Merry Christmas!

Xmas for Kalyan

Yuletide then and now

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Kalyan is keeping stride with other actors on the small screen. That's not all. He recently appeared in the movie "Pitah" based on the Liberation War.

With Christmas on us, the talented actor is abuzz with Christmas plans and indulges in some nostalgia with The Daily Star.



What's your plan for Christmas?

Kalyan: I have a lot of plans. Celebrating with family and friends are in my priority list. I have already invited some guests. A cultural function has been chalked out at my home. Besides, I will go out to catch up with my close colleagues.

Is Christmas a hit with you?

Kalyan: I enjoy the day thoroughly as it comes just once a year. I enjoy gifting kids with chocolates. Their smiles make it all the more worthwhile. Apart from this, my family turns out cakes and the house wears a festive look.

Who does the Christmas shopping in your family?

Kalyan: Earlier, my father did it. After entering the media world, I do the shopping. I love offering gifts to my dear ones at Yuletide. Besides, I enjoy buying new dresses for my elders.

What gifts do you prefer as special gifts on the day?

Kalyan: Colognes are a hot favourite. I enjoy giving the same gifts to others on the occasion too.

How was it during your childhood days?

Kalyan: As a child, I celebrated Christmas Day at my maternal uncle and grandfather's home in Kaliganj and Pabna respectively. But I usually spent the day at my uncle's home in Kaliganj as most of my cousins came over; we had a lot of fun: particularly sports and fishing. We also enjoyed the game of putting stones on rail tracks. I was always keen to buy shoes that lit up. We were also excited at bursting crackers.

What is your aspiration at Christmas time?

Kalyan: In my childhood, I eagerly awaited the festival. I would begin the countdown for Christmas from the first day of December. This time I will go to church and specially pray for the peace and prosperity of the country.