

WHAT'S ON

Amor Ekushey Book Fair
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan and Bangla Academy
Date: Feb 1-28
Time: 3pm-9pm

Photography Exhibition
Title: War and Colonies 1914-1918
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dharmamandi
Date: Feb 25-Mar 9
Time: 3pm-5pm

South Asian Music Festival 2014
Venue: Main Auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: Feb 28
Time: 4pm

SAARC Literary Festival Dhaka 2014
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum, Shahbagh
Date: Feb 27-28
Time: 9:30am onwards

Solo Sarod Recital
Artist: Rajaraj Chowdhury
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Gulshan 1
Date: Feb 28

Solo Musical Soiree
Artist: Ranesh Chandra Datta
Venue: Smriti Milon Kendra, Chhayanaout
Date: Feb 28
Time: 8:30pm

National Classical Music Conference
Venue: Theater Institute
Chittagong
Date: Feb 27-28
Time: 10am onwards

Basanta Utsab
Organiser: Chhayanaout
Venue: Chhayanaout Auditorium, Dharmamandi
Date: Mar 1
Time: 7pm



Strumming the heartstrings

Laura Cortese and the Dance Cards meet Joler Gaan

FAHMIH FERDOUS

Music in itself is a language; one that needs not be taught, nor can it be. It can effortlessly diffuse through barriers -- be it geographical, racial, cultural or linguistic, and connect people at a level no other medium can. The instruments may be alien and the timbre of their sounds unfamiliar, but the melodies they create, if done right, will never fail to resonate in the soul. Laura Cortese and the Dance Cards -- an all-female string trio from Massachusetts, USA brought together by the love of traditional American music and Joler Gaan -- the folksy-theatrical multi-instrumental ensemble from Dhaka, may be miles apart by all means, but their music echoed in unison, both in their individual performances and the surprise collaboration in the end.

The programme, organised by the US Embassy in Dhaka, was held at the main auditorium of the National Museum on Wednesday. Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy Jon Danilowicz gave the opening remarks, thanking the US Embassy officials and employees in Dhaka for their efforts to tell America's story to Bangladesh.

First on stage was Joler Gaan, in their usual demeanour, opening with "Bokul Phool". As they have done in

recent live performances, the band went on to sway the audience's mood between happy and melancholic, romance and loneliness, depressed to exuberant, with "Chithi", "Tomar Jonno Akash Bhora Tara", "Andhar Raite", "Pakhi'r Gaan", "Tumi Amar Pashe Bondhu Hey" and "Pata'r Gaan". Kanak Aditya's voice boomed in the coarse, folk tone while Rahul Anand brought out his improvised vocal variations and strange-looking instruments, backed by their intricate arrangement of stock and custom instruments.

Laura Cortese and the Dance Cards opened with a beautiful bluegrass number "Train on an Island" popularised by Jubal's Kin, and went on to perform a number of their own tracks -- some of them typically happy two-beat numbers, others emotionally profound, a couple of infectious fiddle tunes and a shaker hymn. Although the sound of instruments like the cello, fiddle and hardingfele are not very common to the audiences of Dhaka, and nor were the songs, it did not matter one bit. Be it the disco-like ups-and-downs, grooves of bluegrass or blissful, slow melody, the audience sat there and soaked it in. Laura appreciated the audience's clapping skills and gave them a moderately difficult beat to clap to in one of the songs, and the whole audito-

rium was up to it, be it the teenagers at the back or the front-row dignitaries. All three members -- Laura (fiddle), Valerie Thompson (cello) and Mariel Vanderstee (fiddle) all sang magnificently, and got the crowd involved in humming tunes they had never heard before.

But the best bit of the evening came when Joler Gaan came back on stage for a collaborative performance. Despite the stage getting crowded with as many as 12 musicians, they had ample space for each other in the songs -- the first of which was Joler Gaan's jazzy number "Ghoror Bhetor Chor". All three members of the string trio played a solo each -- improvised, but blended impeccably. Laura then closed the show with an iconic folk number "This Little Light of Mine" as a tribute to recently-deceased folk legend Pete Seeger, adding a verse in Bangla "Dike Dike Amra Shobai, Alokit Hote Chai / Hote Chai, Hote Chai, Hote Chai" that she picked up during her performance in Chittagong a day earlier. It was Joler Gaan's turn to embrace the tune, and they dived right into it. From Jarnal's percussion improvisations to Rahul's flute solo, and getting the audience to sing the last verse in chorus, the two bands bowed out, leaving traces of their marvelous melodies in the hearts of everyone in the hall.

South Asian Music Festival sets off today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian Music Institute has been set up at the initiative of artists and participants who attended the first South Asian Mass Musician Conference 2013 in Dhaka. The inauguration of this institute and South Asian Music Festival 2014 is to be held today at the main auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum. Nepal is the theme country of the festival this year.

Dr. Gowher Rizvi, the Prime Minister's International Affairs advisor, will inaugurate the festival as chief guest. The Ambassador of Nepal in Bangladesh, Hari Kumar Shrestha will attend the programme as a special guest.

Litterateur-lyricist Azizur Rahman Aziz, vice president of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Golam Kuddus and former Member of Parliament Advocate Fazilatunnesa Bappi will be present as guests of honour.



Dr. Anu Mahmud will present the keynote paper titled "South Asian Music: The Characteristics of Bengali Music" at the festival.

The convener of South Asian Music Festival 2014 national committee Sharif Ashrafuzzaman will preside over the programme. Various cultural organisations together with solo artists from Bangladesh and other South Asian countries will perform at the festival.

WE's debut album launched

A CORRESPONDENT

The band WE's debut album "Ekushey Amar Gaan" was launched at FM Radio Studio, Gulshan in the city recently. Musicians Naquib Khan and Mehreen were present as guests at the launching ceremony. The album pays tribute to the language martyrs and all languages around the world. The album features love songs, patriotic songs, nostalgic songs, highlighting six seasons of the country. The band also covers some English songs in the album. The band use of acoustic instruments and their music composition give their songs a feel of 80's music. The present line up of the band is: Pecaro Khan on drums, Zaman on keyboard and piano, Dr. Shipar and Shanto are on guitars and Shohag on bass. They mostly play soft rock and country music. The band has performed in varied locations at home and abroad.



Street theatre festival concludes

A catalyst for social change



A scene from the play.

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A three-day Dhaka Divisional Pathnatya Utsab (Street Theatre Festival), beginning on February 23, concluded at the Town Hall premises on Feb. 25.

Prominent drama groups of Mymensingh and Tangail staged plays at the festival titled "Drama against anarchy". The festival organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGTF), was assisted by Mymensingh Theatre Association.

On the inaugural day, Bahurupi Natya Sangstha staged "Shaheer Kothe Bole", written and directed by Sabuj Sarwar and Shahadat Hossain Khan Hilu; "Bomomalar Chokhe Jaal" by Bidrohi Natya Goshtih; and "Eder Dhorioy Din" by Chhayanaout Sahitya Sangskritik Dal of Mymensingh. On the second day, Ensemble Theatre staged "Sunagoriker Sondhane", written and

directed by Moloy Bhowmik and Abul Mansur respectively. Natya Dal Sampradaye staged "Open Secret" on the second day. On the concluding day, Sanket Natya Dal from Tangail staged "Abohoman Tangail", written and directed by Zakir Hossain and Jhilik Natya Sangstha staged "Ei Deshe Ei Beshe".

Marking the inaugural ceremony of the festival, a discussion was held.

Ekrumul Haque Titu was the chief guest with Shahadat Hossain Khan Hilu, president member of BGTF in the chair.

Organising secretary of BGTF Uttam Saha and Saiful Islam Dudu addressed the discussion among others.

The speakers said, theatre can catalyse social change and help build a Bangladesh free from oppression and hunger.

Culture enlightens the people and our journey towards this goal will continue, they said.



Speakers at the programme.

Nalini Kanta Bhattasali's 67th death anniversary observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the 67th death anniversary of historian, archaeologist, numismatist and antiquarian Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, Bangladesh National Museum (BNM) organised a commemorative speech at Sufia Kamal Auditorium on February 25.

Under the title "NK Bhattasali the Pioneer Scholar of Reconstructing the Medieval History of Bengal", Professor emeritus Dr. AKM Yakub Ali, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Rajshahi University delivered the keynote paper. Professor emeritus Dr. Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin, former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University was present as the main discussant. M. Azizur Rahman, president of Bangladesh National Museum's Board of Trustees presided over the programme. Prakash Chandra Das, director general of Bangladesh National Museum delivered the welcome speech at the programme. Ikram Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) attended as chief guest.

The discussants observed how Bhattasali's contributions had gone a long way in clarifying many obscurities of the history and culture of ancient and medieval Bengal. During its formative stage, the Dhaka Museum was inseparable from Bhattasali, whose personal care and attention was essential for its growth and development. In his lifetime, Bhattasali wandered through the countryside, exploring, discovering, photographing and collecting objects and gathering information, organising exhibitions, and trying to create local interest and consciousness for the preservation of our cultural heritage.

Born to a Brahmin family of Bikrampur, Munshiganj district, he was the first curator of the Dhaka Museum, from 1914 to 1947. Through his works he generated international interest in Bangladeshi heritage. During his tenure, he introduced many novelties and tried his best to keep the antiquities and artifacts in public focus.

Beyonce sings happy birthday to fan

US pop sensation Beyonce stopped a show in Birmingham, UK on Sunday to sing happy birthday to a fan.

Shehnaz Khan was celebrating her 22nd birthday at the LG Arena when the US singer stopped, asked her name and held her hand before she began to sing to her.

Beyonce stopped her band after noticed Shehnaz wearing a birthday badge.

She said: "You got the sign and everything. What's your name and how do you spell it?"

The singer then held Shehnaz's hand before breaking into song.

The show was part of the UK and Ireland leg of "The Mrs. Carter Show" tour, which started in Glasgow on February 20.

Beyonce will also play four dates at London's O2 Arena and will finish with three performances at The O2 in Dublin in March.

SOURCE: BBC

Ambience of a village fair

'Surjomonir Mela' on in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The month long 'Surjomonir Mela' at Betal village in Banaripara upazila of Barisal district from February 6 is a window on the rich local



64TH BERLIN INT'L FILM FEST: Stars and Tears

GILLIAN DELL from Berlin, Germany

On a February evening in Berlin, on the second day of the 64th Berlin International Film Festival, there were screams outside the Hyatt Hotel on Potsdamer Platz. Clustered near four sleek black cars, an excited crowd called out from behind barriers: "Christian Bale! Bradley Cooper! Please get out of the car!" Minutes passed and then finally the actors, in town to promote "American Hustle", got out and signed autographs for grateful fans. Around the corner, another crowd surged down the red carpet into the BerlinalePalast for the premiere of the film "71".

For ten days in February, the Berlinale welcomed the public to 400 films in 24 cinemas around town. "It's amazing here -- people are so serious about film. They stand in long lines for tickets and stay on for lengthy post-screening discussions with the film teams," said Prakash Bare, actor and producer of the Indian film "Papilio Buddha" which had its European premiere in the Forum section of the Berlinale.

This year, twenty films in the competition section were vying for the international jury's coveted Golden Bear for Best Film and for the seven Silver Bear awards. The results were announced in a gala awards ceremony on Saturday evening (February 15) and the big winner was the Chinese film noir "Black Coal, Thin Ice" written and directed by Diaoyin, garnered both the Golden Bear and the Silver Bear for Best Actor, which went to Liao Fan who played the leading role. There were also awards ceremonies for other sections of the festival and in the Generation section, young Indian director Avinash Arun won a Glass Bear for his story of a boy in "Killa/The Fort".

"Black Coal, Thin Ice" translates the classic detective film genre into a Chinese context. In a dark, wintry, provincial town in northern China, a gruff detective, down on his luck, investigates a series of killings and in the process is drawn into a complicated relationship with a mysterious young woman. "There

are many towns in China like this one, with its somewhat surreal atmosphere..." said Diaoyin after the awards ceremony. "The film reflects China as I perceive it."

As usual, the Berlinale jury was not swayed in their choices by the views of the press and the public. The overwhelming popular sentiment favoured US director Richard Linklater's "Boyhood", which premiered at the festival to thundering applause and standing ovations. A sensitively crafted coming of age story, the three-hour film, in quintessential Linklater style, was shot over a

into a fantasy world caricaturing early 20th century central Europe. Old-school humanistic values were pitted against evil and brutality and prevailed. "It was the best fancy-dress party I can imagine" said UK actress Tilda Swinton who came to the film's press conference with Anderson and co-stars Ralph Fiennes, Bill Murray, Willem Dafoe and others -- she was also there to promote the Korean film "Snow Piercer". Swinton said affectionately of the Berlinale: "It's such a precious place for me. It's like my battery charger cinematically, full of friends."



period of twelve years and captured the actors' natural aging process. Linklater won the Silver Bear for Best Director. (A smaller scale time series approach was also effectively used in festival film "52 Tuesdays" in the Generation section, which won an audience award.)

Another of the top contenders -- it won the Silver Bear Jury Prize -- was the festival's opening film "Grand Budapest Hotel", arguably director Wes Anderson's best work to date. Beautiful, whimsical and charming, the production was inspired by Stefan Zweig's book "Beware of Pity" and transported viewers

Hollywood star George Clooney was the undisputed "King of the Berlinale". He was on hand for the European premiere of his film "Monuments Men" in the BerlinalePalast. German government top brass turned out for the event, including the Foreign Minister and the Economics Minister, and throngs of admirers were in position at the red carpet when Clooney arrived with Matt Damon, Bill Murray and others in the star-studded cast. At an overflowing press conference before the premiere, Clooney and crew joked around and dodged questions like the one from a

giddy Brazilian journalist: "Did you know George that you play the main role in the fantasies of so many women around the world?" Clooney did not answer.

"Monuments Men" was disappointing. Based on the real-life story of a group of men who saved precious works of art from the Nazis during World War II, the film's weaknesses started with the script. Clooney, who directed and acted in the film, said he was trying to do something "a little less cynical" than his previous work, something like the films he grew up with, like "The Guns of Navarone"; but he did not succeed with the genre. He also said he wanted to see the return of more of the stolen artwork. With uncanny timing, just weeks before the film was released, German tax authorities found 1000 works of art previously believed lost at the home of a German art dealer's son.

A different kind of war movie, "71" touched viewers much more. In Yann Demange's first feature film, a UK soldier is totally unprepared for his sudden posting to the battle zone in Belfast, Northern Ireland in the early 1970's. We follow him stumbling through the murderous and treacherous terrain of clan and colonial conflicts, where he can trust no one including his own commanding officers. The audience was riveted by the taut performance of Jack O'Connell in this tense anti-war drama.

Terror, pain and betrayal were also threads running through the Indian film "Papilio Buddha" about the Dalit's hopeless battle for survival in Kerala. Torture, rape and other affronts to dignity are their heartbreaking fate as they face "the worst racism on the planet today", in the words of the film's director Jayan Cherian. Their suffering unfolds against the backdrop of an exquisite, idyllic landscape, in a film that broke taboo in India, especially regarding Gandhi and his legacy. The director told a surprised international audience after the screening that India's Censorship Board had banned the film.

(to be continued)

gameenphone presents

ROBOCOP 2014

buy A TICKET
get A TICKET
& popcorn Free*

See inner for details.

gameenphone BLOCKBUSTER

NEWS bytes

JGL's Sandman gets a new screenwriter



The forthcoming adaptation of the "Sandman" comic-books has appointed a new writer -- with "How I Live Now" scribe Jack Thorne on board to work on the script. The new film will be co-produced by Joseph Gordon-Levitt and David S. Goyer, with Thorne expected to write his script based upon a story pitch from Goyer.

Gordon-Levitt is also expected to star in the title role as Morpheus, the Lord Of Dreams, who finds himself exiled from the Dream Kingdom, only to return and find it a ruin of its former self. Neal Gaiman's well-loved book is certainly not the most straightforward of comics to adapt, but Goyer has plenty of previous experience with this kind of material, and has hopefully isolated a particular element of the story for Thorne to work with.

Warner Bros. is also harbouring hopes that JGL will complete his hat-trick and direct the project, but nothing has been officially confirmed on that score as yet.