WHAT'S ON

Art Exhibition
Reality Versus Imagination and Illusion
Artist: Samiran Chowdhury
Venue: Gallery Cosmos
Date: August 30-Sep 11
Time: 11am-7pm

Nazrul Death Anniversary Programme
Organiser: Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha
Venue: Music & Dance Centre auditorium, Shilpakala Academy

Photography Exhibition
Life and works of Tajuddin Ahmed
Venue: Gallery 21, Dhanmondi
Date: July 19-September 8

Musical Evening
Rabindra Sangeet by Rajasree Bhattacharya
Venue: IGCC, Gulshan-1
Date: Sep 4
Time: 6:30pm

Ganga-Jamuna Theatre & Cultural Fest
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

NEWS bytes

Joan Rivers remains on life support

Comedian and TV host Joan Rivers is still on life support after having a cardiac arrest in New York last week, her daughter Melissa has said. Rivers, 81, stopped breathing during a procedure on her vocal chords at an outpatient clinic on Thursday.

She has been in a serious condition in Mount Sinai hospital since then.

"On behalf of my mother and our family, we are extremely grateful for all the love and support we've received," said a

statement from Melissa. "At this time, she does remain on life support."

The actress/stand-up comedian is well known for her acerbic wit and has more recently turned it on the red carpet's worst dressed celebrities, hosting the E! network's Fashion Police.

Both Rivers and her daughter have appeared together in reality TV show "Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best?"

Source: **BBC**

THREADS OF TESTIMONY
Dilara Begum Jolly's solo arts show concludes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bengal Art Lounge organised a three-week solo exhibition titled "Threads of Testimony" at its gallery in Gulshan, Dhaka. Chittagong-based artist Dilara Begum Jolly's paintings, drawings, installations and video-art are on display at the show. The exhibition explores major themes that recur through the artist's entire body of work: the complexity of the feminine condition, its confrontation with dominant orders, and its tension with motherhood.

"Threads of Testimony" also has a focus on the condition of women in the garment industry, a theme that the artist has been increasingly exploring in the past.

Entirely in black and white and with several site-specific installations, the show strikes the eye with its formal and visual boldness. The only touches of colour in the exhibition come from the artist's video-works. Jolly's use of the camera is documented by her practice as a performance artist and some of her video works are conceived as performing acts enhanced by the multiple possibilities of digital recording. The results are gripping and constitute a major addition to the artist's cross-genre approach.

"Threads of Testimony" is a new milestone in the long-standing relationship between the artist and the Bengal Foundation. Over the years, Bengal Foundation has had the opportunity to work with Jolly in countless group exhibitions, numerous art camps and a successful solo exhibition at Bengal Shilpalaya in 2006 and during the production of a documentary film on her work. The art show was another feather in the cap of Bengal Art Lounge, a gallery dedicated to artistic research and formal expressions.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition took place on August 16. Celebrated artist Ferdousi Priyobhashini attended the ceremony as chief guest. Anthropologist and activist Saydia Gulrukh was present as a special guest. Among others, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W Mozena; noted filmmaker Catherine Masud and celebrated photographer and activist Shahidul Alam attended the inaugural programme. The exhibition is open from 12pm to 8 pm and ends today.

## The depth of Nazrul's lyrics attracts me... Manas Kumar Das

SAURAV DEY

Manas Kumar Das has been a Nazrul Sangeet exponent on radio and television for over three decades. Born in a music-oriented family, Manas was initiated into music at a young age. The passionate Nazrul singer talked about the nuances of Nazrul Sangeet in a recent conversation with The Daily Star.

"The diversity of Nazrul's compositions is amazing and his lyrics are a wonder. He composed khayal, kirton, shyama sangeet and his compositions centre on ragas. Nazrul believed in making a break with tradition," said Manas.

"I have been an admirer of Nazrul from my childhood. My father Ustad Suren Das was a disciple of Pandit Girija Shankar Chakrobarhty and my sister Aloka Das was a renowned classical singer. I chose Nazrul because of the depth of his lyrics and its distinct tunes. Though not modern songs, they can be rendered like modern songs," he added.

Nazrul also used modern intonations in his songs. He wrote songs for only a short period, but created diverse songs and lyrics, pointed out Manas.

Manas also shed light on Nazrul and his contemporary singers, saying, "Atul Prasad, DL Roy, Rajanikanta Sen used to follow similar forms. They were tremendously influenced by Rabindranath. But Nazrul is distinct in his style; he did not belong to any particular school."

Manas released his first album under Abid Hossain Khan's music direction. He also released an LP in 1985 along with nine other singers. Now another solo album is in the offing.

Asked how Bangla songs can be popularised, he said "Singers must be dedicated to their art. But nowadays many singers do not practice music with dedication; rather they work hastily to put an album together."

Millions of historic images posted online
An academics' gallant effort to enrich the web

An American academic is creating a searchable database of 12 million historic copyright-free images.

Kalev Leetaru has already uploaded 2.6 million pictures to Flickr, which are searchable, thanks to tags that have been automatically added.

The photos and drawings are sourced from more than 600 million library book pages, scanned in by the Internet Archive organisation.

The images have been difficult to access until now.

Leetaru said digitisation projects had so far focused on words and ignored pictures. "For all these years all the libraries have been digitising their books, but they have been putting them up as PDFs or text searchable works," he told the BBC. "They have been focusing on the books as a collection of words. This inverts that… Stretching half a millennium, it's amazing to see the total range of images and how the portrayals of things have changed over time. Most of the images that are in the books are not in any of the art galleries of the world - the original copies have long ago been lost," he said.

The pictures range from 1500 to 1922, when copyright restrictions kicked in.

Leetaru began work on the project while researching communications technology at Georgetown University in Washington DC as part of a fellowship sponsored by Yahoo, the owner of photo-sharing service Flickr.

To achieve his goal, Leetaru wrote his own software to work around the way the books had originally been digitised.
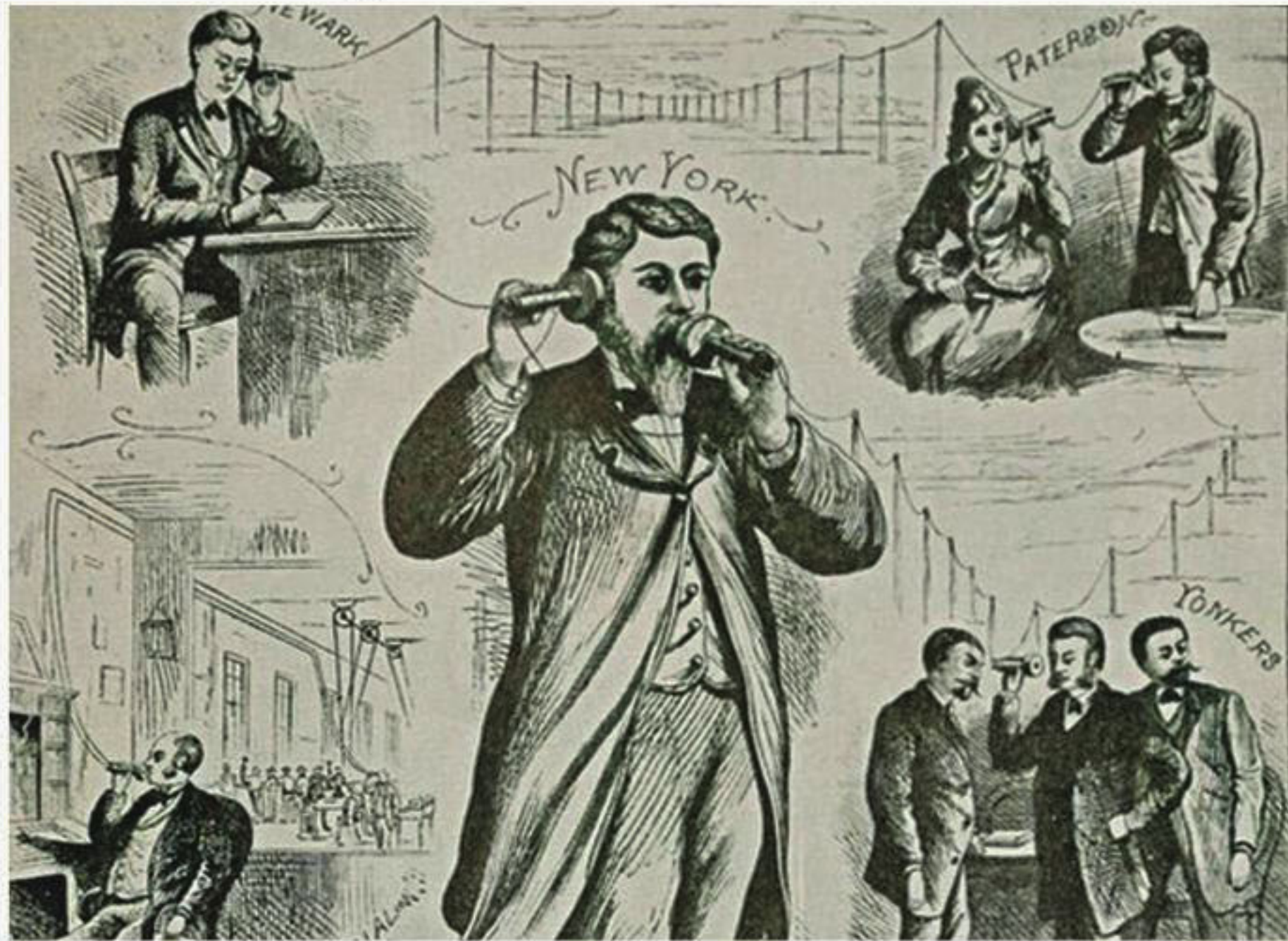
The library of pictures allows users to explore how technologies developed over the years.

The Internet Archive had used an optical character recognition (OCR) program to analyse each of its 600 million scanned pages in order to convert the image of each word into searchable text.

As part of the process, the software recognised which parts of a page were pictures in order to discard them.

Leetaru's code used this information to go back to the original scans, extract the regions the OCR program had ignored, and then save each one as a separate file in the Jpeg picture format.

The software also copied the caption for each image and the text from the paragraphs immediately preceding and following it in the book.

Each Jpeg and its associated text were then posted to a new Flickr page, allowing the public to hunt through the vast catalogue using the site's search tool.

"I think one of the greatest things people will do is time travel through the images," Leetaru said.

"Type in the telephone, for example, and you can see that all the initial pictures

are of businesspeople, and mostly men. Then you see it morph into more of a tool to connect families."

"You see another progression with the railroad where in the first images it was all about innovation and progress that was going to change the world, then you see its evolution as it becomes part of everyday life," Leetaru said.

Archivists said they were impressed with the project. "Finding images within texts and tagging large collections of images are notoriously difficult," said Dr Alison Pearn, a senior archivist from the University of Cambridge and associate director of the Darwin Correspondence Project. "This is a clever way of providing both quantity and searchability, and it's great that it is freely available for anyone to use."

Leetaru's own ambition is a tie-up with the internet's most famous encyclopaedia, once his project is completed next year. "What I want to see is… Wikipedia have a national day of going through this to illustrate Wikipedia articles," he said.

"Take a random page about a historical event and there's probably a good chance that you're going to find an image in here that bears in some way on that event or location. Being able to basically enrich [them] would be huge," he added.

He added that he also planned to offer his code to others. "Any library could repeat this process," he explained. "That's actually my hope, that libraries around the world run this same process of their digitised books to constantly expand this universe of images."

Source: **BBC**

"Lorai" nominated at two festivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Lorai" ("The Struggle"), a short film written and directed by Mokaddem Morshed, has been nominated at two international festivals. The film will be screened on September 14 at the Children's Park Theatre, Kerala (India) at the Bolgatty International Film Festival 2014, and on September 21 at the Panepinto Studio in New Jersey (USA) at the Golden Door International Film Festival 2014).

The film narrates the travails of a girl oppressed physically and mentally by society. Sirajum Munira Swarna plays the central role in the film, supported by Sejuti Dey, Kankan Das, Nabeera Sultana Bena, Afzal Uddin and Touhid Hasan, among others.

Uttam Kumar: The Uncrowned King of the Bengali silver screen

"It is the demise of a leading light of the Bengali film industry…There won't be another hero like him."
-- Satyajit Ray after Uttam Kumar's death

Uttam Kumar's hypnotic screen presence, mellow voice, unique charisma and dazzling smile made him not just a heart-throb, but also a legend of Bengali Cinema. To generations of Bangla film aficionados, he remains "Mahanayak" (epic hero), the undisputed king of the Bengali silver screen. If he were alive, he would be 88 yesterday.

Born as Arun Kumar Chatterjee on September 3, 1926 at Ahiritola, North Kolkata, he was called 'Uttam' by his maternal grandmother. The extended family had its own theatre group, 'Suhrid Samaj', which staged many amateur shows within the community. Besides acting, young Uttam was also into sports.

After graduation, the financial straits of his family forced Uttam to take up employment as a clerk at the Port Commissioner's office.

In 1947, he received an offer for a cameo role in a Hindi film called

"Mayador". The film never saw the light of day. His first release was the Bengali film "Drishtidaan" (1948), directed by Nitin Bose. In the film Uttam was credited as Arun Kumar. The film was a flop. In 1949 he made his debut as the leading man in the film "Kamona", crediting him as Uttam Chatterjee. But this too bombed. By then the film industry had labelled him a "flop master". During this time, he married to Gauri Ganguli (in 1948). Fortunately for Uttam, "Basu Paribar" (1952), co-starring Sabitri Chatterjee, was a big hit.

Uttam delivered another big hit "Sharey Chuattor" in 1953. In the film he was paired for the first time with Suchitra Sen. With "Agniparikkha", the following year, again hitting the bull's-eye, the Uttam-Suchitra pair ushered in the so-called 'golden era of Bengali cinema'. They went on to become icons of Bengali romantic melodramas for over 20 years, becoming almost a genre in itself.

Their films were famous for the soft-focus close ups of the stars, particularly Suchitra, and lavishly mounted scenes of romance against windswept expanses and

richly decorated interiors. The story lines often revolved around a pattern where the lovers would meet and fall in love. And then either the family or difference in status would pose hurdles in the romance. Some popular films of the pair include "Shap Mochon" (1955), "Shagorika" (1956), "Harano Sur" (1957), "Shaptopodi" (1961), "Bipasha" (1962) and "Grihadaho" (1967).

"Shonar Horin" (1959) saw Supriya Debi play the lead opposite Uttam Kumar. As they began to act in more films together, the two got involved off-screen as well. Many of Uttam's films with Supriya too were huge successes at the box office but there was a marked difference in audience perception to these films as compared to his films with Suchitra.

When Satyajit Ray made "Nayak" (1966), he created the role of actor Arindam Mukherjee, keeping Uttam Kumar in mind. Many people feel the film is reflective of Uttam Kumar's own life -- the sense of anxiety and restlessness of the character mirrored Uttam's insecu-

rities about his phenomenal success and abiding fear that his superstardom might not last. Ray later confessed that if Uttam had refused the film, he would have abandoned it. The actor worked with Ray again the following year in "Chiriakhana" (1967).

When the Indian Government instituted the National Awards for Best Actor and Actress in 1967, Uttam Kumar was the first recipient of the Best Actor Award for his performances in "Chiriakhana" and "Anthony Firangee" (1967).

Uttam also tried his hand at Hindi films with the oft-criticised box office bomb "Chhoti Si Mulakat", a film he produced and starred in, among others that were better received.

A strict workaholic, he was rumoured to have said that his preferred demise would be on the floor of a studio, doing what he loved best, acting. Indeed, that is exactly how he died. While filming "Ogo Bodhu Shundori" in 1980, he died of a massive heart attack at the age of 54.

Compiled by Correspondent