

WHAT'S ON

16th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh
Venue: National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: December 1-31
Time: 11am to 8pm except Fridays (3-8pm)

Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Prohanta Kumar Baidya
Venue: Café Mango Gallery, H-3/A, Rd-72, Gulshan
Date: Nov 14-Jan 14
Time: 10am-10pm

Solo Painting and Drawing Exhibition
Title: Shifting Sands
Artist: Nazima Khan
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge
Date: Dec 13-27
Time: 12pm-8pm

Photography Exhibition
Title: On Borders
Organiser: Bengal Foundation and Goethe Institute Dhaka
Venue: Daily Star-Bengal Art Precinct
Date: Dec 10-January 04
Time: 12pm-8pm

Classical Music Recital
Artist: Pt. Santanu Bandhopadhyay
Venue: AS Mahmud Seminar Room, The Daily Star Centre
Date: Dec 21
Time: 6:30pm



SAURAV DEY

The Liberation War of Bangladesh is marked with the valour of our heroes, whereas the stories of war heroines are on their way to oblivion in our history. And sadly enough, the tales of hundreds of thousands of women, whose life became nightmarish during the war, go untold. Komola Collective, a London-based theatre and art company, is trying to bring forth those untold stories through their play "Birangona: Women of War." The debut production saw its first public staging on Wednesday evening at the Shaheed Minar, as part of its tour of Bangladesh.

"Birangona" graphically dug up the haunting stories of war heroines by translating their firsthand accounts into stage

production. The play depicts Moryom and the story is interspersed with her early days. Moryom, portrayed by Leesa Gazi, describes how she grew and was living in peace until one Kalbosheki tore away everything. She also tells the stories of other women whom she met at the rape camp. The play sings for the women whose world fell apart when Pakistani occupational forces and their local collaborators raped and tortured them during the war-time.

Leesa Gazi's portrayal of Moryom was awe-inspiring. Her strikingly bold acting brings tears to the eyes as the flashbacks of the horror being perpetrated are recreated for the audience. The firsthand accounts of Birangona women cross the borders of time and give the audience a glimpse of what happened to the women during the

war. The strongest part of the play is definitely the moving story but it is Leesa who gave the story a life through stage performance. Her presentation serves a million words, and the play presents Birangonas as individuals rather than categorising them as war women.

Besides acting, "Birangona" packs puppet animation of Bengali folk-tale, brilliance of light and shadow, and awe-inspiring background music. Thanks to Sohini Alam for lending her soulful voice. In addition, a multimedia documentary showing Birangonas telling their stories also adds to ambience to make it as realistic as possible.

Earlier in 2013, a R&D show of the play was held in Dhaka to get feedback from a select audience. Later, it was premiered in

the UK. The production is now streamlined and comes with a compact package. It was nominated for the Offie Award in the UK. "Birangona" is scripted jointly by Dr. Samina Lutfia and Leesa Gazi, while Filiz Ozcan has directed it. Caitlin Abbott was in charge of stage design and animation, while Fahmida Islam did videography. Nasirul Haque Khokon was on light design for its Bangla version.

The 60-minute play is powerful; no artificial or unnecessary elements distracted the audience at any point in the performance. More such productions need to be staged across different parts of the country so that Birangonas get their due honour. Komola Collective certainly deserves a tip of the hat for bringing forth the ignored part of history in the form of a piece of art.

RAPID FIRE

NOWSHIN: "I fear bad propaganda"

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nowshin has earned a reputation as an actress-anchor on the small screen and has used her undeniable talent to enter the celluloid world as well. The actress is quite relaxed about being fired with questions, most of which she has never answered before. What do you usually do when you are in a bad mood?
Nowshin: Spend time with my child.
What is your greatest fear?
Nowshin: Bad propaganda or when a dear one gets angry with me.
Any thing you would do differently if you could go back to your childhood?
Nowshin: I would undo the mistakes I made.
What would you be if not an actress?
Nowshin: A perfect housewife.
Who is it you most want to see when back from a shoot?
Nowshin: My family and child.
Any unknown qualities about you?
Nowshin: I can cook really well.
What's most irritating about Dhaka?
Nowshin: The traffic jams.
Do you believe in ghosts?
Nowshin: Not at all.
What makes you happy?
Nowshin: When my dear ones are happy.

Tanvir Mokammel's film screening in Chittagong

To mark Victory Day, Bangladesh Film Institute and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has jointly arranged a seven-day film festival in Chittagong, says a press release. The festival that began on December 18 at the district Shilpakala Academy features 13 films and documentaries by internationally-acclaimed director Tanvir Mokammel. Along with the award-winning films of the director, some of his other creations will be screened

throughout the seven days. "1971", "Jibondhuli", "Rabeya", and "Tajuddin Ahmed: An Unsung Hero", "Chitra Nodir Parey", "Lalshalu", "Lalon" and some others films are scheduled to be screened.



Cultural activists rally for Sunderbans Samageet organises programme at Shahbagh



Prachyanat stage their performance at the event.

SUSHMITA S PREETHA

Cultural activists took to the streets on Wednesday, armed with their weapons of choice—music and performance arts—to protest the destructive policies and practices of the government regarding the Sunderbans. They also demanded an immediate ban on the transportation of furnace oil through the mangrove forest, during a rally organised by musical group Samageet Sangskriti Prangan, in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh.

Performances by different groups and artists were interspersed with speeches from academics and activists, which highlighted the need for collective action to protect the present and

future of the largest mangrove forest in the world.

Theatre troupe Prachyanat rendered a satirical performance of people's ludicrous reactions to the events that unfolded in the Sunderbans, through the lens of a fictional TV channel. In addition to poking fun at government officials refusing to acknowledge the severity of the damage, the play also mocked online 'activists' more concerned with getting 'likes' on Facebook through their posts than in bringing about concrete changes, and self-interested researchers who are hoping to get funding to publish their papers in international journals. It ended with a distressing scene in the future where students are learning

about the Bengal Tigers and Sunderbans from a museum.

Musical troupes Samageet, Leela, Sanskriti Union and artists Krishnoli and Kafil Ahmed also engaged the crowd with their powerful performances to raise awareness about the threat to our natural resources.

Economics professor of Jahangirnagar University, Anu Muhammad, said, "Time and again, we have tried to tell the government of the necessity to protect the Sunderbans from detrimental activities like the construction of coal-based power plants, but it has paid no heed to us." The government's reaction to the oil spill once again proves their indifference towards the plight of the Sunderbans, he added.



Return of the Photography extravaganza Chobi Mela VIII to begin January 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eighth edition of Chobi Mela, the biggest photography festival of Asia, is all set to begin on January 23, 2015. Organised by Drik Picture Library Limited and Pathshala South Asian Media Academy, the biennial festival brings photographers, experts and connoisseurs from all over the globe for a two-week extravaganza of exhibitions, artist talks, workshops and much more.

The festival, themed "Intimacy" this time, will run till February 5, and feature works of 30 artists of 22 countries.

The announcements came from a press conference at the Drik Gallery yesterday. Speaking there, festival director Shahidul Alam said "It's time for Bangladesh to be proud of its

originality. The whole world's eyes are on us, and we have to be prepared accordingly."

Also speaking there, ASM Rezaur Rahman, one of the curators of the festival, said "The festival not only gives us the scope to watch the exceptional works of nationally and internationally reputed photographers, but also brings forward the social issues connected to our identity."

The high profile guests at the festival will include Magnum Photographer Larry Towell, Editor of the New York Times Lens Blog James Estrin, legendary Bangladeshi photographer Anwar Hossain.

World Press Photo contest winner Denis Dailieux, Shirin Neshat, and Simon Norfolk who will share their works and experiences through portfolio

review and talks. World Press Photo jury and pioneer in Indian advertisement photography aesthetics, Swapan Parekh will conduct a workshop titled "Shaping a Vision", Teun van der Heijden (of Hayden's Karwei) will be in Bangladesh for the first time, conducting a workshop on "The Photobook: Going Beyond the Form", and Spanish photographer Cristina Nuñez will conduct "The Self Portrait Experience". A total of 10 workshops will be spread throughout the festival for photographers and artists.

A total of 32 print shows and a video projection will be spread across six galleries of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; two galleries each at Drik, Alliance Francaise and the Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct; National Museum; Bokulita of Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University; Britto Arts Trust; Beauty Boarding, Northbrook Hall and Bulbul Lalitkala Academy. All the exhibitions are free for all. The rickshaw-van exhibition, carrying miniature versions of all the exhibits – a trademark of Chobi Mela, will travel the streets of Dhaka, taking photography closer to the people.

The opening ceremony and a number of other sessions of the festival will also be streamed live for a global audience, like previous editions of the festival.

The curators for Chobi Mela VIII are Munem Wasif, ASM Rezaur Rahman and Tanzim Wahab, while artist Salahuddin Ahmed and Mahbubur Rahman will be guest curators.

Hailed as "perhaps the world's most demographically inclusive festival" by The New York Times, Chobi Mela is the biggest photography festival of Asia and the only regular biennial event on the Asian cultural calendar.



Max Pincker's photo aptly portrays this year's theme of the festival: Intimacy.

Photography exhibition marking Victory Day

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A three-day photography exhibition organised by Alokchitra Shilpi Sangsad (Ashis) to mark Victory Day at Boishakhi Mancha of Shaheb Quarter Park area in the town concluded on Wednesday.

A total of 220 photographs on the War of Liberation were displayed at the exhibition. The images were largely taken by internationally reputed photographer late Naib Uddin Ahmed.

Visitors in hundreds thronged the venue to enjoy the exhibition. Earlier,

Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh Mustakim Billah Faruqi inaugurated the exhibition as chief guest.

Former-vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Professor Anwarul Islam, Superintendent of Mymensingh Police Moinul Haque, Additional District Commissioner Sharmin Jahan, advocate Anisur Rahman Khan, district Muktiyuddah Commander

Anwar Hossain, Dr. Horishankar Das, Professor Afzal Rahman and Horidas Thakur were present, among others. ANM Fayzul Haque

presided over the inaugural session. Ashis secretary AHM Motalab delivered the welcome address.

The speakers said the photographs of historical events including the Liberation War captured the realities of the time.

Terming the photographs as a vital part of our history, the speakers also said, that these photographs should be carefully preserved for generations to come.



"Dhaka's kacchi biryani was awesome" ...Indrani Halder

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Indrani Halder is an accomplished Indian film and television actress with multiple awards on her shelves. On a visit to Dhaka recently, Indrani talked to The Daily Star about her soft corner for the city and her busy career.

When did you last visit Dhaka?

Indrani: About 18 years ago to do a film of thespian Ujjal.

Did you enjoy going around the city?
Indrani: A lot. I've noticed remarkable changes in Dhaka, including the terrible traffic snarl ups. More than ever, I am overwhelmed by the hospitality of the people – I have been flooded with gifts and invitations.

What brings you to Dhaka this time?

Indrani: I came here at the invitation of Srishti Cultural Centre. Shibli Mohammad, Shameem Ara Nipa and Anisul Islam Hero are close friends. I am a great admirer of their work.

What was the city tour like?

Indrani: I've been around almost everywhere. Like, I went to Aarong to do some shopping.

What do you most enjoy about Dhaka?

Indrani: The rickshaw rides.

Your take on Dhaka cuisine?

Indrani: I ate a lot of it. But Dhaka's kacchi biryani which I feasted on at noted film artist Alamgir's home was awesome.

Tell us about your career?

Indrani: I'm now appearing in several movies and several Hindi serials from Mumbai.

What's the feedback to your serials in Dhaka?

Indrani: I cannot believe that people here are such huge fans of my Hindi serials – may be more so than in Kolkata.

You are now hardly seen in Kolkata films?

Indrani: I went to Kolkata after seven years and signed three films.

Your reaction to the numerous Indian and international awards that have come your way?

Indrani: Awards don't any matter that much to me.

What really counts is that people keep me in their hearts.

What do you have up your sleeve for Bangladesh?

Indrani: I have a plan to do some stage work here. I felt very happy to see the live dance performances of Shameem Ara Nipa and others.

IT'S TRUE!

A morsing (also mukharshanku, mouching, morching or morchang), also called the Jaw Harp in English, is a wind percussion instrument, mainly used in Rajasthan, in the Carnatic music of South India and in Sindh (Pakistan). It consists of a metal ring in the shape of a horseshoe with two parallel forks which form the frame and a metal tongue in the middle, fixed to the ring at one end and free to vibrate at the other. In India it is found mainly in South India, Rajasthan and also in some parts of Assam. In South India, it features in Carnatic concerts and percussion ensembles. In Rajasthan it is called morchang and is used as percussion instrument in folk music.



NEWS bytes

Smith, Swift and Sheeran to perform at Brits



Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith have all been booked to appear at next year's Brit Awards ceremony. They are the first names to be announced for the event in February at the O2 Arena in London.

Swift last played at the Brits in 2013, performing her hit "I Knew You Were Trouble".

Ed Sheeran was among the artists to take to the stage at last week's BBC Music Awards, collecting the British artist of the year prize and he is tipped for further glory at the ceremony on February 25.

Sam Smith started the year topping BBC's Sound of 2014 in January. He then went onto win the Brits Critics' Choice award, and has just been nominated for six Grammy's including best new artist.

Further names for the event – officially called the Brit Awards 2015 – will be announced over the coming weeks.

Source: BBC

Kat Graham could play X-Men's Storm



With the upcoming "X-Men: Age of Apocalypse" film set to introduce younger versions of some of the original X-Men characters, speculation on the casting of Storm has been up in the air. The latest rumour is that X-Men's Storm will be played by "The Vampire Diaries" star Kat Graham.

Even with Halle Berry's immense popularity as storm, Graham could be a good signing. Not only is she gorgeous and can easily pull off looking like a younger version of Berry, but also her role as Bonnie Bennett on the CW series is the perfect preparation for playing a strong, super-powered female.

In the Marvel Universe, mutant Storm (real name Ororo Munroe) has the power to control the weather. With this power she can do more than just make it rain; she has the ability to control energy that the weather creates. She also has the ability to fly by gliding on wind currents, or using wind to throw off other people in a fight. But aside from her superpowers, Storm serves as one of the most important members of the team because of her ability to defuse tension, and keep the other members practical and grounded. Her lonely sense of independence probably originates from her life as an orphan before being found by Charles Xavier.

Bonnie Bennett on "The Vampire Diaries" serves as a voice of reason in much of the show. Bonnie has many similar personality traits as Storm does in the X-Men universe, being a caring yet powerful entity to her friends. The character of Bonnie is also an orphan like Storm, so Graham has already explored that type of lonely despair in a character.

Graham also has a career in the music industry as a singer and dancer. Her fitness is something that will make her job much easier when learning Storm's fight sequences. Overall, Graham looks to be a perfect fit for the role of a younger Storm in "X-Men: Age of Apocalypse", which is set to release in May 27, 2016.

Source: Cinema Blend

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