

Love for dance keeps them moving forward

Artistes gear up for International Dance Day



PHOTO: STAR

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

The countdown to International Dance Day (April 29) begins next week, with weeklong dance festivities commencing April 23. Organised by Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS) in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), dancers of every traditional fold in Bangladesh are brought together to present their art. Alongside performances by esteemed dancers of the country, the festivities also provide a platform to young children from all backgrounds and abilities to showcase their talent and learning. The Daily Star recently reached out to President of BNSS Minu Haque and co-Director of Nrityanchal and choreographer Shibli Mohammad for their plans regarding the grand event, and more:

Minu Haque
International Dance Day is commemorated each year on April 29, but we organise week-long festivities beginning from April 23. Our grand opening is taking place at the main auditorium of BSA's National Theatre Hall. For seven days at 6pm-9:30pm, dance institutions from all over the country present their dance forms at the Shilpakala Plaza alongside performances by young children. We also arrange a fair at the plaza where food stalls and other various products such as sarees, ornaments, cosmetics and more are available.



Minu Haque

On the day of April 29, we will commence with a mongol nritya at 7am. From 9:30am we will hold a rally, before returning to the Seminar Hall at the Academy where Mahua Mukherjee will present her paper on Gaudiya dance. After lunch, the main event will open at the National Theatre Hall, where prominent personalities such as Minister of Cultural Affairs Asaduzzaman Noor, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, President of ITI Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu, President of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Golam Quddus, and more will attend. Renowned leading dance artistes of Bangladesh will grace



Shibli Mohammad

the stage on the closing day, each representing the style and dance form they are known for.

Highlighting this occasion is of utmost importance as celebrating culture is the antidote to social unrest, and it is imperative we all work together to restore peace as well as establish a unified cultural harmony in our country. I believe that we are taking positive strides in this direction, and unlike before, all dance forms are celebrated today without restriction.

Shibli Mohammad
Every year Nrityanchal performs for two

days during the weeklong International Dance Day festival. The momentous day is on 29, but our institute performs on the previous day as well. Unfortunately this year, we were unable to book the National Theatre Hall for April 28 even though we had applied for it over two months ago. This understandably put a dent in our plans, but we are still appearing on Nandan Manch on April 29. Like last year, Nrityanchal is working with specially-abled children as well as those that are underprivileged, from various regions around the country.

We face major constraints in taking our dance forms ahead due to funding and lack of a proper dance stage. We are frequently turned down in requesting space for performances as more precedence is given to theatre groups. When performing artistes from abroad come to present their work in Bangladesh, there is no dearth of money to facilitate them. Similarly, other events such as fashion shows are more readily funded, but there are very few benefactors wishing to come forward to help our cause. However, any cultural event in Bangladesh, whether it is in a corporate space or at festivities, is incomplete without dance. Sufficient funds not only help preserve and promote a crucial aspect of our tradition, but it also allows us to reach out to underprivileged groups and help them through dance. But none of this holds us back from doing what we do, and our love for dance and its forms keeps us moving forward.

"Used to sing in trains for money"

... Ayushmann Khurrana

Bollywood actor-singer Ayushmann Khurrana says he used to perform in express trains from Delhi to Mumbai and collect money during his college days.

The actor was present on Tuesday with his co-star Parineeti Chopra for the launch of the song "Ye Jawaani Teri" from their forthcoming film "Meri Pyaari Bindu". The song depicts the college days of the central characters Abhi and Bindu and when asked if he used to sing songs in his college days to impress girls, Ayushmann said, "During my college days I used to do a lot of theatre, live shows, street plays etc. so did not get much time to run after girls."

"In fact, I want to share how we used to perform in trains. During my college days, there was a train named Pashchim Express that used to go from Delhi to Mumbai. So I, along with my friends, used to get onto the train and we used to go to every coach to sing and perform. Passengers used to give us money which we used to collect. We used to earn so much that we managed to sponsor our Goa trip from it! So yes, you can say I am a train singer," the actor said.

Ayushmann started the press conference by singing the song "Haareya" from the upcoming film live before the media persons.

The film, directed by Akshay Roy and also starring Aparajita Auddy, Rajatabha Dutta and comedian Abish Mathew, is set for release on May 12.

Source: Hindustan Times



Vibrant Pahela Baishakh festivities in Washington DC

Pahela Baishakh was celebrated at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC on April 18 amid much enthusiasm and fanfare, says a press release.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin welcomed the New Year saying that it symbolised hope, prosperity and goodwill, celebrated by all irrespective of religion and ethnicity.

The day's celebration began with Mongol Shubhajatra, which the UNESCO included in the list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" in November 2016. Members of the Embassy families welcomed the New Year by rendering chorally, "Esho he Baishakh, Esho Esho" at the packed Bangabandhu Auditorium of the chancery.

Artistes of Bangladesh in Washington presented folk, modern and mystic songs and dances. Singer Selim Chowdhury rendered folk songs at the event, and artistes from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar joined the Bangalee festivities by performing dances on stage.

The event was graced by senior Bangladeshi officials and leading members of the community present in DC, as well as a good number of foreigners, diplomats, businessmen, and members of the press.

TV WATCH

"Shobder Shorir" on ntv

A CORRESPONDENT

Single-episode TV play "Shobder Shorir" will air on ntv tonight at 9:05pm. Written by Ahsan Habib Sakal and directed by Deepu Hajra, it casts Apurbo, Moutushi Biswas, Sabbir Ahmed and others. The play revolves around the couple of Togor and Charu. Togor's father was a writer and always wanted his son to become one too. Togor starts writing and achieves name and fame within a short time. Eventually, it is revealed that those were not his writings, but his wife Charu's.



A CORRESPONDENT

Theatre troupe Swapnadal will stage their latest production "Helen Keller" at the Studio Theatre Hall of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy today. Written by Apurba Kumar Kundu and directed by Zahid Repon, this is the fifth staging of the play.

The mono-drama revolves around the life and struggle inspirational author-activist-lecturer Helen Keller, the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and a literary and cultural icon. Juyena Shabnam is the sole cast of the play, where Sakhawat Shyamol takes charge of producing and management.

