

A triumphant week at the Cultural Centre - Countdown to closing ceremony begins

Friday has arrived! And with all but the tennis competition finishing today (which ends on Saturday) the day was certainly anything but dull. Finals in 5 sports, Badminton, Boxing, Shooting, Swimming and Weightlifting all had the crowds roaring with excitement as the events were concluded.

During the afternoon's offerings over at the cultural stage, the interactive stalls once again proved to be of great interest. These artisans' pavilions ranged from appliqué, lac and rice carving, Banarasi brocade and Sikkim craft, as well as the leather puppet and Tagore paintings that have made regular appearances throughout the week with an enthused reaction from all who partook.

As the day turned to evening all eyes were on the young champions who for the final time were treated to a royal entrance into the cultural centre. The first of the inspiring performances of the night was from Singhicham, in which the associate five peaks of the sacred Mount Khangchendzonga looks like the legendary snow lion, considered to be an important cultural symbol of the state. It is elaborately depicted in the Singhi Chaam, or the Snow Lion Dance.

Other dances to grace the daytime stage were the Bhangra, the Lai Harouba, the Mizoram and the Kathakali, providing the audience with a magnitude of color to feast their eyes upon, which has been consistently bought to the Games via the cultural centre.

This brilliant performance was succeeded by the Sikkim display of the Yak Cham, a dance in honor of the Yak, an animal on which man is completely dependant upon for survival at high altitudes. This dance depicts the Yak and projects the simple lifestyle of the herdsman in the mountains.

The Sikkim show was not over then however, as it continued on to the Monastic mask dance, famous for being a one off spectacle to be experienced no where else in the world. This is performed when celebrating religious festivals and the dances demonstrate perfect footwork and grace. Costumed lamas with gaily painted masks, ceremonial swords and sparkling jewels leap and swing to the rhythm of resounding drums, the trumpeting of horns and chanting of monks. The lavish display was applauded by all, who joined in by the clapping of hands and tapping of feet.

As the last show ended flawlessly on the eve of the closing ceremony, it has undoubtedly set the stage and standard for Saturday evening's program, as well as giving high hopes for the spectators. A triumphant week at the cultural centre!