

Dhaka Day by Day

Galileo Still Basks in Glory

by Fayza Haq



A scene from "Galileo"

Nagorik Theatre Group celebrated the 50th show of "Galileo" recently at the Goethe Institute, before a packed audience. One naturally wonders about its success.

Ataur Rehman, the director for Nagorik Theatre Group explained that the group had rehearsed each of its other plays for not less than twelve weeks, but "Galileo" required four months of rehearsals, and for the "brush ups", two or three days.

Talking about the central plot, he said that it was one of Brecht's famous plays, although it is relatively difficult to comprehend. This is Nagorik's fourth Brecht production and people here regard the group as the local Brecht specialists, he informed me.

When asked why Nagorik has its penchant for performing Brecht's plays, Ataur said, that he believed that Brecht's plays were more successful than those of world known playwrights like Shakespeare or Moliere, and the best playwright in Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore. "We think Brecht can be adapted to any situation. It is easily adaptable because of the way the playwright has written, specially his 'political plays' like 'The Good Woman of Settsuan' and the 'Three Penny Opera'. Our 'Galileo' is both translated and adapted. Not only is this a famous play but we believe that the content is very alive to our own situation, and the world condition as well. The play is a contradiction between science which is truth, and fundamentalism, which in the case of 'Galileo', is the Church," he added.

Answering to the question of what made "Galileo" popular, as it had 50 performances, with a packed house, Ataur replied, "The play has not been popular in an ordinary sense — it has not had 'cheap popularity'. 'Galileo' is both serious and popular, as well as unquestionably topical e.g. Galileo's friend says, 'You tell me that nothing is static in the universe so where is God?' He replies, 'Listen, I'm not a theologian... God is nowhere. If at all there is a God, he is within human beings.' These types of dialogues are there. Conversation with fundamentalist overtone is also included, knowing full well what this type of inflammatory dialogue might lead to."

Replying to the question of whether the Dhaka theatre goes enjoy plays that are written in depth, involving serious speculations, and subjects, Ataur replied, "Yes, some of them, specially the fans of Nagorik. We believe we have created an audience that laps up such intellectual victuals."

By a "special audience" he meant that Nagorik does not care to usually cater for the common masses. We aim at the bourgeois elite. Most of good writings beginning from 'Panther Panchali', although it is a depiction of a rural village, are essentially a product of the bourgeois litterateurs."

Asked if "Nagorik" faced any problems while producing the play, Ataur replied that there had been no objections from the fundamentalists. "However, we encountered some difficulties from the production point of view," he said. Requested to elucidate, he continued, "This is a 'huge' play. It is performed against a

large backdrop. It is being acted in a small auditorium at the Goethe Institute. We have also performed in Bogra, Chittagong and also Calcutta."

Asked to comment about the audience reaction in those places, Ataur replied, with the same confidence and smooth flow of parley as before, "The Calcutta audience is a very mature one. They have a tradition of 125 years of regular theatre going. The commercial theatre which we think is 'good' began fifty years ago, consequently the audience there is a mature one."

Aly Zaker, the lead player, elaborated, "The Calcutta audience has been exposed to 'Galileo' before, repeatedly, by numerous groups and various famous actors, Shambhu Mitra and Kumar Rai had done it earlier. Performing before them was easier in terms of communication. It was also different as they were very critical."

Ataur continued from where Aly left off "Galileo is depicted as a scientist of enormous importance — the West sees him as almost a saint or an incredible individual. In the East too Galileo's intellectual achievements are recognised."

"Yet Nagorik's 'Galileo' has his vices e.g. he is a glutton, he behaves harshly with his daughter, and he also drinks alcoholic beverages. He says that the telescope is his own invention, which in fact, is that of a Dutchman. However, Galileo improved the telescope. Nagorik's 'Galileo' beats other intellectuals by his scientific attainments. We have presented him as an adorable individual," he added.

Aly Zaker added to Ataur's explanations. In Bogra, they held us in awe as we are a leading group from Dhaka and the most experienced group in Bangladesh, as we began in '72. There the totality of the performance made the audience spellbound."

"He was more a man of flesh and blood. The Calcutta depiction by the Indian performers and directors, was that of a super human being. This difference was appreciated by most of the members of the audience. However, some critics did not approve of this as they held Shambhu Mitra and Kumar Rai in high esteem — for them it was a blasphemy to depict the hero otherwise."

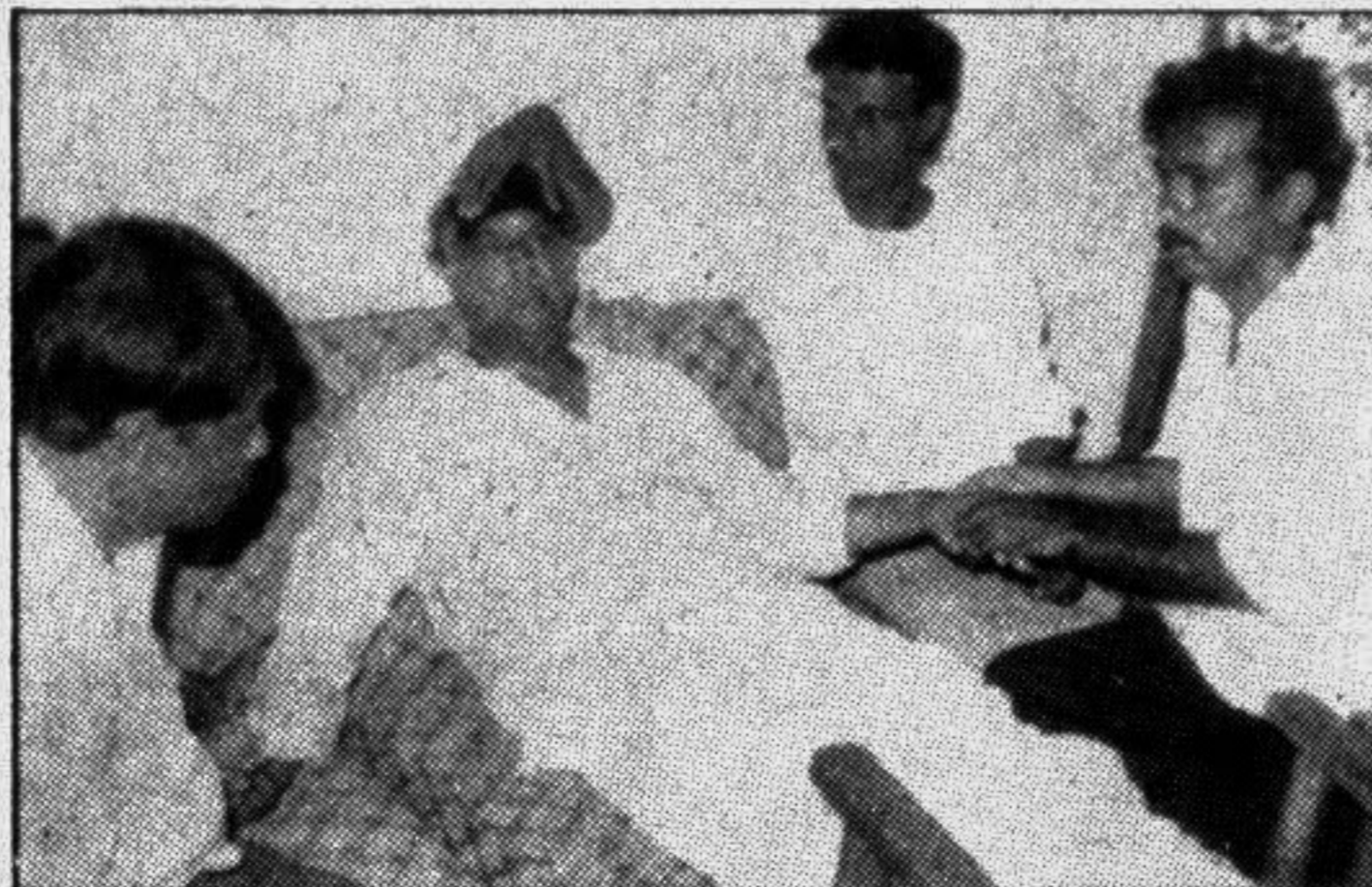
Aly added, "In Dhaka about 50 per cent of our audience came to see the 'stars' as they perform on TV and are popular. Some came to see the performance of a good play. A mixed reaction ensued."

Aly, giving his views again said, "This play is usually set against an enormous stage decor — 17th century Europe. Even in India this is so. In this small theatre at GI, our director worked at it as an intimate theatre, in which the characters were larger than life, while the acting was intense, with direct rapport with the audience."

Speaking to some of the audience of "Galileo" one discovered that they had truly enjoyed it.

Nagorik proposes to present "King Lear" and Brecht's "Mother Courage and her Children" in future

Opposition's 'Dhaka siege' in pictures



Mohammed Nasim, Opposition Chief Whip, injured in police baton charge in front of Matshya Bhavan in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Police firing rubber bullets during yesterday's 'Dhaka siege'. — Star photo



Police being served with special lunch packets during yesterday's 'Dhaka siege'. — Star photo



A procession of the Bangladesh Awami League in the city during yesterday's 'Dhaka siege'. — Star photo



Police lob tear gas shells to disperse the protesters near the Ramna Park in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Kamil exam date shifted

The Kamil examination scheduled for today has been suspended due to unavoidable circumstances, reports BSS.

The examination of the paper will now be held from 10 am to 2 pm on October 9. The dates and time table of the examinations of other papers will remain unchanged, the hand-out added.



Sunday

4:30	Opening session
4:40	Bible recitation
4:45	Educational programme : Shiksha-Dhiksha
5:10	News in Bangla
5:25	Cartoon film : Tom and Jerry Kids Show
5:40	Sports programme
6:30	Health programme : Mayeder Jannyo
7:00	Open University
7:25	Tagore songs
8:00	News in Bangla
8:30	Magazine programme : Biggyan-O-Nari
9:00	Drama series : The Sword of Tipu Sultan
10:00	News in English
10:30	Film songs : Chhaya Chhanda
11:30	Khabar/ The News
11:40	Announcement of tomorrow's programme
11:45	Close down



Activists of the Bangladesh Awami League demonstrating near a barricade in front of the Matshya Bhavan in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina condoles US plane crash deaths

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her deep shock at the deaths of 131 people in a tragic plane crash in Pennsylvania, USA on Thursday, reports UNB.

In a condolence message to US President Bill Clinton, Hasina expressed her deep shock and sympathy for members of the bereaved families.

Indian goods seized

RAJ/SHAHI, Sept 10: BDR personnel of 20 Rifle Battalion seized Indian goods valued at over Taka three lakh from Katal Baria, Rabon Para, Bhuvan Para, Kadam Hajir Hat and Baligram of the district on Friday, reports BSS.

The contrabands included nylon nets, insecticide powder, sarees, blouse pieces, imitations, spare parts of match lights, tyres and bicycle tubes. The smuggled goods were deposited at the Customs office.

Weather

Heavy rain likely

Moderate to heavy rainfall is likely at places over Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka divisions during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met office says occasional light to moderate rain or thundershower may occur at many places over Barisal, Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions.

Meanwhile, Dhaka experienced the highest 35 mm rain during the last 12 hours till 6 pm yesterday. Satkhira and Khepupara each had 22 mm. Cox's Bazar 22 mm. Chandpur 19 mm; Faridpur 17 mm and Barisal 15 mm during the period.

The country's highest temperature 33.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Bogra and the lowest 23.2 degrees at Ishurdi. Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday are given below:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.2	25.1	83	90
Chittagong	31.7	26.2	78	82
Rajshahi	32.8	24.4	80	86
Khulna	31.6	24.0	88	89

Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Comilla Road Division, Comilla

Notice Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No. : 20/EE, RHD Road Divn, Comilla of 1994-95.
2. Name of work : Annual Carriage of different materials from different places to different stack-yard under Comilla Road Division during the year 1994-95. (Ch to 168 RBF)
3. Estimated cost : Tk. 4,51,182/-
4. Earnest money : Tk. 9,024/- in BD/TC/Pratiksha Sanchaya Patras/5-year Bangladesh Sanchaya Patras/Bonus Sanchaya Patra in favour of EE, RHD, Road Divn, Comilla.
5. Name of office where tender bids will be received : Superintending Engineer, RHD Road Circle, Comilla & office of the undersigned.
6. Name of offices of availability of tender bids : Office of the undersigned/EE, RHD Road Divn, B. Baria/Noakhali/Chandpur/Lakshmi-pur/Planning & Design Divn, Comilla & SDE's office under this Divn.
7. Time allowed : 9 (Nine) months from the date of issue of work order.
8. Last date of selling of tender bids : 25-9-94/10-6-1401 BS during office hours.
9. Last date of receipt of tender bids : 12-30PM of 26-9-94/11-6-1401 BS.
10. Date and time of opening of tender bids : 12.45 PM of 26-9-94/11-6-1401 BS.
11. Eligibility of contractors : "A" to "D" general category of contractors.

Gyas Uddin Ahmed

Executive Engineer, RHD
Comilla Road Divn, Comilla.

DFP-3891-6/9
G-1402

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