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The Daily Star

'Jatra needs protection and promotion' -- Milon Kanti Dey

AFSAR AHMED and **SABIRA MANIR**

S the *moushum* (season) of jatra draws closer, the artistes of this age-old folk theatre form are on their toes. 'Traditionally, the beginning of

Jatra commences at the end of September or the beginning of October and ends on April 14. the first day of the Bangla New Year. ' says an eminent jatra artiste and the General Secretary of Jatra Shilpo Unnyayan Parishad, Milon Kanti Dey. Milon also has his own jatra troupe Desh Opera. 'But the contract period or the chukti starts at May and ends at mid July and then starts the rehearsal season or the mahora moushum and lasts from July end to mid-September. However, the official jatra starts from the first day of the Durga Puja that is termed as Saptami,' he continues



Milon Kanti Dey in the role of Hatem Tai

Hectic preparations for the jatra performances are already underway

The mahorabari--the artistes' rehearsal houses--gear up for their new season. A two-and-a-half-foot raised platform and sixteen feet, square aashor -- the stage will be abuzz with the performances of the Juboraj, Raja, Rajkannya,

Maharani, Vivek Ekaniall the

major characters of a pala. The melodious and high-pitched tunes of the traditional musical instruments accompanying the palas -- the pakhawaj and dholak (drums), the behala (violin), cymbal and flutes will reverberate throughout the rural areas.

'Beginning of a journey' is the literal meaning of the Bangla word iatra. This performing art is a form of folk drama combining acting, songs, music and dance. It is characterised by stylised delivery and exaggerated gestures and oration

Talking about jatra, Milon says, 'To form a jatra troupe, an investment of Taka 6 to 7 lakh is needed. The salaried staff of the leading troupes varies from 60 to 70 individuals, and their monthly pay varies from Taka 12,000-15,000 plus food and travelling expenses

Jatra is known to have commenced in the 16th century. Especially in Chaitanyabhagavad (1548), Brindavan Das describes the dramatic performance of Sri Chaitanya in the role of Rukmini in

the Krishna Jatra. Jatra peaked in the period from 1947 to 1971 when 22 jatra troupes were established. Tracing the history of jatra in the country, Milon says 'At that point of time, most of the jatra groups dwelled at Brahmanbaria. Joydurga Opera (1947), Volanath Opera (1955) and Vagyalokkhi Opera (1960) of Brahmanbaria, Raycompany Jatraparty (1949) Bashanti Muktomancha Natyaprotishthan (1954) of Gopalgang, Babul Opera (1958) of Chittagong , Bulbul Opera (1967) of Mymensingh, New Bashanti Opera of Faridpur (1968) and Dipali Opera (1969) of Gopalgang were some of the noteworthy groups of this period. Babul Opera revolutionised jatra by casting women artistes in this

art form for the first time in our country,' says Milon. According to Milon, the 1960s were productive in the history of jatra. As he says,' This was the era when artistes such as Amalendu



jatra to the emergence of vulgar

distorted attitude of the organisers

and artistes and the anti-social

activities of the presenters. The real problem, he believes, lies in

Jatra: An entertainment for the rural folk

Biswas, Tusher Dasgupta, Manjusri Mukherji, Jotsna Biswas and Jahanara Begum appeared in the field of jatra. At this stage, the audience got a glimpse of the first ever Muslim female artiste Jahanara Begum.

desh

Comparing the jatra palas of the lack of popular support for this vesteryears with those of today, art form. 'Very soon, 4,000-5000 Milon says that the older palas artistes of 40-50 groups are likely were purely based on mythology to be out of work. If they get and history. Now social palas are permission and security, at least also performed. 'Especially 100 groups can work through the during the period of mass uprising six-month season,' maintains in 1969 and Liberation War in Milon Thankfully help is at hand in the 1971, striking changes in the scripts of jatra were seen. Palas form of a 16-year-old organisation were staged to create awareness called Jatra Shilpo Unnayan of this movement among the rural Parishad. 'Jatra aficionados such denizens,' says Milon. He adds, as drama activists, poets, 'Most of the jatra groups were previously seen at Manikganj.

journalists, researchers, artistes and lawyers can step forward to Now Jessore has turned into the protect this art form. Further, the main centre of jatra in Bangla-Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Bangladesh

Milon attributes the decline of Shilpakala Academy and Cultural Ministry can also further promote forms of entertainment, the jatra,' says Milon.

> To be fair, a National Jatra Festival has been organised on five occasions by the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. However, stronger efforts are needed, says Milon

Milon concludes by drawing a comparison of jatra today with that of yesteryears. 'To stage the jatra was not as hard as it is today. Before the Liberation War, jatra was an unparalleled medium of entertainment for the rural people. Those were the good old days when people from all walks of life, including, the educated people formed the audience. This was also the time when jatras were staged for social reforms by aiding the schools, colleges and clubs,' says a notstalgic Milon.

'Documentaries allow me artistic freedom' --Shakoor Majid

Films on renowned music personalities

ERSHAD KAMOL

V playwright-director Shakoor Majid is on the move. He is now in the process of making three documentaries on three eminent music personalities of the country--Abdul Latif, Shah Abdul Karim and Radha Raman

Explaining the motivation behind his new project, Shakoor says, 'For many years I had thought of filming renowned music personalities of the country whose lyrics have enriched our music scenario.

On his documentary film on Abdul Latif, Shakoor says, 'I want to keep footages of this trio of aged cultural personalities of the country. Abdul Latif is now suffering from old age complications. However, I feel that he has a message for the youth. For example, we are still confronted by a question -- as to who the original composer of the immortal tune of the song Aamar bhaier rokte rangano Ekushey February was: Altaf Mahmud or Abdul Latif? Through this documentary it will be clear, that, although Abdul Latif initially composed the tune, the popular tune which we now listen to, was composed later on by Altaf Mahmud. Video footages of Abdul Latif is essential because his other inspirational songs like Ora aamar

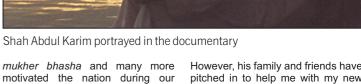


A scene from the documentary Kothay Shey Jon

Art & Soul Gallery inauguration

The inauguration of the Art & Soul Gallery will be held on October 1, at 5.00 pm, says a press release. Eminent artist Rafigun Nabi will inaugurate the show in the presence of Jurg Casserini, Head of Mission, Charge d'Affaires of Switzerland and actor Aly Zaker. Artworks of various prominent and up coming artistes from all genres will be on display. The gallery is located at Gulshan, Road 36, House 16A. The show will remain open from 11 am to 9 pm daily till Friday, October 15.





motivated the nation during our Language Movement. Moreover, he project. was the music composer of many of

this genre of songs." Focusing on the problems he faced along the way, Shakoor says, 'I am facing many hurdles. Firstly, because of his ailment, Abdul Latif cannot communicate effectively. Moreover, he suffers from amnesia.

pitched in to help me with my new

Shakoor Majid is a fan of Bangladesh's rich tradition of folk songs. He says, 'We do not have many documents on our folk song practitioners. That is why, I have decided to focus on folk songs in my forthcoming project. I am also producing a documentary film on popular folk lyricist, the 94-year-old Shah Abdul Karim of Sylhet. He is the lyricist and composer of popular folk songs such as Krishna, which has earned huge popularity as a remix of the original piece.

Regarding his work on Radha Raman, Shakoor says, ' Raman's popular Krishna kirtans (love songs on Radha-Krishna), such as Bhromor koio giya and others, are sung by many contemporary singers

The new films come on the heels of Shakoor's documentary film on Lalon, titled Kothay Shey Jon.

On his working process, Shakoor says, 'Like other documentary filmmakers of the country, I make my films in VHS format. I have my personal camera as well as an editing panel. I really enjoy making documentaries as it allows me artistic freedom.'





Taj Mahal's 350th anniversary celebration begins

The Taj Mahal in Agra, needs no introduction. World over, visitors flock to this monument which never seems to lose its exquisite charm. For the romantics, there is the immortal story of the fifth Mughal emperor Shahjahan who built this poetry in marble in memory of his late wife Mumtaz Mahal. When she passed away in 1631, he decided to immortalise

The highlight of Monday's celebrations was an evening concert by Indian musician Shiv Kumar Sharma and singer Hariharan. The BBC's Geeta Pandey in Agra says Bollywood celebrities were among the 800 VIPs invited to the concert

There is little chance of the Taj remaining open to tourists

Rajan Kumar (R) acts as Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an unidentified actress plays the role of Mumtaz-i-Mahal at the 350th anniversary of the Taj Mahal on the banks of Yamuna river in Agra.

her Celebrations to mark the 350th anniversary of India's most famous monument, the Taj Mahal, have begun in the

northern city of Agra. Festivities kicked off by the Yamuna river near the marble mausoleum on September 27. Officials plan a series of anniversary events over the next

six months. 'It's the beginning of a great journey,' said chief organiser DK Burman after the pigeons were released.

India's Supreme Court, however, dashed tourists' hopes of seeing the Taj at night by rejecting a government request to open the monument after dusk. The court also refused to allow any cultural programmes within 500 metres of the 17th century monument

every night, because that would require putting up floodlights. Artificial lighting is not allowed at this World Heritage site because it could damage the monument.

The celebrations at Taj have been also marred by controversy over the monument's construction date. Some scholars insist that the Taj was ready by the end of 1643 or early 1644, so the monument's 350th anniversary happened a decade ago.

'Someone, somewhere goofed up somewhat on the Taj Mahal's birthday dates,' historian Ramesh Chand Sharma told French news agency AFP.

TV GUIDE

11:30

12:30

1:30

2:30

3:30

4:30

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11.30

3:30

4:30

5:00

5:30

Source: BBC Online



Mother and Child, Ranjit Das

Singer Syed Abdul Hadi (L) received an honorary award at the eleventh anniversary of Katha Lalita Kala Academy at the Shishu Academy auditorium recently, Singer Khalid Hossain, (M), was also given a reception by the Academy. Former Additional Secretary M A Jalil is seen giving away the awards.

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the

BTV

News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am.12:10 pm. 2:00 pm. 3:00 pm. 4:00 pm. 7:00 pm News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 1:00 pm.5:00 pm.8:00 pm. News (English) at 3:00 pm. 10:00 Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. CHANNEL-i News (Bangla) at 7:15 am. 9:00am. 7:15 pm, 9:00pm, 10:30, 12:15 am. Telecast of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm ATN BANGLA News (Bangla) at 7:00 am.10:00am. 2:00 pm. 7:00 pm. 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm. Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm. Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 a.m,10:00 am, 11:00 am.1:00pm.3:00 pm. 4:00pm.6:00 pm and 8:00 pm. ntv News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am. 12:00 am. 6:15 pm. 9:30 pm. News (Bangla) 7:30 am. 2:00 pm. 5:00 pm.7:30 pm.10:30 pm. Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm TARA BANGLA NewsHeadlines(Bangla) at 5:30 pm. 7:30 pm Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm. 11:30 pm Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm **BBC WORLD**

BTV		05:35	Jonopoder Khob
07:30	Bangladesher	05:45	Bangladesher Sthanio Khabor
00.00	Hridoy Hotey	06:10	Music Plus
09:00	Satellite Programme	06:45	Gillette World
12:15	Shongbad Potrer		Sports
12.15	Pata Thekey	07:55	RC Travel On
12:30	Shasthya Tothya	08:25	Drama Serial:
01:05	Selected		Kichhu Megh
	Programme		Kichhu Roddur
02:05	Khelte Khelte	09:35	Drama Serial: D
	Computer	10.00	Choley Jay
02:30	Hijal Tomal	10:00	Drama Serial:
03:05	Shukhi Paribar		Gunai Bibi
03:35	Gito Bitan		BANGLA
04:05	Open University	10:30	Talk Show:
04:30	Angikar		Annodrishti
05:05	Mati O Manush	11:15	Drama Serial:
05:30	Bajar Shamachar	11 50	Sansar Jibon
06:10	Special Programme	11:50	Neshatantik
07:05	Talk Show	12:30	Bangla Feature
07:30	Film Show: Mortal Combat Conquest	03:45	Film: Ke Tumi Musical
08:30	Drama Serial:	05:45	Programme
00.00	Phutena Bashanto	04:20	Shapla Shaluk
09:00	Drama Serial: Dour	05:10	Motamot
09:30	Drama Serial:	05:45	Islamee Sawal C
	Beain shaheba		Jawab
10:35	Kamon Aaachhen	08:00	The sword of Tip
11:00	Chandralok		Sultan
CHA	NNEL-i	08:30	Drama Serial:
09:30	Shongbad Potrey		Khowab
09.00	Bangladesh and	09:00	Drama Serial: Sł
	Public reaction		Patrer Shondhar
09:45	Tritiyo Matra	09:30	Drama Serial: N
10:45	Sports Time	10.00	Files
11:30	Close Up Juke Box	10:30	Face to Face Liv
12:00	Chithi Pelam	ntv	
12:30	Aaj Dupurey and	08:00	Aajker Shakal
	CityCell Taroka	08:30	Kobitalaap
	kathon	09:00	Frankly Speaking
01:00	Ebong Cinemar	09:30	Expedition Anim
	Gaan		Kingdom
01:30	Public Reaction	10:02	Zoo Adventure
01:45	Bangla Film	10:30	Aarshinagar
04:00	Banglar Gaan	11:00	Transworld Spor
05:00	Sa Re Ga Ma	12:02	Circus Lights



Motamot On ATN Bangla at 5:10 pm Programme on viewers' opinion Hosted by Irin

02:35 Sporsher baire

Taray Taray

Shyaola

Drama Serial:

Apnar Jigyasha

Sports World

Siddika Kabir's

Kichhu Katha

Kichhu Gan

Recipe

09:40 Drama Serial:

11:25 Dindarpan

Shyaola

The Firm

Stepmom

Rush Hour

Wonder Boys

03:05

03:45

05:20

06:20

06:55

08:15

08:50

HBO

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R. Charles		
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Live From Baghdad On HBO at 9:30 pm Genre: Drama / War Cast: Michael Keaton, Helena Bonham Carter

Global Adventure	7:00	Home Improvement
Xena Warrior	7:30	Friends
Princess	8:00	Just Shoot Me
Next Action Star	8:30	Ed
Hollywood's Greatest	9:30	Beyonce Live At
Stunts		Wembley
7 Days	11:30	Baywatch
Global Adventure		· ·
Nick Of Time	JIA	R PLUS
The Associates	2:00	Bhabhi
The Amazing Race	2:30	Kesar
Guinness World	3:00	Kabhi Aaye Na Judai
Records: Primetime	3:30	Kyunki Saas Bhi
Rank		Kabhi Bahu Thi
	4:00	Kahiin To Hoga
R WORLD	4:30	K.Street Pali Hill
Oprah Winfrey	5:00	Zindagi Milke
Bold And Beautiful		Bitayenge
Hollywood Squares	6:00	Maal Hai To Taal Hai
Whose Line Is It	6:30	Fox Kids
Anyway	7:30	Kumkum - Pyara Sa
Miami Vice		Bandhan
The Simpsons	8:00	Shaka Laka Boom

		Boom		Collie	L	Ancient Redwood
	8:30	Dekho Magar Pyaar	1:00	Breed All About It	8:30	Dream Jets
	0.00	Se	1.00	Rottweiler	9:30	Extreme Latitude
	9:00	Kasautii Zindagi Kay	1:30	Emergency Vets	10:00	Quest For K2
	9:30	Kehta Hai Dil	2:30	Heart of a Lioness	10:30	Extreme Detectives
	10:30	Kahaani Ghar Ghar	3:30	Beauty of Snakes	11:30	Different Ball Game
		Kii	4:30	Animal Precinct	12:00	Revolutionary
	11:00	Kyunki Saas Bhi	5.00	Staten Island Dogs		Rhythm
	11 20	Kabhi Bahu Thi	5:00 Animal Precinct Horse Neglect		STAR SPORTS	
	11:30 12:00	Kahiin To Hoga K.Street Pali Hill	5:30	The Planet's Funniest	9:30	Gymnastics Fig
			0.00	Animals	9.50	World Cup 2004/05
		OVERY	6:00	Amazing Animal		La Serena Chile (T)
	1:30	The Science of Re-		Videos	12:30	English Premier
		entry	6:30	Zookeepers	12.00	Football League
	2:30 3:30	Zero Hour Atkins: Fat or Fiction	7:00	Monkey Business		2004/05 Manches-
	3:30 4:30	Greater Crimes And	7:30	Devil's Playground		ter City Vs Arsenal
	4.50	Trials of the 20th	8:30	Kandula An		(T)
		Century:	9:30	Elephant Story Temple of The Tigers	2:30	British Rally
		Disappearnace of	10:30	Ultimate Predators		Championship 2004
		Jimmy Hoffa	11:00	Supernatural		- Jim Clark Memorial
	5:00	Greater Crimes And	11.00	Extrasensory		Rally Edinburgh
		Trials of the 20th		Perception		Scotland Round
		Century: Rosenbergs,	11:30	Wild Encounters		4(T)
	E 20	The Atom Spies?		Herd of Their Own	3:00	Watersports
5:30 Treks in a Wild World Trekking in Borneo		NATIONAL			Programming Hot Water (T)	
6:00		Desert Mum-	GEC	GRAPHIC	4:00	Max Power 2004
	0.00	mies/Remote	12:00	Toyota World Of	4:00	(T)
		Viewing	12.00	Wildlife	5:00	Hitz (R)
	6:30	Junkyard Wars	12:30	The Man Who Killed	5:30	Cricket Gold (T)
		Snowmobiles		The Easter Bunny	0.00	
	8:30	Unsolved History	1:30	Dream Jets	7:30	Asia Golf Travel (T)
	9:30	Boston Massacre In Therapy Celebrity	2:30	Extreme Latitude		
	9:30	Therapy	3:00 3:30	Quest For K2	8:00	Sportsline (L)
	10:00	Building the Ultimate	3:30	Mysterious Life Of Caves		
		Submarines	4:30	Different Ball Game	8:30	Uefa Champions
	10:30	Dangerman, Warrior	5:00	Revolutionary		League 2004/05
		Women Perfect	0.00	Rhythms		Group Phase 1
		Storm	5:30	Dogs With Jobs		Matchweek 2(R)
	11:30	Medical Detectives	6:00	Hayden Turner's	10:30	Sportsline (R)
		Specials Eight Men Out		Wildlife Chall	11.00	
			6:30	Planet Wild	11:00	Classic Boxing Ali:
	ANIN		7:00	Toyota World Of		The Greatest (T)
	PLA	NET		Wildlife	12:00	Sportsline (R)
	12:30	Breed All About It	7:30	Realm Of The	12:00	Sportsline (R)