

Film actor Manna passes away

ERSHAD KAMOL

The movie industry in Bangladesh is shocked at the sudden demise of actor S.M. Manna. One of the leading actors of Dhaliwood, Manna, passed away yesterday at the United Hospital in Dhaka. He died of heart attack.

Born in 1964 in Tangail district, Manna acted in over 300 movies. Most of them have done profitable business in an era when the Dhaka-based movie industry faced a drought. Manna's career was initiated in 1984 after he was discovered through a talent search programme by the Film Development Corporation.

Manna was the General Secretary of Bangladesh Film Actors Association. As the General Secretary of the organisation, he had remarkable contribution to the ongoing movement against vulgarity in the Dhaliwood film industry.

Commenting on his sudden death, Managing Director of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation, A.N.M. Badruddin Amin said, "He was one of the most popular film actors in the country. His participation in the ongoing movement against the rampant trend of vulgarity in the mainstream Bangladeshi cinema was significant. Manna's demise is a great loss to the whole industry."

Noted filmmaker Chashi Nazrul Islam said, "We have a shortage of accomplished film actors. This is certainly an irreparable loss."

Film actor Mousumi said, "We had performed in several popular



movies such as *Anonto Prem*. He was a great actor and a great human being."

On an average, Manna acted in 10 movies each year. Among films released last year, Manna played lead roles in commercially successful films including *Shajghar*, *Khomot Garom*, *Moner Shathey Juddho*, *Machine-man*, *Ulta-Pulta 69* and *Shotru Shotru Khela*.

Manna also emerged as a film producer. As a producer, he casted once popular actors who left the movie industry as a protest against vulgarity. Popular actor Razzaq said, "Manna encouraged me to work in a film produced by him. The movie is now in production. I don't know what would happen to the film."

The directors and producers of the 20 films in pipeline, in which Manna had been cast, are seemingly facing uncertainty.

Manna received several prestigious awards including a National Award for Best Actor in 2005.

Two-day Rabindra fair in Mymensingh ends

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The two-day long 'Rabindra Mela' marking Nobel laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore's first visit to Mymensingh, concluded recently (February 16). The programmes held under the canopy of a banyan tree at the Teachers Training College (for men) premises were organised by Rabindra Parshad's local unit.

Tagore arrived in Mymensingh by train from Dhaka on February 15 in 1926 on a four-day visit. The then Zamindars arranged special programmes in the district, where people gathered to get a glance of the poet. Tagore was accorded several receptions. Later, he visited the palace of the then Zamindar of Mukttagacha, Maha Raj a Shaikhanta Acharya Chowdhury,

in the district town (now Teachers Training College). To celebrate that occasion (82 years ago), programmes are held on this particular date at the venue.

The two-day long event included discussions, recitations of Tagore's poems, dance accompanied by rendition of Tagore songs and screening of the documentary on Tagore, directed by Satyajit Ray.

A discussion held on the last day of the Rabindra Mela was chaired by Rokeya Begum, Vice-president of Rabindra Parshad. Professor Shantanu Kaiser took part in the discussion on "Rabindranath and Bangladeshi Culture".

Earlier Professor Sardar Abdus Sattar, Director (Training) of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Dhaka, inaugurated

the programme. Professor Md. Mukarram Hossain, President of Rabindra Parshad chaired the event. Professor Sattar discussed on "The arrival of Tagore in Mymensingh: Memory and Importance".

Habibuzzaman Khurram, Secretary of Rabindra Parshad, artiste Dulal Chandra Gain; Poet Yazdani Koraishi; Poet Swadhin Chowdhury; Poet Nazrul Hayat; Emdadul Haque Millat; Professor Reazul Islam; Professor Atique Rahman and Emdadul Haque Selim, among others attended the programme. Members of Shishutirtha Anandhani, Udhichi Shilpi Goshthi and Alokdhara rendered the opening song.

A colourful rally was brought out in the district town on the occasion.



Artistes of Shishutirtha Anandhani sing at the programme

ITI Theatre Festival '08 Four plays to be staged today

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On the second day (today) of the theatre festival arranged by Bangladesh Centre of International Theatre Institute (BCITI), in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), four plays will be staged.

Shubochan Natya Sangsad will stage its popular production *Rupoboti* at the National Theatre Stage, BSA. Nasrin Jahan's play *Rupoboti* highlights the scourge of poverty in the rural areas, where people are often compelled to leave their dear ones in search of a better life.

The play features the conflict between love and destitution. A flute-player in the playwanderers from village to village in search of the killer of his beloved, Rupoboti. Who is the killer? Is he an individual or a faceless entity? At the end of the play one comes to the realisation that it is about hardship that makes people like the flute and Rupoboti suffer.

Rupoboti is directed by Khaled Khan. At the Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA, South Asian Ibsen Centre from Chittagong will stage *Ichchha Mritu*, a translation of the Ibsen play

A scene from the play *Rupoboti*

Rosmersholm. Through the character of Rebecca West, who is a free-thinker, critic and novelist, *Ichchha Mritu* addresses the deceptive and self-righteous defenders of traditional values. *Ichchha Mritu* is directed by Kuntal Barua.

Department of Theatre and Music, University of Dhaka (DU), will stage *Urubhangam* at Natmandol, DU campus.

ITI Worldwide Committee's message

Bangladesh Centre is offering unique opportunities for encouraging dialogue between theatre activists and dealing with global themes of importance to all."

The letter also reads, "During the theatre festival, dedicated to Selim Al Deen, those from abroad will have an opportunity to appreciate the universality of the celebrated playwright, who has left a treasured legacy of

powerful poetic theatre."

Highlighting the Bangladeshi theatre movement, Jennifer M. Walpole further writes, "The Bangladeshi artists have evolved a theatre that has worked to preserve and restore the humanity and identity of a nation that has endured a brutal war and attempted genocide. This theatre of tolerance and dialogue can be a powerful source of strength for us all."

Boshonto Utshob, award-giving programme in Netrakona

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

A two-day long *Boshonto Utshob* was held recently at the Netrakona Public Library premises. Apart from a colourful cultural programme, *Boshonto Bondona*, the celebration also included conferring the 'Khaleqdad Chowdhury Memorial Award'.

Netrakona Sahitya Samaj, a literary organisation, arranged the cultural programme on the occasion.

This year, noted poet Abu Hasan Shahriar was awarded for his contribution to Bangla poems, by the organisation.

On the first evening, a discuss-



A rally brought out by Netrakona Sahitya Samaj

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