

**National Rabindra Sangeet Festival**

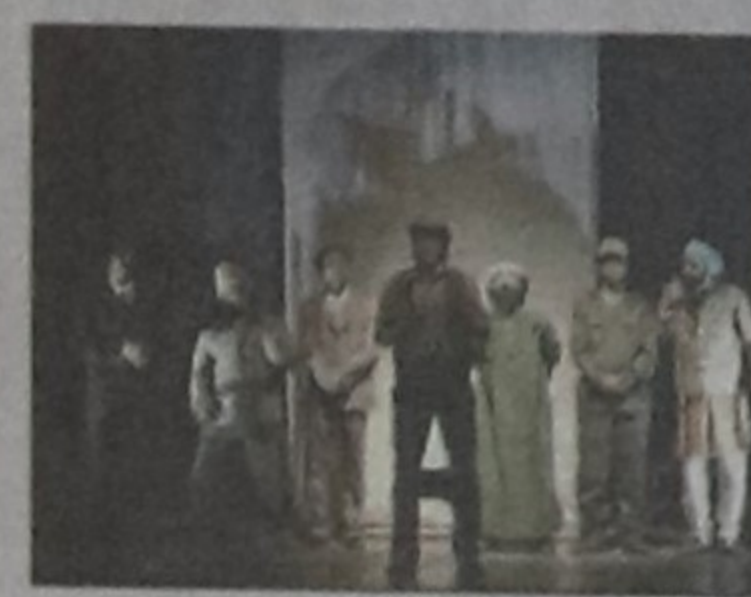
Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha  
Venue: Shawkat Osman Auditorium, Central Public Library, Shahbag  
Date: March 5-8  
Time: 5pm-9pm everyday

**Street Theatre Festival '08**

Organiser: Bangladesh Patha Natak Parishad  
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar  
Date: March 1-7  
Time: 4:30pm onwards (everyday)

**Theatre**

Premier Show  
Play: Raja Eboang Anyanno  
Troupe: Prachyanat  
Venue: British Council Auditorium, 5 Fuller Road, Dhaka University  
Date: March 4  
Time: 7pm

**Film Screening**

Film: City of God (Brazil) and Amores Perros (Mexico)  
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society  
Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, H 510, R 7, Dhanmondi  
Date: March 4  
Time: 3pm onwards



# A montage of genocides

## "Nimajjon" staged at the Experimental Theatre Hall



NADIA SARWAT

As part of the two-day long 'International Conference on Genocide, Truth and Justice' organised by Liberation War Museum, Dhaka Theatre staged their production *Nimajjon* at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on March 2. The conference ended on the same day at the BRAC Centre Inn.

Liberation War Museum arranged the convention on the first day of March, the month that marks our Independence, to encourage research, documentation and study on the genocide in Bangladesh during the Liberation War and link those with similar incidents across the world to strengthen a global protest on crimes against humanity.

"The initiative taken by Liberation War Museum is an important and timely one because the world still experiences genocides in different countries. The late playwright Selim Al Deen's play *Nimajjon* has a strong anti-war message -- a call to raise voices against all kinds of war crimes including genocide and to realise the dream of a peaceful world," said the director of the play Nasiruddin Yousuff.

*Nimajjon* is Dhaka Theatre's 32nd production. The play is a montage of numerous incidents, tracing genocides throughout history. Without any particular storyline, the play

opens with a stranger coming to an imaginary place to meet his dying friend.

Right before the eyes of the stranger, the place becomes identical to all the places that bear the brutal mark of genocide. Throughout the play, he sees hanging corpses at the station, experiences holocaust on the steamer, talks to the dead girl who refuses to rest in her grave, finds murdered children and sees glimpses of genocides held in different places throughout different civilisations before he reaches his friend.

When at last he reaches his ailing friend, he finds another story of victimisation. The friend is a Professor of Political Science whose political idealism earns him torture by the 'Black Death Squad of Caravan' (an allusion to the infamous army squad of Chile).

The entire town seems to be on fire, destroyed by nuclear weapons -- thus drowning into the darkest core of the humanity.

The play ends with a collective prayer to the sun, conveying the craving for a peaceful world.

Asaduzzaman Aman played the role of the stranger while Sirajul Islam played the Professor. The cast of the play also included Mostafa Ratan, Tarikul Islam, Roni Hossain, Farzana Afreen Rupa, Samiun Jahan Dola and others.

Music and costumes by eminent theatre personality Shimul Yousuff were impressive. Dhali Al Mamun's art direction was innovative and Nasirul Haque Khokon's light design was effective.

PHOTO: ISHTIAQUE BIN QUASHEM

# Radha Raman Utshab held in Sylhet



Artistes perform at the Radha Raman Utshab

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Cultural activists and music enthusiasts in Sylhet attended the 'Radha Raman Utshab-1414' recently. The daylong festival began with a rendition of a Radha Raman song by noted folk singer Chandrabati Roy Burman at the M Saifur Rahman Auditorium.

Convenor of the Radha Raman Utshab, Nurul Islam Chowdhury spoke at the inaugural programme. A competition was held on the occasion. A substantial number of contestants from the Sylhet division took part in the competition.

In the group 'Ka', Samir Ranjan Biswas stood first while Rahul and Poroma came second and third respectively. In the group 'Kha', Abhijit, Chandrika Dey and Zannat Tasnuva came first, second and third respectively. In the group 'Ga', Rakhi Basak, Sipa Das and Nima Chandra stood first, second and third respectively while in the open group, Mridul Dev, Kalpana Chanda and Mohan Roy came first, second and third.

Professor Mridul Kanti Chakravarty of the Department of Drama and Music, University of Dhaka, was the chief guest at the discussion and prize-giving programme in the evening. On the rural bard, Professor Chakravarty said, "Radha Raman songs beauti-

fully combine elements of mysticism with regional nuances of Sylhet. The unique character of this region is well portrayed in his songs. There are scopes for research on his songs, since it is a significant part of our heritage." Professor Chakravarty also urged the authorities and others concerned to preserve the Radha Raman Smriti Mandir at Keshabpur in Jagannathpur upazila, Sunamganj district.

The speakers discussed on different aspects of Radha Raman songs. A devoted soul, Radha Raman expressed his passion through mystic music from an early age. Many of his songs remain popular throughout the country. The bard is also considered 'the father of dhama songs'.

Artiste Chandrabati Roy Burman and Member-Secretary of the Festival Committee, Animesh Roy Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion. A website on Radha Raman was launched at the event.

Later, Radha Raman songs and dances were performed and prizes were given away among the winners of different competitions. Artistes of Sylhet Lalitokala Academy, Nabarun Shilpi Goshthi, Geet Bitan of Sylhet, Spondon Sangskritik Sangstha, Nriya Shilpi Sangstha, Nriyangan, and Arkum

Shah Shilpi Goshthi of Sunamganj performed at the programme.

Radha Raman Dutta was born in 1833 at the Keshabpur village, in Jagannathpur upazila, Sunamganj district. His father Radha Madhab Dutta was also a poet. Some of his works are, *Bhraman Geeta*, *Bharat Madhabi*, *Padma Pura* and *Suryabrata Panchali*. Radha Raman was the youngest among his siblings.

Radha Raman lost his father in his childhood and came across sages, but failed to earn total empathy from any of them. At the age of 50, he became a disciple of a Vaishnav, Kedarnath Bhattacharya of Rajnagar in Maulvibazar district. Out of his devotion for Krishna, Radha Raman set up an *ashram* at a remote place by the Naluar Haor, where he composed over a thousand songs, which are known as Radha Raman Sangeet.

Mohammad Mansur Uddin in his *Haramoni* included 51 songs of Radha Raman. Some of his songs are still being recorded and aired on radio and TV. However, many of his songs are yet to be collected and listed.

The rural bard passed away in 1915, but his creations like *Bhraman koiyyo gya* or *Shyam Kalia bandhurey* remain classics and are still hummed by many.

# Female strength and beauty

## Papia's solo exhibition

FAYZA HAQ

About Habiba Akhter Papia, who recently had her sculpture exhibition at the Zainul Gallery, noted artist Hamiduzzaman Khan said, "This young woman who got a first class first in her department has done metal casing and wood and iron work side by side."

The young artist is best in casting and most of her work is in this medium. Her drawings are also remarkable even though they are academic and are basically to help her do her sculpture work. Some of the sculptures also deal with wood-carving. Most of her works come in human forms which are lyrical and even spiritual.

German artist and critic Peter Kustermann says, "For European eyes it is important to see how Papia's sculptures represent female strength and beauty. The unexpected gestures in her works invite the eye to rest and repose. I find an underlying human power in all of them far beyond ethnic, religious or national boundaries. Her sketches too are full of subtlety and compassion."

Papia said that when she joined the Fine Arts Department at DU, some European sculptures had, at that time, come to the department and this inspired her to go into the art form in 1996. Papia said that she believed that if a man could do the work she too could excel in this field. She only regretted that the oven for firing in the department was



Artwork by Habiba Akhter Papia

not quite up to the mark, and the students had to spend on their own in order to make it work.

In her *Rejuvenation of women* the artist dwells on the women as she feels that they have still to come to the forefront and get recognition. Papia got encouragement from her father to go into fine arts, although he was not a professional artist.

In one of her sculptures one finds a nude done with a modern vision. The limbs are thin to represent the constant pressures under which women are. "When I work late in the department, even that comes under censor. A man, on the other hand, would never be questioned or criticised. In another composition one finds the hands missing and this has been done on purpose, to depict the women as vulnerable.

The 19 bronze pieces again bring in women's beauty, activities and their thoughts. Women -- waiting and bathing -- are among these bronze creations. The three goddesses of beauty, intelligence and strength are also portrayed. The strength that one gets in coming and working together is also reflected in this piece.

There are wood and metal mixed creations as well. "Here I want to show that people hide their ugly sides and present their best fronts," Papia says.

The sketches are in pastel and wash and contain female figures. "I've tried to depict not only the exterior of the woman but her feelings and thoughts too."

# Debate competition in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At a discussion and prize-giving programme held recently, speakers said that the art of debate is a powerful instrument of social transformation. The occasion was the two-day long Second Inter-School Debate Competition at District Shilpakala Academy under the slogan "Prakriti Ujanay Khuji Juktir Sopan".

Local organisation Global Village Rangamati organised the competition and Khagrachhari Hill District Council (KHDC) was an associate in the arrangement.

Khagrachhari Natun Kuri Cantonment High School won the championship while Cantonment Public School and College emerged as runner up.

The three best debaters were Tanvir Hasan from Natun Kuri Cantonment High School, Rohit Kumar Tripura from Khagrachhari Adarsha High School and Zahedul Alam from Cantonment Public School and College. The lucky trio received an opportunity to tour India with financial assistance from KHDC.

KHDC chairman Monindra Lal Tripura was present as the chief guest while the Executive Director of Global Village Rangamati, Fazle Elahi presided over the event.

# Suchitra Sen recovering



Suchitra Sen

Legendary Bengali screen diva Suchitra Sen is recovering well from a chest infection five days after she was admitted to a nursing home in Kolkata.

"Sen is in a stable condition and is much better now," Belle View Nursing home administrator Dr P Tandon told PTI.

Tandon said that the team of doctors attending on her was satisfied with the progress of her health. The chest infection was gradually receding.

He, however, did not give any date for her release, saying the matter would be decided later. Security has been tightened outside her cabin at the nursing home's ICU and also at all entrances in view of a woman's attempt to enter her cabin last Saturday. The woman was prevented by female police constables outside Sen's cabin.

The reclusive screen legend, who is often compared to Greta Garbo, was perturbed at the attempt and had to be given oxygen to calm her down.

Sen, 77, has not been seen in public since her retirement from the film world in the late 1970s.

Source: Internet