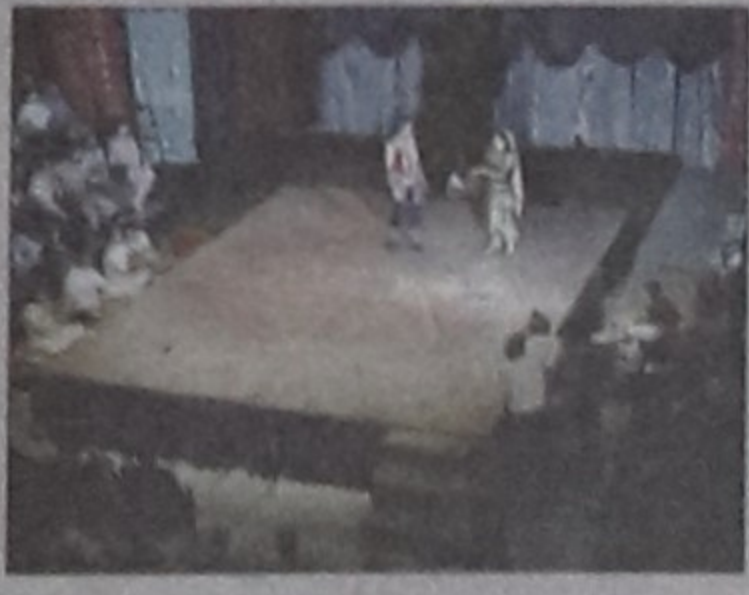


Weeklong Jatra Utsab

Organiser: Department of Theatre and Film, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA)
Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA
Date: March 18-24
Time: 6:30pm



Theatre

Play: Binodini
Troupe: Dhaka Theatre
Venue: Mahila Samiti Auditorium, Bailey Road
Date: March 20
Time: 7pm



Children Art Exhibition

Organiser: M. Nurul Kader Foundation
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, R 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: March 22-26
Time: 12pm-8pm



Bashanto Utsab

Organiser: Jaliya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad
Venue: Rabindra Sarobar, Dhanmondi
Date: March 20
Time: 06:00 pm



Weeklong Jatra Festival inaugurated

"Sohrab-Rustam" staged

ERSHAD KAMOL

To promote and preserve the performing art form *jatrapala*, which was once one of the most popular performing art forms in rural Bengal, the Department of Theatre and Film of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) has arranged a weeklong Jatra Festival at the Experimental Theatre Stage.

The festival was inaugurated on March 18, by Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K. Chowdhury. Abul Kamal Shafi Ahmed (also known as Shafi Kamal), director of the department, delivered the welcome speech. The inaugural programme was presided over by the Director General of BSA, Quamrul Hassan, ndc. General Secretary of Jatra Unnayan Parishad, Milon Kanti Dey was the other discussant at the programme.

Recalling the origins of *jatrapala* in the medieval period, Shafi Kamal in his welcome speech said, "Day by day *jatra* is losing its popularity. Despite many limitations, we are taking initiatives to encourage the traditional art form. However, the sole endeavour of BSA is not enough to uphold *jatra*."

Appreciating the initiatives taken by BSA, Milon Kanti Dey said, "A guideline should be prepared by the government immediately for the betterment of *jatra*."

Adviser Rasheda K. Chowdhury said, "The fact that *jatrapala* is fast losing ground, even in the rural areas, is alarming. Moreover, the art form has been abused under the pervasive influence of vulgarity. We should all work together to preserve and promote our heritage."

Calling *jatra* "an influential art form", the adviser added, "It's the duty of the *jatra* artistes to deliver



Actors of Mayuri Jatra Unit from Manikganj in *Sohrab-Rustam*

PHOTO: ISHTIAQUE BIN QUASHEM

social and cultural messages concerning the contemporary times."

Addressing the Cultural Affairs Adviser, Quamrul Hassan, ndc, said, "Because of certain rules and regulations BSA cannot implement programmes to carry out its responsibility properly. We hope to receive support from the government to promote the cultural activities of the country."

The discussion was followed by the staging of a *jatrapala* -- *Sohrab-Rustam* -- an adaptation of

a heroic tale from the Persian epic *Shahnameh* by Brojendra Kumar Dey, widely known as the "Pala Samrat". Mayuri Jatra Unit from Manikganj staged the *pala*. The historical *jatrapala* featuring an anti-war message was directed by Rekha Siddiqui.

The show began with the acoustics of clarinet, cornet, *mandira*, *nakara* and *tabla*, which was followed by the presentation of a patriotic song by the artistes of the troupe.

After a bell toll, the actors, in

rhythmic high-pitched vocals, presented the tragic myth of Sohrab who was unknowingly killed by his father Rustam in the battlefield.

Seasoned actors of the troupe -- Kutubuddin in the role of Rustam, Habib Sarwar in the role of Sohrab, and Rekha Siddiqui in the role of Tahmina -- performed well, following the traditional *jatra* style of acting. However, the rest of the actors of the troupe were not up to the mark.

Heart-to-heart

Shaju Khadem and Proitee

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Proitee Haque -- daughter of noted TV and theatre personalities Dr. Enamul Haque and Lucky Enam -- and actor-art director Shaju Khadem tied the knot on March 3 this year. In a recent interview with *The Daily Star* (TDS), the newly married talked about their marriage, how their relationship blossomed, their likes and dislikes. Excerpts from the conversation:

TDS: How does it feel being married?

Shaju: It is definitely a special feeling. But honestly speaking, since I have known her for so long, life does not seem to have changed drastically. Rather what feels weird is having moved into our new apartment.

Proitee: For me, it is like moving from one home to another. But yes, both of us are taking some time to get used to a new home.

TDS: According to some, marriage equals imprisonment; that is, losing freedom. What's your take on it?

Shaju: Actually, it depends on your perspective. If you love someone a lot, there is no "obligation". If you care about someone, you would want to do anything to make that person happy. It is about the understanding between two people.

Proitee: I absolutely feel no such obligation. Like he said, it is about how well you understand each other. In love, compromises are made out of respect, not obligations.

TDS: How did you two meet?

Shaju: We have known each other for about 8-10 years. We were in the same theatre group so we used to hang out together a lot, but it wasn't love at first sight. Liking her and later falling for her, all happened gradually.

Proitee: A lot of times, when Hridi apu (my elder sister) and her



The newly married Shaju Khadem and Proitee

husband (Litu Anam) went out we used to go along with them. It was funny how our friends thought we were dating, long before we developed feelings for each other.

TDS: How did your parents take it? Were they supportive?

Shaju: We are lucky that our families consented to our relationship and we have their blessings.

TDS: What was the first thing about him/her that caught your attention?

Shaju: Like I said before, I did not know when I first met her that we would be in love. But when I got to know her gradually, I was smitten by her refreshing naivete.

TDS: What do you like most about him/her?

Shaju: Proitee is an extremely caring person. She is not too complicated and that is what I love

about her most.

Proitee: The best thing about Shaju is his dedication towards work. He is a very simple person and a caring partner.

TDS: And, bad qualities?

Proitee: He is on the phone frequently, and that sometimes annoys me.

TDS: What are your common interests?

Shaju: We like discussing different aspects of our work. Proitee is critical about my work, which serves as a motivation for me to work harder.

TDS: An interesting incident from your pre-marital life?

Shaju: Before we got married, I used to call her mother (Lucky Enam) "Apu" and I still cannot get over that. My friends and family often make fun of this.

TDS: Given the opportunity,

would you two like to work together, say in a TV play or movie?

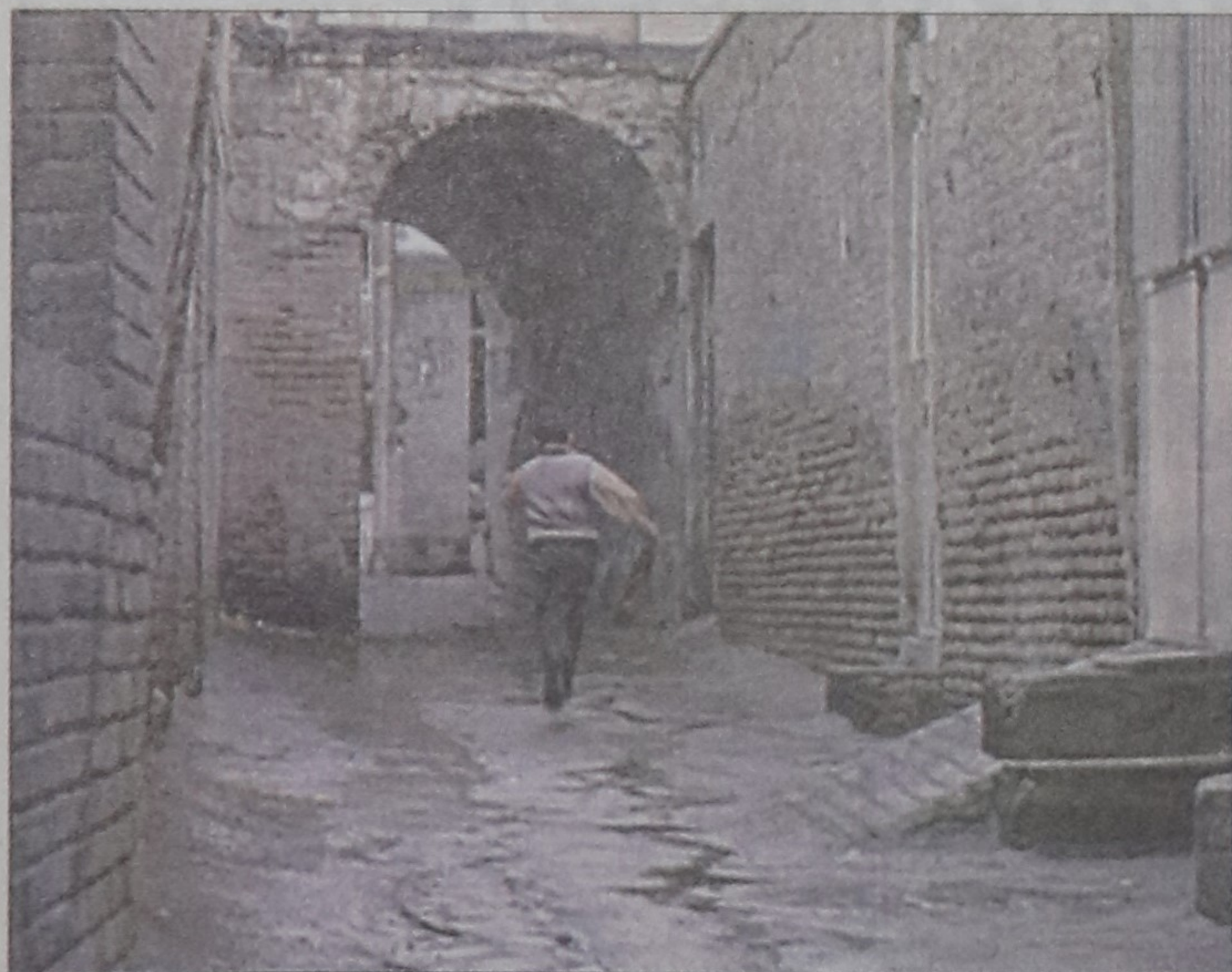
Proitee: Actually, I am not that keen on working on television. I have had offers previously, but never felt the urge. But, maybe if it is a good script, I would like to work with him.

TDS: Define "marriage" in one sentence?

Shaju: I believe marriage is a social institution. Even if we did not get married, my love for Proitee would not become less. It is an extended bonding of the relationship of our hearts.

Proitee: For me, marriage is the union of not only two people, but also their families. With marriage comes several responsibilities and it helps two individuals develop their relationship and come even closer.

Travelling Children's Film Festival begins in Khagrachhari



A scene from *Children of Heaven*, screened on the opening day at the festival

Children's Film Society is organising a festival titled "Travelling Children's Film Festival for a beautiful tomorrow". The festival commenced at Khagrachhari yesterday and will continue there till March 21, says a press release.

The festival will be held at different districts of the country.

The event was inaugurated yesterday at the Upojatiya Sanskritik Institute Auditorium, Khagrachhari. Shahadat Hossain, DC of Khagrachhari, inaugurated the festival. Principal of Khagrachhari Government College, Bodhisatta Dewan and Shushmay Chakma, director, Upojatiya Sanskritik Institute were present as special guests.

The boy, the slum, and the pan lid (Brazil) and *Children of Heaven* (Iran) were screened after the inauguration. Films

will be screened at 11:00 am, 2:30 pm and 5:00 pm on the last two days of the festival. Filmmakers Morshedul Islam and Fuad Chowdhury from Dhaka are set to also attend the festival.

The festival is being organised with the support of United Network Ltd. and Hill Film Society. Advanced Development Technologies is sponsoring the event.

The Arts & Entertainment Pages will regularly feature exhibitions, cultural programmes, film screenings and more. Cultural organisations and concerned individuals are therefore requested to send us information on their upcoming programmes a few days ahead so they can be highlighted in our 'What's on This Week' section. Email us at culture_dailystar@yahoo.com or write to us at Arts & Entertainment, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

Handicraft fair ends in Pabna

Our Correspondent, Pabna

The five-day long handicraft fair in Pabna concluded on March 18 at the Pabna Town Hall premises. A discussion was also held on the occasion. The event was arranged by cultural organisation 'Shekor Sanskritik Sangathan'.

Adviser of 'Shekor', Idris Ali, chaired the concluding programme, while Professor Shibojit Nag, principal of Pabna Government Bulbul College, was the chief guest. Prominent local physician, Dr. Sarwar Jahan Fayez; Professor Abdul Karim; Sumon Ahmed, President of 'Shekor' and journalist Sifat Rahman attended the event as special guests.

We should preserve our culture and heritage for the next generation, the speakers urged everyone at the programme.

Cornucopia of contemporary art

Exhibition at Drik Gallery

FAYZA HAQ

There was a fine exhibition of contemporary Bangladeshi art at the Drik Gallery recently. Contemporary art in Bangladesh is based on the models of 20th century art as it has an influence all over the world. It has its history dating to 1947 when Zainul Abedin and his colleagues set up the Art College. The modern artists of Bangladesh have used styles and techniques that go with eastern art, and at times there is a blend of the east and west.

A part of the exhibition was also seen at the Gallery of Fine Arts, Asiatic society. The artists have been generous about their works making their paintings available without any fuss at this special exhibition.

There were poster prints of the works of Zainul Abedin, which included boatmen pulling ropes, in which the figures were done in geometrical forms and yet the reality was preserved. There was also the portrait of women combing their hair and people huddling together in the cold, waiting for food and succour.

In Quamrul Hassan's work one sees a bullock cart with a family going home, in which the trees and bullock were all in white. Novera Ahmed's statues of families in white and black were also included.

Shahabuddin Ahmed's work features the freedom fighters, with their rippling muscles, during the Liberation War. Bold and brave are the figures painted by SM Sultan, depicting boatmen catching fish, with the women in the background collecting to have a bath. The

clouds and river add to the opulence of the village scene.

Murtaja Baseer brought in the beauty of the butterfly's wings, where the brown is flecked with orange and yellow. Syed Jahangir's painting depicts a row of people, standing in water and waiting with empty bowls. This is in blue and gold. Hashem Khan's work is an abstract piece with grey, purple and orange.

In Swapan Chowdhury's painting the viewer sees a collection of geometrical forms in white. This is outlined with pink and black at the top. Abudus Shakoor Shah's portrait in green is decorated with more

faces of women at the side and bottom, also done in green and black. Bird motifs complete the work.

In Farida Zaman's painting the figure of a mother and a child are seen against a curved grey boat, with the red sky in the back, and dark water in front. Kalidas Karmakar's work features figures of a couple, blowing at each other. This is in black and grey. Lyrical motifs of flowers, fruit and insects of paradise were included.

Abul Barq Alvi's abstraction is in green, brown and red and contains many squares and rectangles with a background of turquoise and

brown.

Rafiqun Nabi's painting brings in women and fish. Samrjit Roy Chowdhury's creation contains happy birds, fish and flower in reds and blue. Ivy Zaman's massive white metal work with the face of a woman is startling. It has two eyes on two sides of the face. Tawfiqur Rahman's goat, done in metal, is also amazing in grace, though made from remnants of metal sheets.

Tejosh Halder Josh's sculpture featuring a teacher and students is quite engaging.

This was a rare opportunity to see the works of so many artists at one go.



A sculpture by Tejosh Halder Josh at the exhibition

PHOTO STAR