

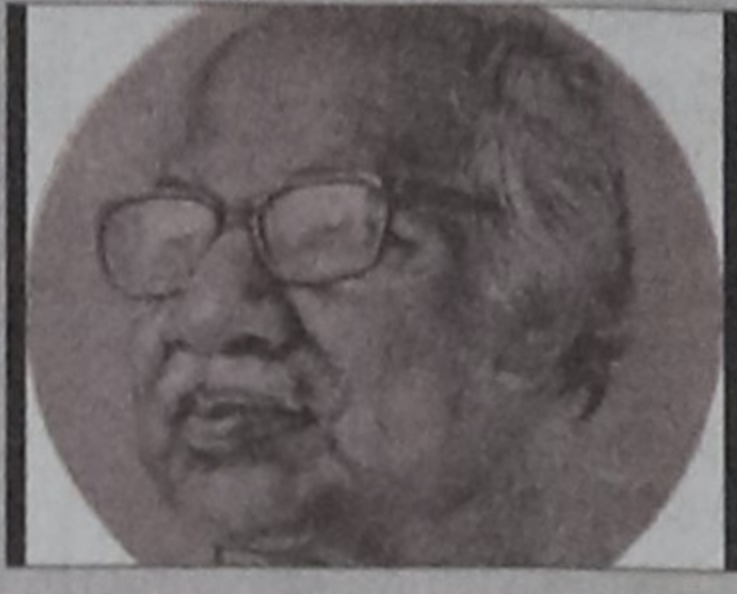
Weeklong Jatra Utsab

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



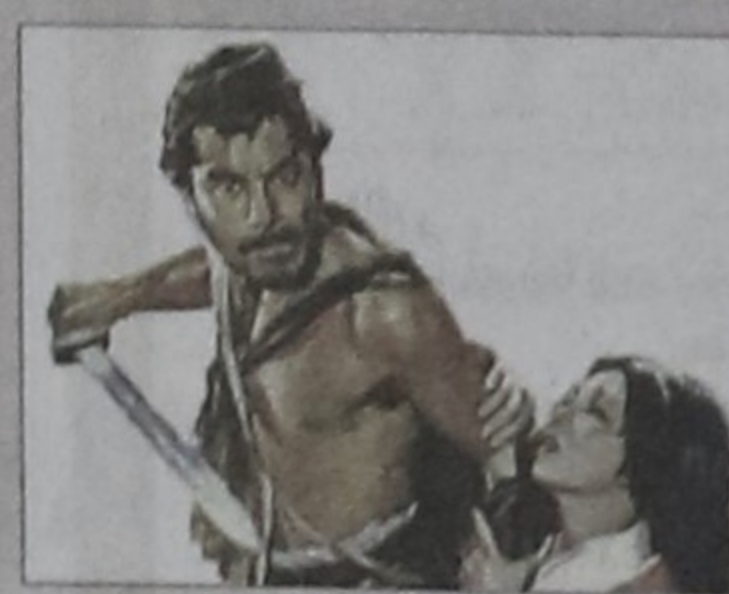
Reminiscence on Waheedul Haque

Organiser: Kanthashilan
Venue: Shawkat Osmani Auditorium, Public Library, Shahbagh
Date: March 21-22
Time: 09:00 am onwards



Film Screening

Film: Rashomon (Japan)
Director: Akira Kurosawa
Venue: Bangladesh Film Centre, 160 Lake Circus (4th floor), Kalabagan
Date: March 21, 22
Time: 4pm, 7pm



Solo Exhibition

Title: Bangladesh: Impassioned crowd of non patriots
Artist: David Saikat
Venue: Dnk Gallery, House 58, Road 15/A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: March 20-27
Time: 3pm-8pm



“Je Shohor Chorabali”

Rosy Siddiqui in a new avatar

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming film *Je Shohor Chorabali* -- written and directed by Shubhashish -- features popular TV actor Rosy Siddiqui in the lead role. The artiste recently spoke to *The Daily Star* about her character in the film and her experiences in the course of filming.

Rosy plays the character of a sex worker in the movie. The story mainly revolves around the lives of street children and sex workers. Ramna Park serves as the backdrop of the film, with most of the scenes shot on location. According to Rosy, hers was a challenging role and an eye opener on the harsh lives of street children, many of whom are forced to sleep at night under the open sky. The film follows the life of a sex worker, how she has to deal with her undesirable existence and struggle to make ends meet. The relationship between her and her *dalal* (pimp), played by Ashish Khondoker, has been well captured in the movie and throws light on his oppressive influence in her life.

Sharing her experiences of shooting outdoors, Rosy informed that the crew had to work late into the night. She was shocked by the fact that drug abuse and other such illicit activities were often explicitly taking place under the very nose of the police. She feels that a special shelter should be arranged for the accommodation



Ashish Khondoker (L) and Rosy Siddiqui in *Je Shohor Chorabali*

of the street children and sex workers. In her view, these marginalised people deserve better treatment and the privileged citizens should come forward to the aid of the helpless.

Rosy previously worked in films like *Padma Nadir Majhi*, *Love Story* and the recently *Mad_e in Bangladesh*. She said working in movies is quite complicated compared to working on TV or stage, because of the longer schedule

and the frequent number of retakes. On the other hand, she has a passion for theatre as it gives her a chance to interact more closely with the audience and get instant feedback from them. She smilingly confessed that when someone comes up to compliment her, she feels simply "joss!"

On been questioned whether she would like to work in more movies, she said "Sure. It does not matter if it's an art film or an out-

and-out commercial movie; my job is to perform and be able to get under the skin of my character, with an eye on my audience's expectations. It is the dream of every artiste to be remembered long after they have departed from the scene. And that is exactly what I yearn for -- to be remembered and loved by my audience always." *Je Shohor Chorabali* is set to be released soon.

Theatre festival for the Old Dhaka audience

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A nine-day theatre festival has been arranged jointly by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (BGTF) at the newly built Zahir Raihan Sanskritik Kendra at Loharpul, Sutrapur (Ward 82).

The auditorium will be inaugurated by DCC Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka tomorrow. And the theatre festival will run from March 23 to March 31.

This is the first time DCC is organising a theatre festival with BGTF. The denizens of Old Dhaka will be able to enjoy the popular theatre productions of the leading troupes.

On the opening day, students of DCC-run cultural training centres will perform dance and music.

Moreover, leading dance troupes -- Nriyadhara, Nriyanchal and Akriti Academy will stage present recitals. Ruposhi Mumtaz will play violin.

The theatre festival will begin with the staging of *Samayer Proyojoney*, an adaptation of Zahir Raihan short story with the same title. *Samayer Proyojoney* is a Theatre Art Unit production. Other plays to be staged at the festival are *Binodini*, *Shat Ghatir Kanakori*, *Khandani Kissa*, *Totaram*, *Kanjush*, *Bhaddornok*, *Jalodah* and *Mayur Shinghashon*.

The Theatre festival will also be inaugurated by the Mayor of DCC. Air Vice Marshall (Retd) AK Khondoker is expected to be present as the chief guest. The opening session will be presided over by M. Hamid, the chairman of BGTF.

'Dol Purnima' celebration begins tomorrow

ERSHAD KAMOL

'Dol Purnima', the biggest celebration programme of the *bauls*, will be observed tomorrow at Chhewria, Kushtia. Followers of all of the 'ghar' (guru-traditions or schools) of the mendicant sects will gather at the open ground opposite to the Lalon Academy Complex to take part in the three-day 'Dol Purnima' celebration, organised by Kushtia district authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Besides renditions of *baul* songs of the principal gurus like Fakir Lalon Shah, Fakir Panju Shah and others, *bauls* will arrange 'shadhu shangha' (a congregation) and 'Khalafat' (the highest state of awareness and purity; the cult believes that at this stage one is prepared to absorb the Lord within) ceremony at the Dol

Purnima celebration.

Cultural Officer of Kushtia district, Saiful Islam Milon informed, "Leading *bauls* such as Fakir Abdul Karim Shah, Bazlu Shah, Yasin Shah, Alauddin Biswas and Abdur Rab Fakir will render songs at the programme. Moreover Lalon exponent Farida Parveen and other artistes who render Lalon songs for the urban audience will participate at the programme."

As part of the celebration, a seminar will be held where Lalon scholar Dr. Abul Ahsan Chowdhury and Rabindranath Biswas will speak, informed the cultural officer. The festival will be inaugurated by the Commissioner of Khulna Division.

Apart from the arrangement by government, leading *bauls* will hold informal programmes at their abode to observe the 'Dol Purnima'.

Learning the basics in mother language



This new pre-primary school in Beribaid village, Madhupur will provide education to the local Garo children in their mother tongue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A pre-primary school that will provide education in the mother language of the Garo children has been set up in Madhupur upazila, Tangail district -- the first institution of its kind in the region.

The school was inaugurated at Beribaid area in the Madhupur Garh region last Tuesday.

Joinshabi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad, with the help of the donor agency OXFAM GB, has set up the school.

On the occasion of the inauguration, a programme was organised at the school premises.

Among others, Shamsul Alam, Tangail zone president of Nijera Kori, Project Officer of OXFAM GB Showli Jharna; advocate Abu

Obaidur Rahman of Ain O Shalish Kendra and leaders of the local indigenous communities Ajoy-a-Mre and Ugin Nokrake spoke at the inaugural programme.

Seven more pre-primary schools like this will be set up in the Madhupur Garh area in near future, said Joinshabi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad President Ajoy-a-Mre.

Lovely Atiwalla, a teacher of the pre-primary school, told *The Daily Star* that 25 indigenous children will receive primary education in their mother language, apart from Bangla, at the school.

Around 25,000 Garo people live in the Madhupur Garh region under Tangail and Mymensingh districts.

Down Memory Lane Discovering Roma Das Gupta



Suchitra Sen

SHAHNOOR WAHID

My mother gets upset whenever she hears news of Suchitra Sen falling ill and undergoing treatment at some clinic. She reads three to four newspapers that week to get updates on the legendary screen diva's condition. I can sense she silently prays for her recovery and well-being. Why does she feel so strongly about Suchitra Sen? Is there an unknown bond between my mother and her? Not really, when 'Suchitra Sen', the 'First Lady of Bangla cinema' is concerned, but there was an undeniable bond between my mother and one Roma Sen Gupta from Pabna who moved to Calcutta (now Kolkata) during the Partition (1947).

That very face!

One evening, towards the end of the '50s in Dhaka, my mother went to see a new Bangla (West Bengal) film called *Moroner Porey*. The heroine of the film was Suchitra Sen and the newcomer made an indelible impression on all with her immaculate grace and ravishing beauty. The face was right out of a fresco and the eyes were elusive enough for the men to want to drown in them! Who is this new actress? That face! That face seemed so familiar yet not quite! Those mysterious eyes... that smile... that chin... that neck... everything! Has she seen her before? My mother apparently couldn't forget that face.

Then one day she read in a Bangla magazine published from

Calcutta (Possibly *Ullorath*) that the new sensation of Tollygunje, Suchitra Sen, was actually Roma Sen who came to Calcutta from Pabna soon after the Partition and got married to a rich zaminder's grandson Dibanath Sen. Dibanath's grandfather was Dinanath Sen (Dinanath Sen Road in Gandaria was named after him long before the Partition). That was enough for my mother to figure out where she has seen that face. She immediately brought in all the paper clippings of Suchitra Sen, her friends had amassed and looked deeply into those eyes. Yes! There she was! That pretty, soft-spoken girl called Roma from Pabna was today's Suchitra Sen! Mother called everyone and broke the news, excited with her major discovery! From that day on, mother never missed a single film that featured Suchitra.

The Pabna years

My grandfather Dr. Mohammad Hossain Ganguly was the Civil Surgeon of Pabna at that time and the father of Roma Sen AKA Suchitra, Sri Karunamoy Das Gupta, was the Sanitary Inspector. Roma had one elder sister named Uma Das Gupta and three younger sisters -- Hena, Leena and Runa. Incidentally my mother's nickname is Hena too. Roma had two brothers but my mother had seen only one.

In a district town, government officials lived in a specially developed area where security and amenities were better than that of the rest of the town. Only one house with a large compound separated Roma's house from the Civil Surgeon's house. Roma, her sisters and the brother used to play badminton in winter on the large compound between the two houses where my mother and my two aunts would join them for a game or two.

In a Hindu family, taking music and dance lessons just came naturally. All the Das Gupta sisters used to sing well and they would sing whenever my mother or my aunts or even my grandmother would request them. The sisters and their parents were extremely polite and amicable to people around them and made friends effortlessly.

Mother still remembers Roma, the best looking among the sisters, walking to school in a white sari

with red border, almost looking like a goddess from the pages of mythology. One day she came to my grandfather for the treatment of an acute tonsillitis she was suffering from. It was painful and at the same time she was unable to take her singing lessons. After she recovered, she came to meet 'kakababu' (my grandfather) and thanked him. But the family was yet to encounter the harshest illness. The youngest sister Runa contracted the worst type of Typhoid. Grandfather used to visit her twice every day and monitor the treatment. Runa's fever often used to shoot up causing her to lose consciousness. One night, at around two in the morning, Roma's father came running to my grandfather, fearing that Runa may not have any hope. Grandfather went running with some medicine and stayed there for over an hour. He came back only after Runa gained consciousness and felt a little better. Since then she began to improve progressively. When Runa was completely cured after over a month, the whole Das Gupta family came to visit my mother's family to express their gratitude.

Towards the end of 1946 my mother's entire family was invited to Uma's wedding. They were all excited about it and started planning what to wear and all that. But one evening Roma's father came up to my grandfather and with a troubled face told him that Uma's soon-to-be father-in-law who was an orthodox Hindu priest of the community would not like a Muslim family attending the wedding. Roma's father apologised profusely and promised to hold a separate programme for the Muslim officials and neighbours.

With Uma's wedding and the Partition taking place in August 1947, things began to change fast in the lives of the two families. Most of the affluent Hindu families left for India. Karunamoy Das Gupta also took the difficult decision to migrate to West Bengal. For the last time the two families met and exchanged pleasantries. Memories crowded their minds and yet it was time to go and let go. 'Kakababu' put his hand on little Runa's head and ruffled her hair. Runa smiled and turned her face away. She was trying to hide her tears.



難波産業株式会社
Namba Sangyo Co., Ltd
<http://www.namba.co.jp/EN/index.html>

Advanced Course for Garment Washing Finishing

A 14 days training program (29 March to 11 April 2008) aimed at supervisor/trainer level staff of Garment Washing Finishing Factories and Service Providers. A course completion certificate will be awarded at the end of the program by the Japanese firm.

Criteria:
The trainees should preferably be persons with at least one year industry experience and who are willing and able to share the knowledge gained with their respective factory personnel.

Training by Subject Matter Experts:
The training program will be conducted by a team of Japanese washing and finishing experts with over 20 years of relevant global industry experience. A fully capable Japanese-English/Bengali interpreter will be also available to the trainees during the entire training program.

Training Includes:
- Latest garment wet processing techniques
- World class garment dry processing (finishing) techniques
Please go to following web-link for detailed program schedule: www.sedf.org/wdftot.html

Training Methods:
Practical based training with theoretical aspects also being covered. 3 days of class room lectures and 10 days of practical hands-on training.

Registration:
Firms and individuals who are interested to participate in the training program are requested to send their application and CV by e-mail to: semran@ifc.org. There will be a registration and course fee of Tk. 35,000 per person. This includes full training package, transportation to training site, lunch and refreshments during the training program (09:30 a.m. to 05:00 pm everyday for 14 days). Seats are limited and will be awarded on first come first serve basis. The last date for accepting applications is 25 March 2008 by 02:00 p.m.

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