

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Inter University Drama Festival '08

Organiser: IUB Theatre and BSA
Venue: National Theatre Stage, BSA
April 20, Time: 6:30pm
Play: All This Madness--Troupe: Independent University, Bangladesh



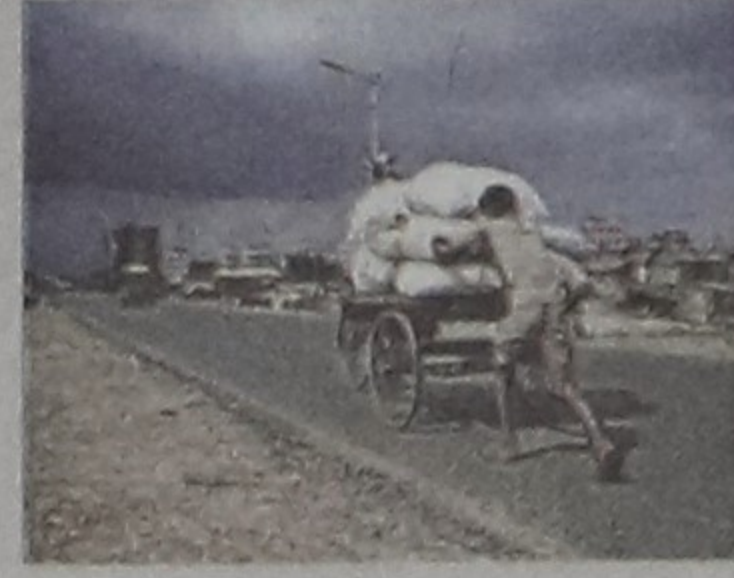
Film Screening

Title: 2nd Int'l Film Week '08
Organiser: Jahangirnagar Students' Film Society (JSFS)
Venue: Central Auditorium, JU
Date: April 16-22
April 20
3:00 pm Carandiru (Brazil)
5:30 pm Opal Dream (England)
6:30 pm Pushpak (India)



Photography Exhibition

Title: Zoom in! Discovering New Hopes
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, R 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: April 16-20
Time: 3pm-8pm



Int'l Inter University Short Film Festival

Organiser: DUFFS
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, R 9, Dhanmondi
Date: April 21-23
Time: 4pm onwards



Al Jazeera airs documentary on war crimes in 1971



A still from the documentary

PHOTO COURTESY AL JAZEERA WEBSITE

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Trial of the war crimes committed by the Pakistani military and their local collaborators during the Liberation War in Bangladesh in 1971 is a much-talked about issue. Popular satellite TV channel Al Jazeera has been airing a documentary on this issue. Bangladesh authorities claim that three million people were killed, while a Pakistani government investigation put the figure as low as 26,000 civilian casualties.

Each day the channel is airing a 20-minute documentary titled *Bangladesh's Long Wait for Justice* which features the comments of the victims, the current initiatives

taken by some organisations-- War Crimes Fact Finding Commission, Sector Commanders Forum and Liberation War Museum-- for the trial of war criminal, comments of those involved in war crimes and the views of the intellectuals for the immediate trial of war criminals.

The documentary, *Bangladesh's Long Wait for Justice*, was first aired last Thursday. Al Jazeera will air the documentary 11 times this week. It will be repeated today at 5:30 pm, tomorrow at 8:30 am and at 7:30 pm, day after at 9 am and 4:30 pm and on Wednesday at 7:30 am and 12:30 pm in Bangladesh local time.

Encouraging theatre in public universities

M. Hamid on Natyachakra's scholarship programme

ERSHAD KAMOL

Theatre troupe Natyachakra has been offering scholarships to the theatre students of Department of Drama and Dramatics, Jahangirnagar University (JU) and Department of Theatre and Music, University of Dhaka (DU), to promote academic performances. Usually Natyachakra announces the scholarships on the occasion of its anniversary programme. But this year the troupe arranged a two-day award giving ceremony on April 9 and 10 at the Experimental Theatre Stage. M. Hamid, the chairman of Natyachakra, spoke to *The Daily Star* on this regard.

The scholarships offered to JU and DU students are Mojibur Rahman Shanto Smriti Padak and Sergeant Ahad Smriti Padak respectively. This year Shams Shahriar Kobi (2005), Tuhinur Rahman Tuhin (2006), and L. Ruma Akhtar and Urmila Palit (2007) received the Mojibur Rahman Shanto Smriti Padak. M. Ziaul Islam (2005) and Soari Sultana (2006) received the Sergeant Ahad Smriti Padak.

Mojibur Rahman Shanto and Sergeant Ahad Parvez were two promising young theatre activists of Natyachakra. The awards are Natyachakra's homage to them.

Talking about the scholarship, M. Hamid said, "We understand the importance of academic thea-

tre for the development of theatre activities in Bangladesh. To encourage academic theatre we have introduced these scholarships. They receive a medal, a certificate and token money. Prior to the award giving programme, we ask the selected students to turn in their thesis papers. Moreover, the students get a chance to perform in plays for an audience that includes noted theatre personalities.

"Natyachakra has been involved in initiatives like this since its inception in 1972. Initially we introduced a 'reading circle' for

the activists of the troupe. Subsequently, in 1977 we introduced a one-year certificate course forming a theatre school called Natyashikkhangana. Natyashikkhangana is the first school of its kind in Bangladesh. I believe we have made significant contributions in introducing theatre as an academic subject at the public universities."

M. Hamid further added that starting from next year Natyachakra will provide scholarships to the students of Department of Theatre and Music, Rajshahi University.



From (R-L) M. Hamid and Ramendu Majumder at the scholarship giving ceremony

Baishakhi celebration by Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad

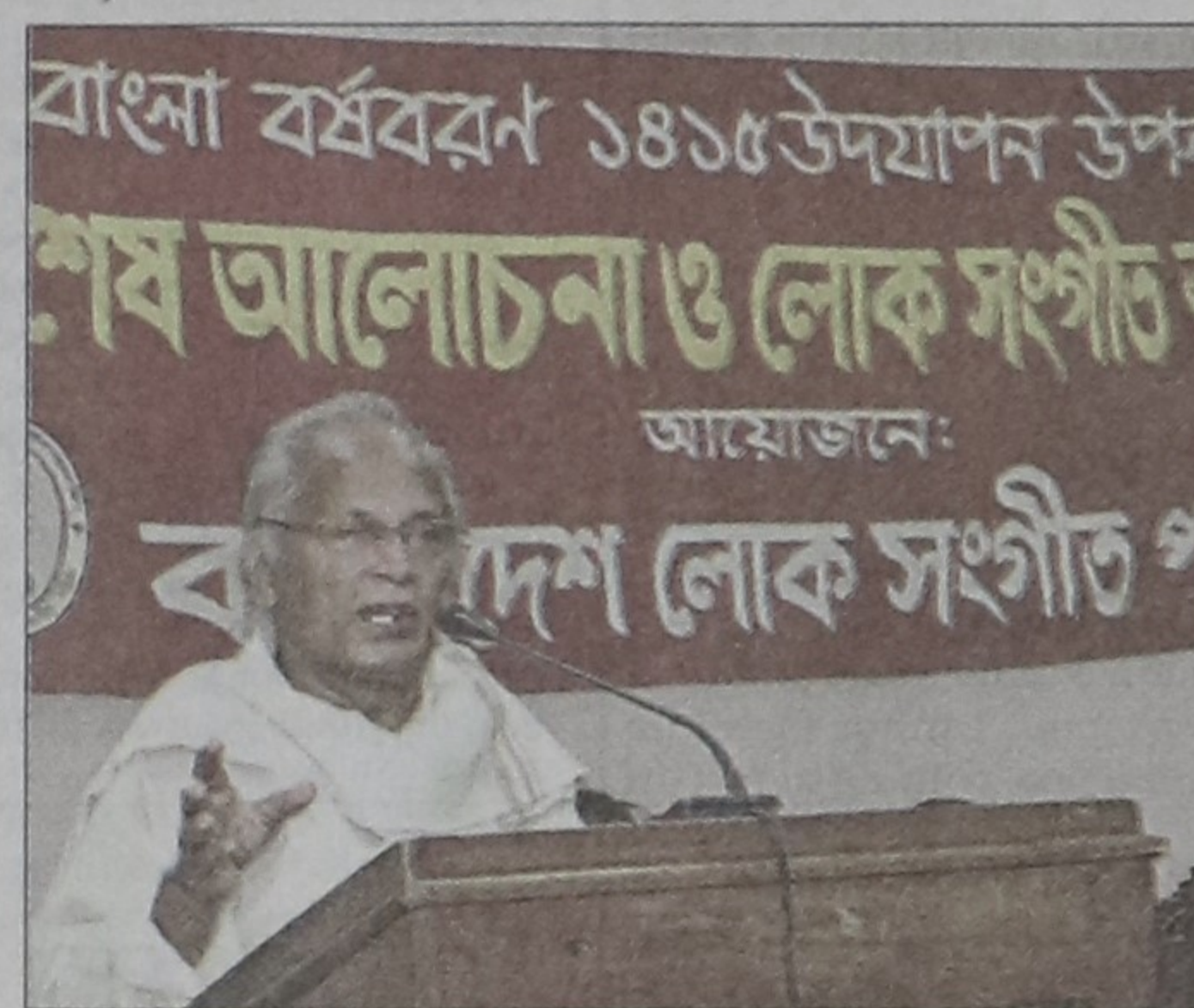


PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Farhad Mozhar speaks at the programme

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to uphold and promote folklore and traditional songs, Bangladesh Loko Sangeet Parishad (BLSP) regularly arranges cultural programme. The 83rd programme by the organisation was arranged on the occasion of the Bangla New Year.

The programme was held at the seminar hall of Central Public Library on April 18. At the programme, artists of the organisation rendered folk songs of Abdul Alim, Shah Abdul Karim, Abdul Latif and Kalu Shah Fakir.

The programme started with a group rendition of the song, *Aailo re Baishakh*. Founder president of BLSP and noted folk singer Indra Mohan Rajbongshi

composed the song prior to Pahela Baishakh this year.

Parul Rajbongshi, Shamima Sultana and Nigar Sultana rendered *Amar haar kala korlamrey, Kala aar na bazan banshuri and Pran kande mon kanderer* respectively.

Members of the organisation also sang *Swabhab kororey shodhon* -- composed by Yaar Alam Chisti; *Nirikh bandharey dui nayan-e--* composed by Kalu Shah Fakir and the familiar *Je jon premer bhab janey na*.

"The Bengali New Year celebration on the public level was initiated by the British in our country. Our traditions also hold 'Chaitra Sangkranti' important as it is related to the agrarian society. I hope BLSP will arrange

An artiste sings at the programme

programmes to mark Chaitra Sangkranti as well," said writer-columnist Farhad Mozhar. Farhad Mozhar was the chief guest at the programme.

Indra Mohan Rajbongshi presided over the programme. The artiste said, "We have immense opportunities to work in the field of folklore. Necessary patronage to this cause will benefit us to delve into our roots."

Among others, publisher and lyricist Hamidul Islam and Dr. Mohammad Mahmudul Hasan, secretary, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO spoke at the programme.

Nasrin Ferdous, general secretary of BLSP gave the welcome speech.

Masks that laugh and cry

FAYZA HAQ

Sandip Kumar Deb Nath's recent exhibition at Zainul Gallery presented masks and sculpture pieces in clay, wood and metal. There were 85 pieces, of which there were 35 masks and eleven metal pieces, while the remaining were in wood. Only five of the pieces were class work while the rest have been at his own time and mood.

He was inspired by Saidul Haque Juis's masks, and the mask exhibition "Mukh-o-Mukhosh" which was held in 2005 at Kaya Gallery, where he had participated himself. Sandip was the youngest artist in that joint venture. Yet, all of his eight pieces had been sold on the opening day.

"In my masks I've combined the traits of Bangladeshi masks with African ones. The metal wall hangings with birds bring in purely local birds which includes minas, pigeons, owls and buzzards. The birds are usually presented in pairs and bring in a romantic atmosphere. As I belong to the crafts section, I have brought in a set of table and seats along with lamps, which were sold at the outset," says Sandip.

The series of masks is called "Expressions". In it we see faces in different moods-- laughing, cry-

ing, screaming, howling, shouting and being full of fear. They are made of clay and are painted over in different hues of blue, red, green and even silver. They have been fired at Rayerbazar.

"In our crafts section we usually make household items. I wanted to move away from the conventional themes and wanted to do something fresh and something which would speak of my personality. I could have tried the same in wood but it would not have been this easy to capture the different moods and personalities of the individuals. Also, wood would have taken much more time. I really enjoyed making the masks," says Sandip.

Much of his work is done in the Fine Arts Department, while the rest, specially the clay objects are done in his university dormitory. The metal pieces were completed in his department as students are allowed to work late after class hours. He says that his teachers' encouragement have got him this far. His guides like Abdus Shakoor Shah, Mohammed Najib, the head of his department, Farook Ahmed Mollah, Abdur Jabbar and Milton Ahmed have inspired him all along. He has his family backing too.

Sandip has taken part in many joint ventures.



Items seen at Sandip Kumar Debnath's exhibition



In conversation

Topu talks about his songs, Yaatri and going solo

MAINUL HASSAN

Rasheduddin Ahmed Topu, widely known to young music lovers as "Topu", is one of the most promising artists in the contemporary music scene. Vocalist of the band 'Yaatri', Topu has carved a niche for himself with hummable melodies like *Ek paye nupur* and more. Recently, *The Daily Star* caught up with the musician.

Topu's foray into the world of music began at an early age. "My sister had a harmonium and I loved playing it," he recalls. "During my school days my interest in music grew." According to the artiste, "I used to compose songs and set them to tune on my guitar."

Topu drew inspiration from his surroundings. "On a lonely afternoon or a glum evening, as the day changed its hues, I used to sit and observe everything around me and that would inspire me to write," says Topu.

However the real turning point for Topu was his college days. "While studying at Barisal Cadet College I was asked to perform at a programme. I rendered one of my songs *Proshno*. The response from the audience was great!"

"That experience gave me the boost I needed as an artiste," he says.

After college, Topu got enrolled in North South University (NSU). It was there that he met up with Emran and formed the band 'Yaatri'. NSU was an important chapter in Topu's life.

"Budding romance, unrequited love and other aspects of life inspired me to



Topu

write. I became a member of the North South University Sanskritik Sangathan (NSUSS). Emran and I met, and we were fortunate to get an opportunity to demonstrate our talents soon. Tony bhai (drummer of the band 'Black') was coordinating a mixed album, *Shopnochura* and we wanted to take part. So we formed 'Yaatri'."

The initial line up of the band had Bipu (lead guitar), Mitu (bass), Emran (keyboard) and Topu (vocals). Tony on drums played with the band.

Shopnochura was released towards the end of 2004. Yaatri's song *Ek paye nupur* received an encouraging response and the next year Tony again asked Yaatri to record another song for

Shopnochura II. It was their work in this follow-up album that catapulted them to public attention; the song *Ekta gopon kotha* was huge hit. After that there was no turning back. The success helped them to get a contract with G Series for their debut album *Daak*.

Daak was released in October 2006. The album featuring songs -- *Ei ki beshi na, Bhalobasha shunehchi ja, Ojana mon-e, Ke daakey, Mithithy prem, Jaatri, Ektu porey* and more -- was a hit.

All songs in the album were written by Topu (except for *Jitsa*).

Other songs by Yaatri are: *Jonmechi tai* from the mixed album *Shopnochura 3* and *Chetona* in the another mixed album *Underground 2*.

Topu's most recent venture is *Bondhu bhabo ki?* -- his first solo album (produced by G- Series) released early this year. All songs in the album are written by Topu. Fuad Al Mukadmir, one of the most popular musicians now, has composed the songs. From the album, *Meye* has become a hit as well as *Banglar gaan* and *Shottobadiami*.

Talking about going solo, the artiste says, "After the success of *Daak*, I wanted to do something new. Fuad bhai is one of the best composers now, so I decided to bring out an album with him."

Regarding upcoming projects, Topu says, "I'm looking forward to complete an album by the end of this year."