

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Theatre

Fund raiser for Poet Samudra Gupta... Play: Raja Ebong Onnanyo... Troupe: Prachyanat... Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA... Date: July 19... Time: 7pm



Theatre

Play: Kolna... Troupe: Prachyanat... Venue: Mahila Samiti, Nalok Sharani... Date: July 18... Time: 7pm



Solo Musical Soiree and CD Launch

Artist: Rokaiya Hasina... Venue: Central Auditorium, BUET... Date: July 17... Time: 7pm



Theatre

Play: Khona... Troupe: Subachan Natya Sangsad... Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA... Date: July 18 and 23... Time: 7pm



In Focus

Shashi Lodge: In need of a face-lift



A front view of Shashi Lodge (left), a crumbling door and stairway at the lodge



AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Shashi Lodge, an architectural symbol of Mymensingh region, is in poor shape as neither the Ministry of Cultural Affairs nor the Education Ministry is taking necessary steps to preserve its glory. Only three rooms of the structure are being used for official purposes, other 21 rooms remain closed and in a state of neglect.

Though there was a negotiation between the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Education Ministry in 1995 to hand over the responsibility of the site to the Archaeological Department for better preserva-

tion, the issue is yet to be settled, according to sources. The meeting was held at Mymensingh Circuit House and attended by higher ups of both the ministries, sources said.

Since 1952, the building has been used as the Teachers' Training College (female), Mymensingh, the only one of its kind in the country. However, the building is not used for holding classes currently as new buildings were constructed in recent years.

Background of Shashi Lodge

Maharaja Shurjokanto Acharya Chowdhury commissioned this magnificently designed lodge

with a musical staircase. Shurjokanto named the lodge after his beloved son Shashikanto Acharya Chowdhury. The lodge was razed to the ground during an earthquake on June 1, 1897. Later Shashikanto had the lodge reconstructed but he could not erase the memory of the destroyed musical staircase. He had another musical staircase built at a cost of Taka 3 lakh, a major amount in those days. Materials and instruments were brought over from Paris.

Antique items are tastefully arranged at every step of the lodge situated on nine acres of land. The beautifully designed lodge attracts visitors from both home and abroad. The palace has an abundance of trees, including

arjun, korpur, naglingam, kathgolap, laxmibilash and radhachura. There are also rubber, bokul, champa, kamini, korai, ashok and jamrul trees in the spacious estate, planted by the then zamindars.

The 24 rooms in the lodge incorporate unique architecture. The doors, and windows of the rooms are embellished with various artistic designs painted on the glass, which immediately grab the visitor's attention. However, these valuable elements are in a dilapidated condition due to lack of proper care and maintenance.

The large and magnificent antique chandeliers are in a sorry state as well. These were imported from overseas to satiate the

zamindars' refined tastes. The woodworks on the floors of this lodge are being damaged every day.

Rainwater pours in after two or three heavy showers, posing a peril to the palace. Thankfully, the relevant authority recently undertook repair works to check the rainwater, official sources said.

There is a statue of a bathing woman made of stone in the middle of a fountain in front of the lodge. Another fountain is inside the palace. The two-storied bathing house by a big pond, adjacent to the lodge is now being used to store straw. Likewise, the ghat of the pond has been totally ruined.

As this palace has historical value, it has also been used for shooting TV plays and movies. Though the Education Ministry undertook repair work 50 years ago, leaks sprang up a few years later, according to the Teachers' Training College sources.

Principal of the college, Professor Rikta Roy said that no class is held in this building now. She also called for the restoration of this historic site.

A Tk one crore nine lakh project, titled "Teaching Quality Improvement-Secondary Education Project" (TQI-SEP) under the Education Ministry, was submitted in the last fiscal year for renovation work of the lodge but is yet to be approved, the sources added.

"Such a magnificent palace needs constant repair by the Archaeological Department," said a local source. The sources also added that it would be better to hand over the lodge to the Archaeological Department as soon as possible for proper preservation.

"A Throw of Dice" Blast from the silent past



Charu Roy (left) and Seeta Devi in the 1929 film "A Throw of Dice," directed by Franz Osten

There's hardly a frame in the 1929 film "A Throw of Dice" that doesn't provide a surge of visual pleasure. Produced by the German director Franz Osten and the Bengali lawyer and crusading nationalist Himansu Rai, the movie itself seems poised between two cultures, balancing the highly developed technique of German silent filmmaking and the rich iconography of Indian tradition. Jungles and palaces, elephants and tigers, princes in silk and servants in rags were photographed on location in Rajasthan and presented with the meticulous "lighting," enveloping depth effects and rhythmic editing patterns of the Weimar cinema at its height.

Based on an episode from "The Mahabharata," the ancient Indian epic, the film tells the story of two kings, the open-hearted Ranjit (Charu Roy) and the devious Sohat (played by Rai himself) who, during a hunting expedition, fall in love with Sunita (Seeta Devi), the beautiful daughter of a wise man

who lives deep in the wild. Ranjit wins Sunita's heart, but on the day of the wedding, the conniving Sohat lures his rival into a game of chance using trick dice. Ranjit loses her, along with his kingdom and his personal freedom, and returns to Sohat's palace as a slave. Chance has led Ranjit to this dreadful pass; chance, perhaps, will rescue him.

Largely forgotten until a restoration by the British Film Institute made a splash last summer at a screening in Trafalgar Square in London, "Dice" was the third film produced by Osten and Rai. "The first," "The Light of Asia," has been restored by the European cultural channel Arte. All three seem to have been substantial successes in Europe and Asia, a phenomenon explained partly by the decision to cast Indian actors (although Seeta Devi, born Renee Smith, was Anglo-Indian) rather than the European performers in dusky makeup who had populated previous German visions of India, like Joe May's 1921 film "The Indian Tomb."

Though hardly free of the colonialist curse of Orientalism, "A Throw of Dice" seems less concerned with presenting its characters as exotic/erotic "others" than with creating a common ground of artfully presented spectacle. Osten returned to India in 1935 to work at the studio Rai had created, the mellifluously named Bombay Talkies Workers Industrial Co-operative Society, where he directed 15 more features -- a run that came to an end during the production of "Kangan" ("The Bangle") in 1939, when Osten, a member of the Nazi party, was arrested by British colonial officials and held through the end of the war.

The new disc, originally produced for British release by Tim Pearce and Nadine Luque, features an appropriately cross-cultural score by Nitin Sawhney that blends Western orchestrations and Indian motifs.

Source: The New York Times



All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programmes.

On Air

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for News Bulletin, ATN Bangla, and Rtv.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for BTV, CHANNEL-1, and ETV.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for ntv, CHANNEL-1, and Rtv.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for Citycell Sa 2 Sa, CHANNEL 1, and BANGLAVISION.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for Home Care, CHANNEL 1, and STAR WORLD.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for STAR PLUS, STAR MOVIES, and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL.

Table with TV channel logos and program schedules for THE HISTORY CHANNEL and Happy Feet.

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Citycell Sa 2 Sa On Channel 1 at 11:30 pm Musical Programme Tonight's Guest: Dr. Mahboob Morshed Host: Ayub Bachchu

Radio Forth 88.0 FM and Radio Today 89.6 FM program listings.



Happy Feet On HBO at 9:30 pm Genre: Animation Cast: Hugh Jackman, Robin Williams, Nicole Kidman