

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Story of Stitches: The Art of Nakshi Kantha
Exhibition celebrating 30 years of Aarong
Venue: Plaza, National Art Gallery, BSA
Date: July 16-29
Time: 11am-7pm, (Fridays 3pm-7pm)

Photo Exhibition
Marul Hasan Abhi's 1st solo exhibition
Venue: Galerie Zoom, Alliance Francaise de Dacca, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmendi
Date: July 10-23
Time: 9am-12pm and 5pm-8pm, (Sunday to Friday) 5pm-8pm (Saturday)

BFFS Film Award
Organiser: Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies
Venue: Shaheed Zia Auditorium, National Museum, Shabbag
Date: July 25
Time: 6pm
Antarjatra by Tareque Masud will be screened after the award giving

Film Screening
To commemorate the Shamsunnahar Hall atrocity
Film: Shironamhin 23 July
Filmmaker: Molla Sagor
Venue: Shamsunnahar Hall premises, DU
Date: July 23
Time: 7:30pm

"Nakshi Kantha Film Festival" begins in Kolkata

Seven Bangladeshi movies to be screened



Faridur Reza Sagar speaks and other dignitaries seen seated at the inaugural programme.

ERSHAD KAMOL, from Kolkata
The Gorky Sadan at the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Kolkata has been decorated with posters of seven Bangladeshi movies. The occasion is the six-day "Nakshi Kantha Film Festival", inaugurated by eminent Indian filmmaker Mrinal Sen.

Organised by the Kolkata based Eisenstein Cine Club and Bengali film lovers Society in association with Bangla Telefilm Club, the six-day film festival will continue from July 21 to 26 in Kolkata. Seven movies produced by

Mukherjee; Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director of Impress Telefilm Ltd; Bangladeshi filmmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury and film activist Ahmed Muztaba Zamal spoke at the inaugural programme. Appreciating the initiative of screening contemporary Bangladeshi movies in Kolkata, discussants expected more such cultural exchange programmes. Faridur Reza Sagar said, "Our intention is not just to produce quality films but also to take the movies to Bangla speaking people all over the world." Goutam Ghose said, "Bengali



A scene from Kittonkhola.

filmmakers from India and Bangladesh should work together to target the global market. I hope this festival will help to form such initiatives." Madhabi Mukherjee said, "These days we don't get to see a lot of decent Bangla films. Hopefully people of Kolkata will enjoy these movies." Ahmed Muztaba Zamal said, "We hope to arrange festivals like this in both countries regularly." Mrinal Sen said, "It's the beginning of a new era."

A one-minute silence was observed to honour the Bangladeshi theatre icon Selim Al Deen. Everyone hoped for the fast recovery of ailing actor Raisul Islam Asad. The discussion was followed by a screening of Abu Sayeed's film, *Kittonkhola*. The movie is based on a Selim Al Deen play with the same title. *Kittonkhola* received Bangladeshi National Award in seven categories, including the best director award in 2000. The film was jointly produced by Angik Communications and Impress Telefilm Ltd.

Lalu Bhai passes away

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The evergreen comic actor A. E. M. Abdul Ali Lulu is no more. Popularly known as "Lalu Bhai", the actor passed away at the age of 76 on July 21. He had been ailing from various old age complications and was bedridden at his Brahmapalli residence in the district town for a while. He left behind his wife, six sons, a daughter and many well-wishers. Son of late Wazed Ali and late Zobeda Khatun, Abdul Ali Lulu was born at Charpara Sehara in the district town in 1932. As a child artiste, his first performance was in a drama titled *Palli Samaj*, directed by his father. Lulu Bhai gradually became an inseparable part of the cultural arena in Mymensingh. He moved to Dhaka as an employee of T & T and this gave him an opportunity to take his acting career ahead. His performance in *Shurjo Snan* (in 1962) drew accolades from the audience. Throughout his career, Lulu Bhai acted in over 100 films. Among them, *Ka Kha Ga Gha Uoa*, *Sonali Akash*, *Dui Diganta*, *Raja Elo Shahorey*, *Saat Rang*, *Nabab Siraj-ud-Dawlah*, *Chena Ochena*, *Dharapat*, *Protikar*, *Badhu Bidaye*, *Nach Char*, *Janajani*, *Matir Pahar* and *Ekhane Akash Neel* are noteworthy. Lulu Bhai also worked with Abdul Jabbar Khan in *Mukh O Mukhosh*, the first film made in East Bengal. Ailing with various old age complications and diseases including high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and heart disease, Lulu Bhai was

admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) several times. He was also treated at a hospital in Dhaka in February this year. Lulu Bhai's treatment was hampered due to constraint in funds. The artiste endured hardship in almost every respect.

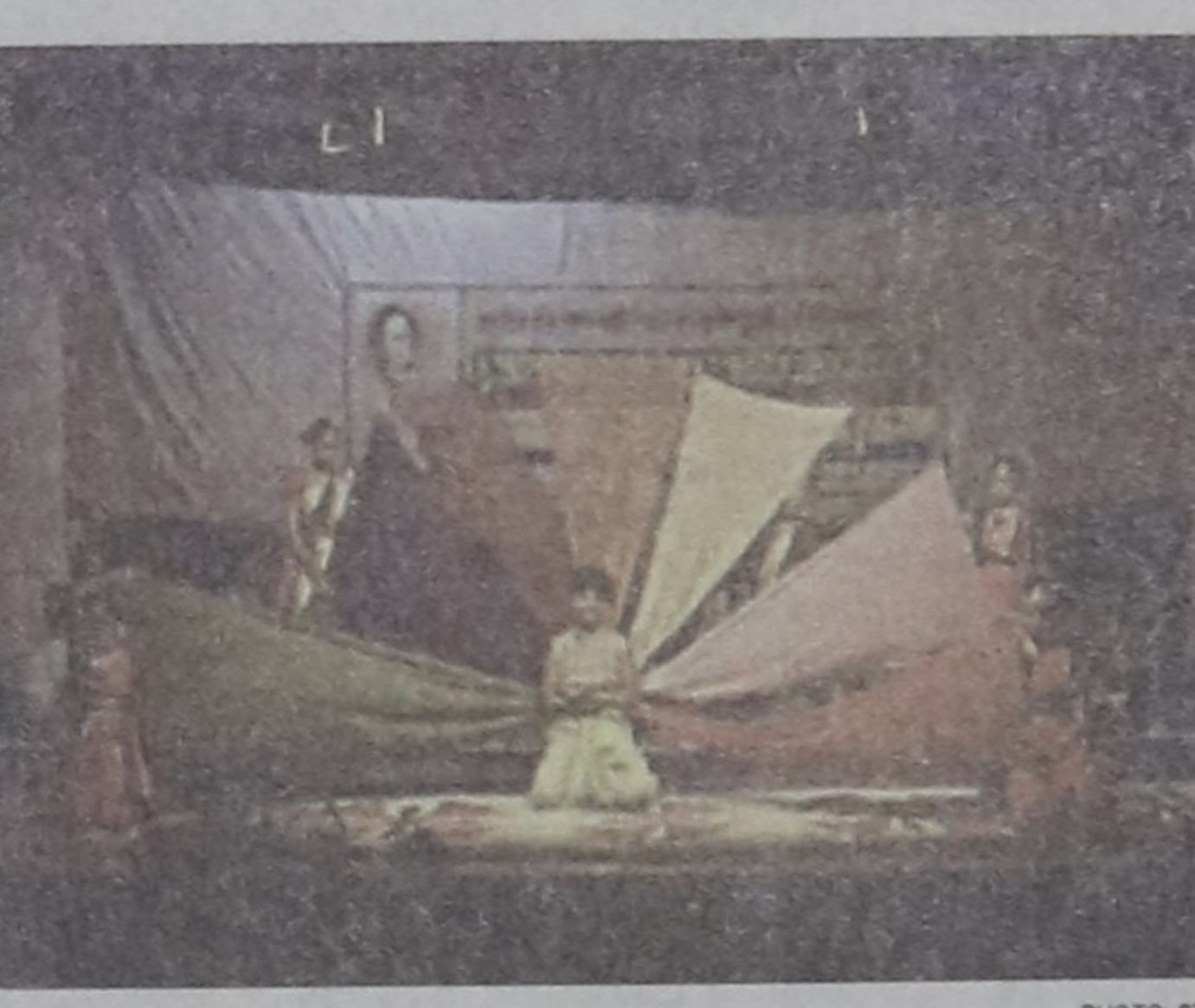


Abdul Ali Lulu aka "Lalu Bhai" PHOTO: STAR

Poet Bonde Ali's 29th death anniversary observed in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The 29th death anniversary of the poet Bonde Ali Mian was celebrated with much festivity. A discussion and colourful cultural programme was organised on Saturday on the occasion. Pabna district administration and Pabna Shilpakala Academy jointly organised the programme at Pabna Bonomali auditorium. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mohammad Sajahan chaired the discussion meeting while the deputy commissioner, Pabna Khondoker Mokhlesur Rahman was the chief guest. Prominent educationist and the former head of the department of Bangla of Pabna Edward College Professor Mohammad Kamruzzaman, president of Kobi Bonde Ali Shoron Parishad advocate Abdul Aziz, former principal of Pabna Woman College Professor Mohammad Abdul Karim and the poet's son Mohammad Faridul Islam among others were the speakers. The speakers said that that poet Bonde Ali has captured the essence of simple rural life in his works. "The natural beauty of the rural areas is the pivotal point of his writings. His works embrace, village fields, rivers and birds," they asserted.

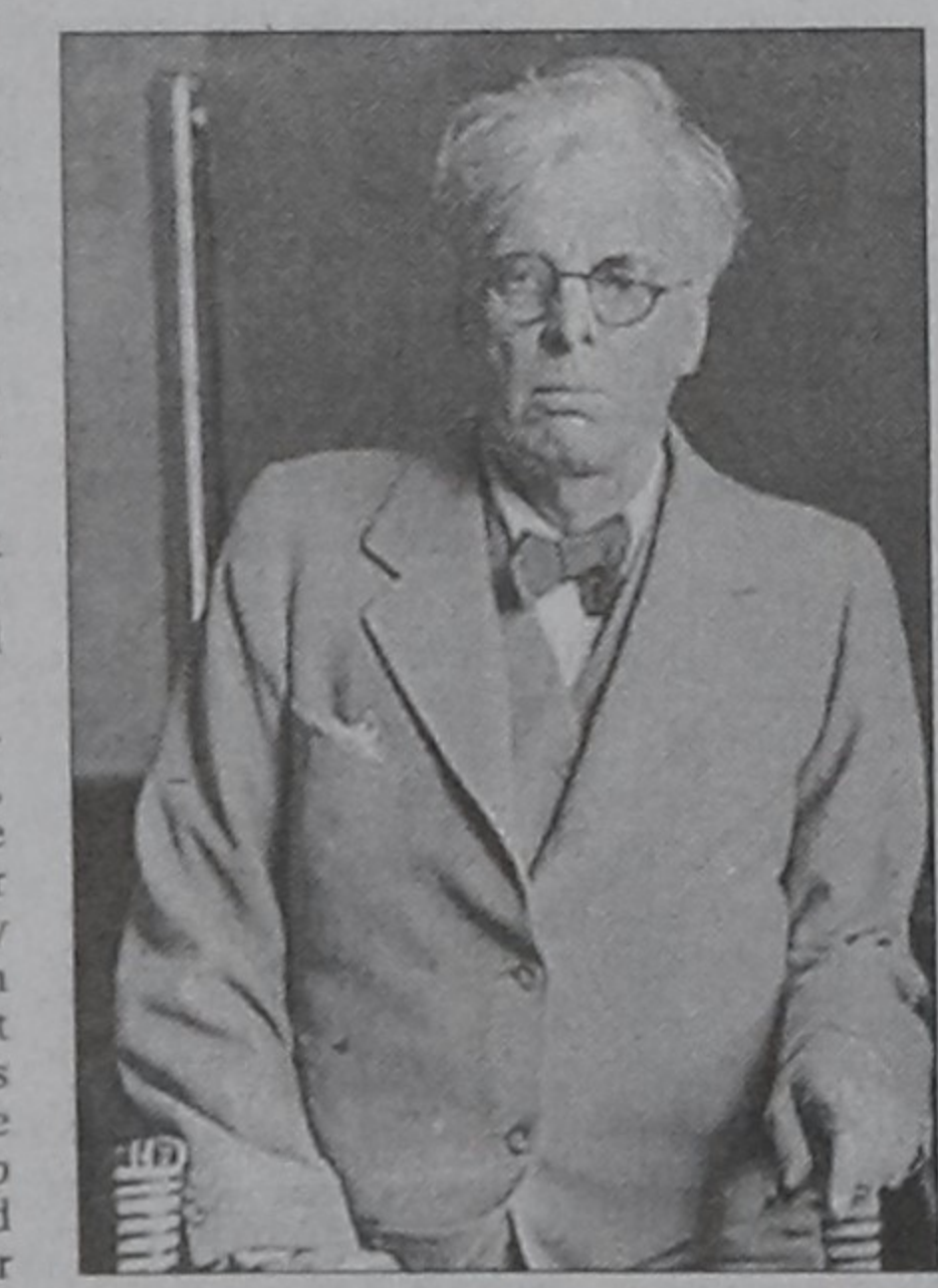


Child artistes perform at the programme. PHOTO: STAR

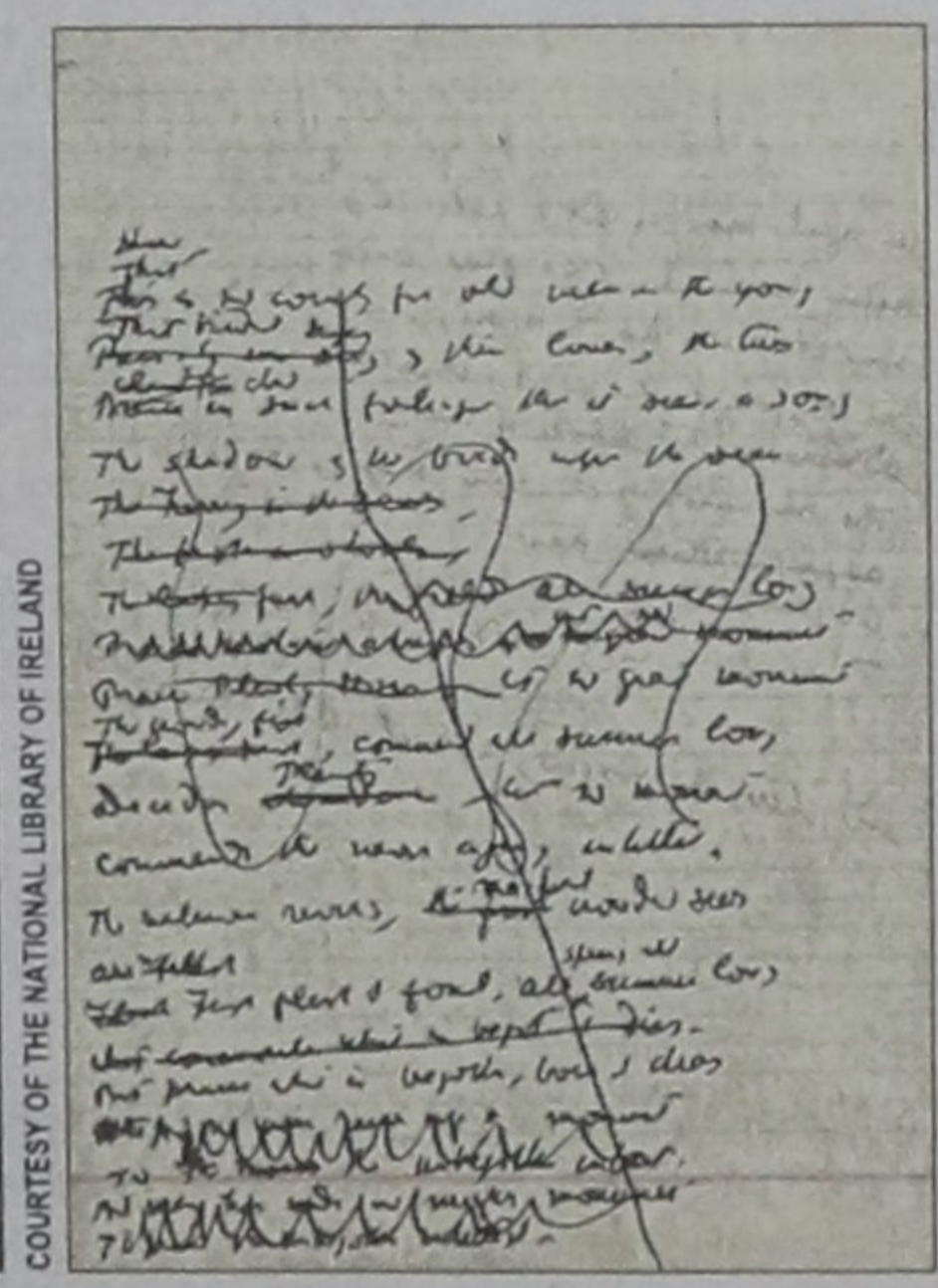
"Bonde Ali has made a tremendous contribution to children's literature as well. All his verses are replete with wisdom. Literature aficionados should catch up with his works," said the speakers. The speakers were of the opinion that his writings should be included in textbooks. They also emphasised the need to preserve the memory of the poet and have a website dedicated to him. "This is the age of technology. A huge amount of information is available on the web. It is, therefore, our duty to have a website in his name so that the public can glean information about the poet and his literary works," said the Pabna deputy commissioner in his speech. Later, a cultural programme was held. The artistes of AFA Institute, Sangeet Biddayalaya Bithi performed the songs of the poet. Meanwhile, the child artistes performed a dance. The latest function came on the heels of the 29th death anniversary of the poet Bonde Ali on June 17. Truly, he is a proud son of the district.

Yeats meets the digital age

Under airtight, light-shielding glass, is a notebook given to William Butler Yeats in 1908 by Maud Gonne, the beautiful, brainy feminist Irish revolutionary and object of Yeats' infatuation across five decades, the muse -- well, really, the furnace -- for his poetry of yearning and his willing partner in what they called a mystical marriage. As far as actual marriage, Gonne became expert at wielding the word "no". Bound in white vellum, the notebook served as their metaphysical marital bed. Yeats used it to keep track of their shared fixation with the occult and each other. Now, a century later, that book is on display at the National Library of Ireland, opened to a page that is just barely visible under the indirect lighting prescribed for aged ink treasures. Yet every syllable -- every comma-deprived sentence, every curve in her script, every ampersand -- is legible. Next to the display case the entire notebook has been digitally reincarnated. With the stroke of a finger on a touch screen, a visitor can flip through pages written 100 years ago and summon an image of this letter, or any other entry. If needed, Gonne's handwriting can be deciphered on a pop-up screen that types out her fevered scrawl.



William Butler Yeats in an undated photo.



A manuscript page of Yeats' poem "Sailing to Byzantium."



A photo of Maud Gonne.

The exhibition draws its power not only from nimble navigational tools but also from the intimacy of the encounters. The four films are shown in cosy rooms that can seat only five or six at a time, in spaces decked out like his study, a backstage corner of the Abbey Theatre and Thoor Ballylee, the chronically damp tower in County Galway where Yeats tried to set up home. The first stop is at a chapel-size octagon of screens. The bustle of the Dublin streets falls away, replaced by recordings of a dozen famous poems. All his verse was meant to be heard, not read. Yeats once said, "Write for the ear, I thought, so that you may be instantly understood as when an actor or folk singer stands before an audience." Here the words roll across one screen, while evocative pictures fill the others. The opening of each poem commands silence: "When you are old and grey and full of sleep And nodding by the fire, take down this book." The readers include Seamus Heaney, Sinead O'Connor and Theo Dorgan, but it is the voice of Yeats himself, reciting "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" at a sing-song pace, that comes as a revelation. Yeats "had a very comes as a revelation. Yeats "had a very distinct Irish country accent, from Sligo," noted Patrick McAfee, a visitor earlier this month. "That was amazing. And the way he

was reciting was very peculiar. My friend said it was rather beelike, like a bee in a glade." In the four films Yeats (1865-1939) is presented as public man, poet, lover and occultist, a figure of towering achievement, eccentricities and pretensions. Less than 50 years after famine had decimated the island, and as tensions with England persisted, he championed a distinctly Irish cultural identity. He collected folklore, helped start the Abbey Theatre and promoted John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey and others. On being awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1923, he said he regarded it as "part of Europe's welcome to the Free State." As a member of the Irish Senate he spoke against a law underwritten by the Catholic hierarchy that banned divorce, and recalled that some of Ireland's greatest figures had been Protestant. His instinct, Seamus Heaney says in one film, was to find and stand by underdogs as power in society shifted. He also found his way into a eugenics society in 1936, and before then dabbled with the fascist Blueshirt movement. "A flirtation," Heaney says, "but not an affiliation." At its core the exhibition offers Yeats' papers not as relics but as living documents. The visitor sees a manuscript of "Sailing to Byzantium." Next to the display a digital

tutorial shows how he kneaded the words and notions of the poem. Only in later drafts did he find a streak of lightning to open the poem: "That is no country for old men." Elsewhere software developed by the British Library allows visitors to page through digitised manuscripts. In 1916, at 51 and still a bachelor, Yeats consulted an astrologist, then turned again to Gonne with an offer of marriage. She declined. With her permission he proposed to her 22-year-old daughter, Iseult. She too said no. Yeats eventually married Georgina Hyde Lees (he called her George) in 1917, when she was 25 and he was 52. He had two children. At last, his Maud obsession seemed to ebb, nearly 30 years after they first met. His love life remained a tangle. He charged ahead with a dizzying series of affairs, and on his death in January 1939, both his wife and his last lover stood vigil at his bed. Until nearly the end of his days he and Gonne kept an eye on each other. In 1938 he wrote "A Bronze Head" about her frequent appearances at political funerals, a "dark tomb-haunter," so transformed from the light, gentle woman of his memory.

Weaving: An indigenous heritage in Chittagong Hill Tracts

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

The 13 indigenous communities of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have their enduring traditions, cultures and heritages. One popular art is weaving. Most women of the 13 indigenous communities, including Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Rakhain, Tanchangya, Khumi, Banjughal and Byom, know how to weave clothing material and generate a reasonable income, along with fulfilling family needs. In some communities, the skill of weaving is considered as a major plus for marriage. In fact the lack of knowledge of this art is a definite disqualification for matrimony. The indigenous women are

versatile weavers -- in their production line are *khaddar*, *saree*, *chador*, warm clothes and various decorative pieces. These women collect their raw material of cotton from around 150 local markets in the three hill districts: Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban. Mostly their weaving tools are fashioned out of local bamboo and wood. There are 20 handloom-based textile enterprises in the CHT, all located in Rangamati district, while at least 50,000 waist-loom based textile enterprises function in the three hill districts. As for marketing, the indigenous people approach local institutions such as Boyon, Hill Fashion, Banarashi, Paharika and representatives of the community. When *The Daily Star* correspondent visited them in CHT, one weaver said, "The ability to sell our products has given us confidence along with generating income." "Along with having a source of income, many have acquired reputations for their exquisite weaving," said Dr. Sudin Kumar Chakma, a retired principal of Khagrachhari Government College. *The Daily Star* correspondent also found that weaving communities bought 1kg cotton at the rate of Tk 220 from the local market. "From 1 kg cotton they make at least two *chadors* that fetch them over Tk 600 in the market," said Konika Chakma, 25, from Perachhara under Khagrachhari sadar upazila.