


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK


Film Premiere
 Film: Lilliputs will Overcome
 Director: Rakibul Hasan
 Venue: VIP Projection Hall, BFDC
 Date: December 28
 Time: 4pm



Theatre
 Play: Ohom Tomoshay
 Troupe: Mahakal Natyasampraday
 Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
 Date: December 27
 Time: 6:30pm



Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Ferdous Khan
 Venue: Zainul Gallery, Faculty of Fine Arts, DU
 Date: December 22-28
 Time: 11am-7pm



Documentary Festival
 Title: 3rd Int'l Festival of Docufilms on Liberation and Human Rights
 Venue: Auditorium LWM
 Date: December 21-27
 Today: The Leader, His Driver and the Drivers Wife and 'Voices of Iraq'
 Time: 3pm onwards



'Lathi khela' at Charukala



PHOTO: MUMIT M

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A spirited demonstration of 'lathi khela' was on at the Bakultala premises, Charukala (Faculty of Fine Arts, DU) yesterday morning. The demonstration was part

of a five-day workshop that began on December 22. Shadhona -- a centre for advancement of South Asian music and dance -- arranged the workshop, which was conducted by artiste Sutapa Pradhan from Medinipur, West Bengal.

Troupes from Kushtia, Jhenidah, Sirajganj and Manikganj as well as students who attended the workshop demonstrated the indigenous art form for over an hour. Participants of the workshop presented an improvised performance of

'lathi khela'. "The purpose of the workshop is to generate awareness on this art form among the urbanites. We plan to arrange another programme of this kind in the coming months," said noted danseuse and general secretary of

Shadhona, Lubna Mariam, who works on different indigenous performing art forms.

'Lathi khela' has a remarkable history. But at present the art form is on the verge of extinction.

"Till 1989, we used to arrange an annual nationwide 'lathi khela' convention in Kushtia, where troupes from all over the country took part. But due to financial constraints, we can only hold the convention once every three years now," said Shahina Sultana Dwiju of Bangladesh Lathial Bahini. Shahina is a third generation 'lathial' ('lathi khela' performer). Her daughter too is involved in this art form.

"If we think positively about this art form then it would be possible to revive it to its old glory," said Mariam.

Mariam also informed that Kazi Kayes of Black Belt Academy associated in conducting the workshop with different tips on the martial dance form.



Alongside 'lathials' from different parts of the country, participants of the workshop (bottom-right) presented an improvised 'lathi khela' based performance.

HOMAGE

Harold Pinter: Master of menace

Harold Pinter was speaking to the press just after receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. "I was told today that one of the Sky channels said this morning that Harold Pinter is dead. Then they changed their mind and said, 'No, he's won the Nobel prize.' So I've risen from the dead."

So people have been anticipating the death of one of the 20th century's most revered and mysterious playwrights -- the near equal to his fellow Nobelist Samuel Beckett, with plays that achieved far more commercial success than Beckett's -- for quite some time. Now they can stop. Pinter, who had long been ailing from cancer, died on Christmas Eve, at 78.

The most appropriate tribute would be an hour and a half of silence. For Pinter was the master, virtually the copyright holder, of the pregnant pause that never gives birth. Words hurt in his plays, but the withholding of them can inflict deeper wounds, on the characters in his plays and on some of perplexed members of the audience. "Pinteresque" came to suggest an edgy break in an uncomfortable conversation, and the playwright tended to these ellipses like a doting mother. "I did change a silence to a pause," he said about a scene in one of his plays. "It was a rewrite."

In such acclaimed plays as "The Birthday Party" (1958), "The Caretaker" (1960), "The Homecoming" (1966), "Old Times" (1971), "No Man's Land" (1975) and "Betrayal" (1971), Pinter radically altered and energised the traditional dynamic of the stage. It was no longer simply the place where people spoke; it was where not speaking could be far more suggestive, dangerous, theatrical, and eloquent. Like Beckett, he renounced the flossy rhetoric of such post-war playwrights as Christopher Fry and Jean Anouilh for a back-to-basics starkness -- a two-men-on-a-stage simplicity that Aeschylus would have admired. In its citation, the Swedish Academy said Pinter "restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue, where people are at the mercy of each other and pretence crumbles."

Under all the mysterious legerdemain, Pinter was the Shakespeare of rhetorical bullying. The bickering men in "The Caretaker" and "Old Times," the quarrelling couples in "Old Times" and "Betrayal," the desperate or rancorous family in "The Birthday Party" and "The Homecoming" -- the rivalries and recriminations of all these mean creatures sparked instant and lasting theatrical pyrotechnics. Who could ask for more of a modern playwright?

He was born on October 10, 1930 in Hackney, London, into what he called "a very respectable,

Jewish, lower-middle-class family"; his father Jack was a ladies' tailor. At Hackney Downs School, perceptive teachers nurtured Harold's talent for writing. He was also mad for sports, especially cricket, which would prove a lifelong passion. In his 50s he said that his "three main interests" were family, work and cricket.

Instead of university, Pinter turned to the theatre for his advanced schooling. Hating his time at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (and registering as a conscientious objector when he was called up for national service), Pinter escaped into regional theatre, where he played in repertory for a dozen years. The man who much later reputedly turned down a knighthood rather than align himself with the British government once acted like a baron: David Baron was his stage name.



In 1980 he married the novelist-historian Lady Antonia Fraser.

Like John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Alan Sillitoe and other novelists and dramatists in what was dubbed the "Angry Young Men" group (after Osborne's 1956 play "Look Back in Anger"), Pinter was not a product of the Oxford-Cambridge factory for leaders in politics, industry and the arts. Being neither born nor bred into the upper class, these writers made class their theme: the resentment and suspicion the unders had for the uppers, which Pinter stripped of overt political references and flipped into the power that one person exercises with cool brutality over another.

Pinter's plays perplexed, not because they withheld information, but because what was on stage didn't always scan logically. In "The Homecoming," for instance, the philosophy professor returns to his boyhood home, bringing a woman he describes as his wife of nine years. Yet his two brothers, their father and an uncle seem

surprised at the news. Has the professor been out of touch for so long he hasn't told them he's married? Is she his wife, or perhaps a woman he's engaged to as a test of men's sexual predation? Pinter would tell you to figure it out for yourselves, or don't bother figuring. Looked at today, the play makes perfect sense as Pinter's ribald, misanthropic version of Snow White, with the father and brothers as the dwarfs and the "husband" as her Prince Charming. And the wicked witch with the poisoned apple? Pinter, presenting his play.

Though his plays became sparer and less frequent, he remained an industrious producer of scripts, especially for the movies. Assigned all manner of British novels to adapt, and turned virtually all of them -- "The Servant," "The Pumpkin Eater," "The Quiller Memorandum," "Accident," "The Go-Between" and "The French Lieutenant's Woman" -- into parables of class inequity and betrayed alliances.

"I can sum up none of my plays," he protested. "I can describe none of them, except to say: That is what happened. That is what they said. That is what they did."

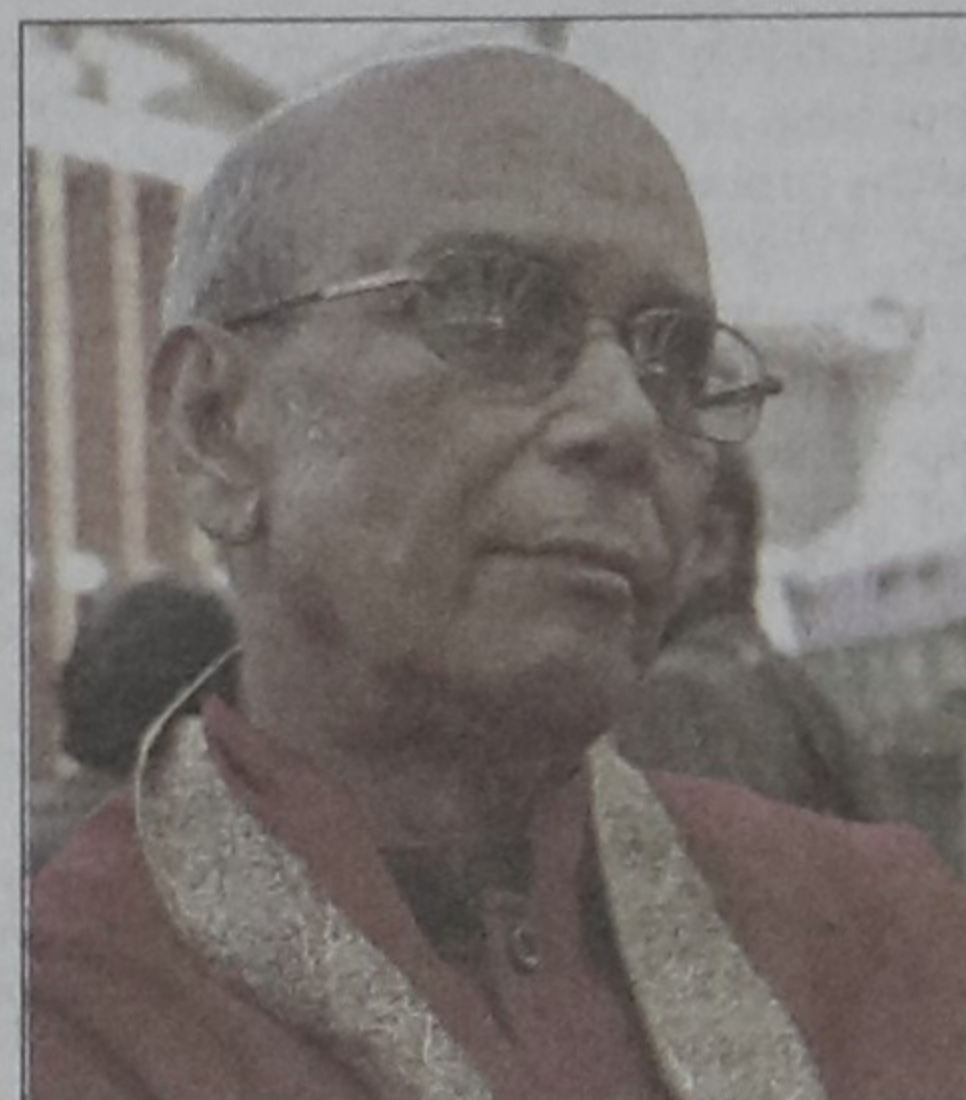
In his Nobel speech, which tried to explain his method of evasion, Pinter said: "It's a strange moment, the moment of creating characters who up to that moment have had no existence. What follows is fitful, uncertain, even hallucinatory, although sometimes it can be an unstoppable avalanche. The author's position is an odd one. In a sense he is not welcomed by the characters... To a certain extent you play a never-ending game with them, cat and mouse, blind man's buff, hide and seek. But finally you find that you have people of flesh and blood on your hands, people with will and an individual sensibility of their own, made out of component parts you are unable to change, manipulate or distort."

Pinter did not consider his fellow inhabitants of the world lucky, especially those squirming under tyranny's boot. That sense of moral outrage made his political statements more surgically excoriating. His Nobel speech included a bitter reprise of U.S. foreign policy, which he saw as criminal; and he pockishly offered his services as George W. Bush's speechwriter.

Though it was not his final performance (he did Beckett's monologue "Krapp's Last Tape" from a motorised wheelchair at the Royal Court in 2006), the Nobel speech was the last great play of a man who knew the value of silence, the importance of speaking out.

Source: TIME

Rabeya Khatun and Syed Shamsul Haque turn 74 today



Syed Shamsul Haque

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Eminent litterateurs Rabeya Khatun and Syed Shamsul Haque turn 74 today (December 27).

On the occasion, a programme will be held at a city hotel in the evening. Noted litterateurs, including editor of the monthly 'Begum', Nurjahan Begum and journalists will be present at the programme.

Born in Bikrampur in 1935, Rabeya Khatun's first story "Prashno" was published in the weekly 'Juger' (Dabi), and her first novel was "Madhumati".

She was the editor of the monthly 'Angana'. Rabeya Khatun also wrote for the daily



Rabeya Khatun

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

and Wrishiz Shahitya Padak in 1998. She has written over 100 books in different genres of literature that include essays, novels, research, short stories, religious history, travelogues and more.

Many of her works were later adapted for television and cinema.

Rabeya Khatun has won numerous awards for her contribution to Bengali literature, including Ekushey Padak in 1993, Bangla Academy Puroshkar in 1973, Nasiruddin Swarna Padak in 1995, Humayan Smriti Puroshkar in 1989, Kamar Mushtaree Shahitya Puroshkar in 1994, Bangladesh Lekhika Sangha Puroshkar in 1994, Sher-e-Bangla Swarna Padak in 1996

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

An accomplished short story writer, novelist, playwright and a very popular poet, Syed Shamsul Haque was born in 1935 in Kurigram. A recipient of several prestigious awards including Bangla Academy Padak (1966), Ekushey Padak (1984) and Swadhinata Padak (2000), Syed Shamsul Haque is regarded as one of the most important figures in contemporary Bengali literature. His major works include, "Payer Awaaj Pawa Jai," "Nurul Diner Shara Jibon," "Khelaram Kheley Ja," "Nishiddho Loban," "Kobita Shamogro" (Collected Poems) in three volumes and more.

Naksha New serial on ATN Bangla

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A new drama serial, "Naksha," goes on air on ATN Bangla tonight at 9:20 pm. Written and directed by noted theatre and TV personality Mamunur Rashid, the serial features ATM Shamsuzzaman, Nazneen Hasan Chumki, Joyraj, Sujata, Lutfur Rahman George, Azad Abul Kalam, Tushar Khan and others.

The serial centres on Lachan Sardar, a resident of Old Dhaha and his family. Lachan has married three times and has 18 offspring. None of Lachan's sons and daughters went for higher education, but a granddaughter Nuri is a student of Dhaka University. A grandson, Chan,



ATM Shamsuzzaman (left) and co-actors in a scene from the serial.

has graduated in architecture and works at a firm. Conflict between the older and newer generations of Old Dhaha is

the highlight of the serial -- reflected through the everyday events that take place in Lachan's family.

Jogphol on Banglavisision tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama serial "Jogphol" will be aired tonight on Banglavisision at 8:15 pm. The serial has been written and directed by TV actor Tazin Ahmed.

A professor of a private university plans to go to Bangkok with his colleague and some of their favourite students. Mysterious incidents start to unravel as the group lands in Bangkok. Even at the hotel, the tourists experience some eerie presence. The group is attacked by a faceless entity. Feeling helpless, the group approaches a Bengali law enforcement officer in Bangkok. The cast includes Abul Hayat, Srabonti,



Abul Hayat and Srabonti in "Jogphol". Anisur Rahman Milon, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Humaira Himu and others.



"Stardom," a monthly entertainment magazine was launched recently in the city. Cultural personalities including director-actor Salahuddin Lavlu, fashion designer Shahrukh Shahid, beautician Kaniz Almas, artiste Maqsood, and photographer Chanchal Mahmood among others are seen at the launching programme.