

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Mimodrama

Play: Zador Pradip
Troupe: Swapnadai
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Date: January 12
Time: 6:30pm



Group Drawing Exhibition

Title: Rhythmic Lines
Venue: Asiatic Gallery of Fine Arts, Nimtoli, Ramna
Date: January 3-15
Time: 12pm-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Stimulated Luminescence
Artist: Juneer Kibria
Venue: Bengali Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27, Dhanmondi
From January 5-14 at 12-8pm



Photography Exhibition

Condolence for the people of Gaza
Organiser: Iranian Cultural Centre
Venue: ICC, H 54, Rd 8/A, Dhanmondi
From December 30-January 12 (9am-5pm)



The lure of 'roopkotha'

'Konthoshilon' stages fairy tale-based plays

MAINUL HASSAN

Who has not heard or read fairy tales in childhood? To every child 'roopkotha' (fairy tales) from 'Thakurmar Jhuli' (grandmother's repertoire), involving 'ponkhira' (flying horse), 'Rakkhosh Puri' (den of demons) have always been a subject of great fascination.

On January 10, cultural organisation 'Konthoshilon' organised a 'Golpo Bolar Ashor' (narration of stories) at Shaukat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library. Titled 'Rupkathar Golpo', the event featured staging of two plays based on the famous tales of 'Kolaboti Rajkanya' and 'Neel Komol Aar Lal Komol'.

With evocative theatrics and use of colourful masks and props, artistes of Konthoshilon brought to life the ever-popular fairy tales on the stage, taking the audience on a journey through magical adventures.

'Kolaboti Rajkanya' was staged first. The story revolves around two princes who were born as a monkey and an owl. They take off on a journey in search of the Kolaboti Rajkanya, a beautiful princess living in 'Patalpuri' (an underground world). On the way the brothers face many obstacles -- the 'Kantha Buri' (a woman with



a magic quilt that can paralyse anyone when thrown upon), dark dungeons and so on. But armed with good intentions and truth on their

side, and a little help of magic, the brothers overcome all evil. The monkey prince marries Kolaboti Rajkanya and the owl prince

marries princess Hirabori. In the end the brothers are transformed into humans and they live happily ever after, as tradition goes.

Artistes of 'Konthoshilon' presented 'roopkotha' based plays at the programme.

One of the most familiar of 'Thakurmar Jhuli' tales, 'Neel Komol Aar Lal Komol' is also a story of two princes, who were reborn to avenge their deaths at the hands of 'Rakkhosh' (demons) from their previous lives. In their previous lives, the brothers were Kushum and Ajit. Their father, the King, had two wives. Unbeknown to the King, Kushum's mother was a demon princess in disguise. Through a surprise attack, her demon minions overrun the kingdom and kill everyone including the prince brothers, and imprison the King with a spell for eternity. The brothers are reborn and take revenge, with the help of magic of course.

This was the first initiative by Konthoshilon to promote traditional 'roopkotha'. The organisation mostly stages recitation programmes.

'Roopkotha' are gems of our culture, but the tradition is on the verge of extinction. This initiative has been taken to promote our indigenous fairy tales among urban children, said Azharul Haq Azad, director of the plays.

"We hope to hold more such programmes regularly and promote our folklore in a modern form," added the director.

The programme drew a sizable crowd.

Songs of our roots

Solo performance by Chandana Majumdar at Bengal Shilpalaya

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bengal Foundation has been promoting traditional Bangla songs over the last two decades. As part of the initiative, the organisation arranged a musical soiree, 'Praner Khela', at Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi on January 10. Accomplished folk singer Chandana Majumdar performed a dozen folk songs of five iconic bards -- Laloni, Bijoy Sarkar, Radharaman, Rajab Ali and Shah Abdul Karim -- at the programme.

The programme began with an instrumental performance by Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Milon Bhattacharya and Ratan Kumar Roy. The musician trio played a couple of folk compositions with flute, 'tabla' and 'dotara' creating an apt ambience for Chandana's performance.

Chandana started with a Laloni song, 'Itorpana karjo amar'. Bengal Foundation has released a CD featuring Chandana titled 'Bhober Ghatay'. The album includes familiar

and unfamiliar Laloni songs for which Chandana won the best folk artiste award at the 4th Citycell-Channel i Music Award last year.

At Bengal Shilpalaya, Chandana rendered five songs from the album including 'Rupkashther nauka' and 'Kothajaimon'. The artiste also sang 'Tin pagoley holo mela' and 'Parkoro doyal'.

Chandana performed two songs of Bijoy Sarkar -- 'Koto bhalo lagey tomarey' and 'Aami jarey bashi bhalo'. The latter was featured in a mixed album recently. Radharaman's 'Kunja shajao', Rajab Ali's 'Pran-er bondhu biney' and Shah Abdul Karim's 'Aami tomar koler gari' were also part of Chandana's repertoire at the programme.

Chandana intended to conclude the performance with another Laloni song, and she rendered 'Nigumbicharey'. But repeated requests from the audience convinced her to wrap up the event with 'Jao pakhi bolo tarey'. The song from 'Monpura' soundtrack has become hugely popular.



Chandana Majumdar performed songs of Laloni, Bijoy Sarkar, Radharaman, Rajab Ali and Shah Abdul Karim at the programme.

Slumdog favourite as Golden Globes launch Oscars countdown

AFP, Beverly Hills

The race for honours at next month's Oscars cranks into overdrive here Sunday as a galaxy of stars descends on Beverly Hills for the 66th Golden Globes.

After a disastrous event last year that was reduced to a celebrity-free zone by the entertainment industry's writers strike, this year's red carpet parade will read like a who's who of the movie industry's A-list.

Brad Pitt, Kate Winslet, Tom Cruise, Angelina Jolie, Clint Eastwood, Leonardo DiCaprio and Meryl Streep are just a few of the Hollywood heavyweights vying for awards at the Globes, regarded as second only to the Academy Awards which take place on February 22.

Pitt is up for best actor for his performance as a man who ages in reverse in 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button', which along with 'Frost/Nixon' and 'Doubt' goes into the event with five nominations.

'Benjamin Button' and 'Frost/Nixon' are regarded as strong Oscars contenders with nods in the key categories of best drama, best director and best actor.

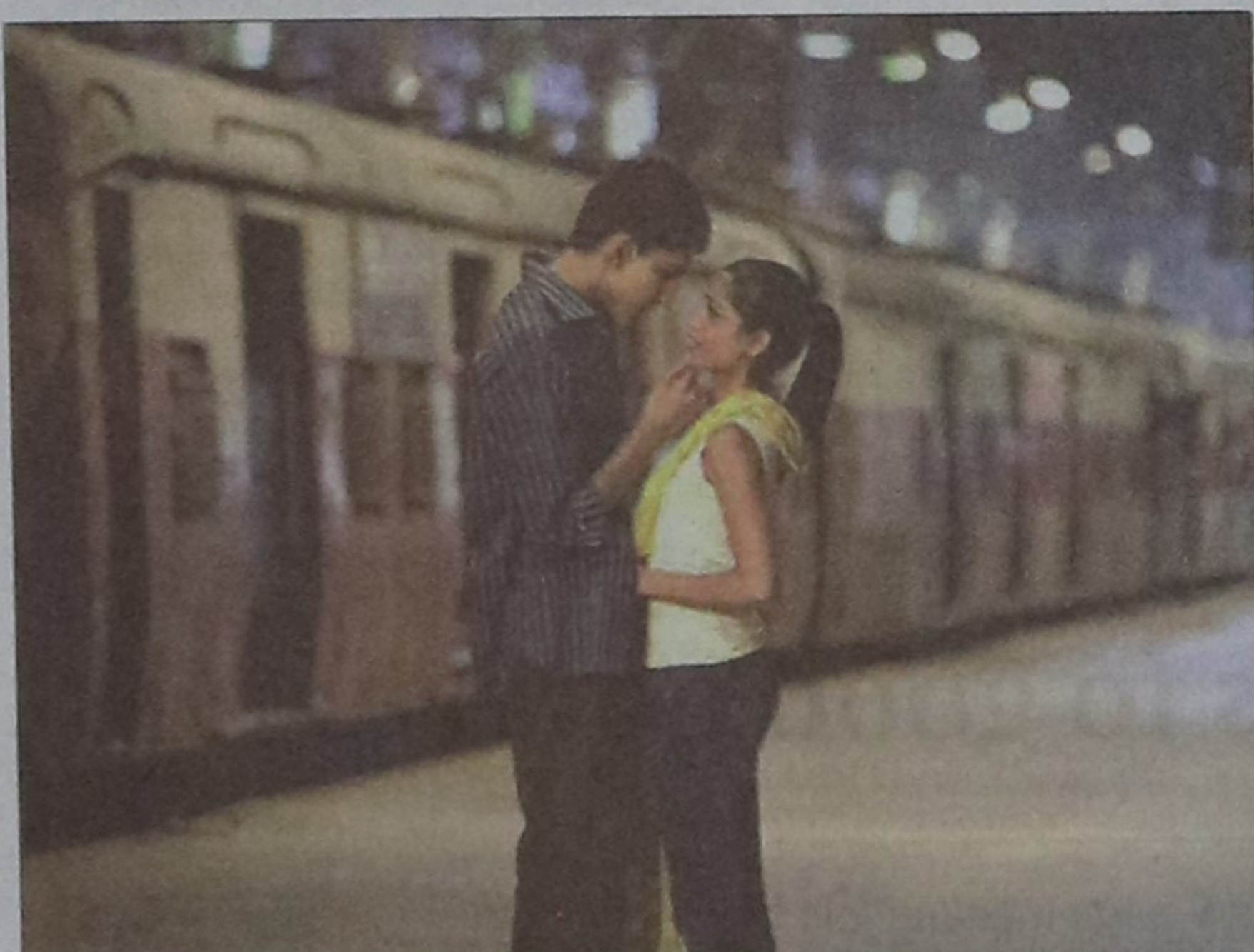
However awards season pundits believe 'Benjamin Button' could be snubbed for best drama honours by 'Slumdog Millionaire'.

British director Danny Boyle's riotous feel-good flick tells the story of a boy who rises from crushing poverty in Mumbai to find fame and fortune on India's version of the television quiz show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?'.

The film's Oscar campaign picked up valuable momentum on Thursday when it swept the board at the Critics Choice Awards, winning five honours including best picture and best director.

"I think it's a real close race between 'Benjamin Button' and 'Slumdog Millionaire'," said Pete Hammond, film critic for Maxim and a contributor to the Los Angeles Times's the envelope.com.

"I've talked to many members in the Hollywood Foreign Press Association



'Slumdog Millionaire' tells the story of a boy who rises from crushing poverty in Mumbai to find fame and fortune, and is one of the top favourites among Golden Globes contenders this year.

who just loved 'Slumdog Millionaire'. They're passionate about it and it played really well with them. But they also like and admire 'Benjamin Button'.

Unlike the Oscars, the Golden Globes -- which are chosen by around 80 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association -- have separate best picture awards for dramas and musicals.

In the past four years the Globes have failed to accurately predict the best picture winner at the Academy Awards, but overall two-thirds of best picture Oscar winners had first received a Golden Globe.

Pitt's rivals in the best actor drama race include DiCaprio, who plays a frustrated 1950s suburbanite in 'Revolutionary Road', Sean Penn as a trailblazing gay politician in 'Milk', Frank Langella as disgraced US president Richard Nixon in 'Frost/Nixon' and Mickey Rourke, a washed up brawler in 'The Wrestler'.

In the best actress drama race, Pitt's partner Jolie is nominated for her performance as a mother searching for her son

in Clint Eastwood's period film 'Changeling'.

Other nominees include Anne Hathaway for 'Rachel Getting Married', Streep for her performance as a tyrannical nun in 'Doubt', Kristin Scott Thomas in 'I've Loved You So Long' and Winslet for 'Revolutionary Road'.

Meanwhile Australian actor Heath Ledger is the hot favourite to win a post-humous Globe in the best supporting actor category for his acclaimed performance as the Joker in Batman blockbuster 'The Dark Knight'.

Ledger, who died of a prescription drugs overdose in January last year, faces competition from Cruise, Ralph Fiennes, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robert Downey Jr. But pundits are tipping Ledger for success.

"I think if he wins on Sunday he's likely to go all the way to the Oscars," Hammond said. "Anybody but Heath Ledger would be an upset."

A vibrant get-together away from the city

ZAHANGIR ALAM BISWAS, Manikganj

Naib Uddin Ahmed, an internationally acclaimed photographer, and his brother Dr. Nawazish Ahmed, an agro-scientist and environmentalist, recently held a get-together in Paril Nawadha, a village 40 km from Dhaka city, under Singair upazila in Manikganj. The brothers organise such celebrations annually in winter.

Hundreds of talented people, including scientists, writers, poets, researchers, dramatists, singers, artists, historians and politicians attended the celebration at Paril, also the home of Language Movement Martyr Rafik Uddin Ahmed.

Among those who attended the function were Professor. Nazrul Islam, chairman of University Grant Commission; Dr. Enamul Haque, former director general of National Museum; Emdadul Hossain, a Language Movement veteran; Lily Islam, professor of Shanta Maria University and Tagore singer; dramatist Masud Ali Khan; renowned artist Mustafa Monwar; theatre personality Hasan Imam and Dr. Mirza Jolil, president of Bangladesh



PHOTO: STAR

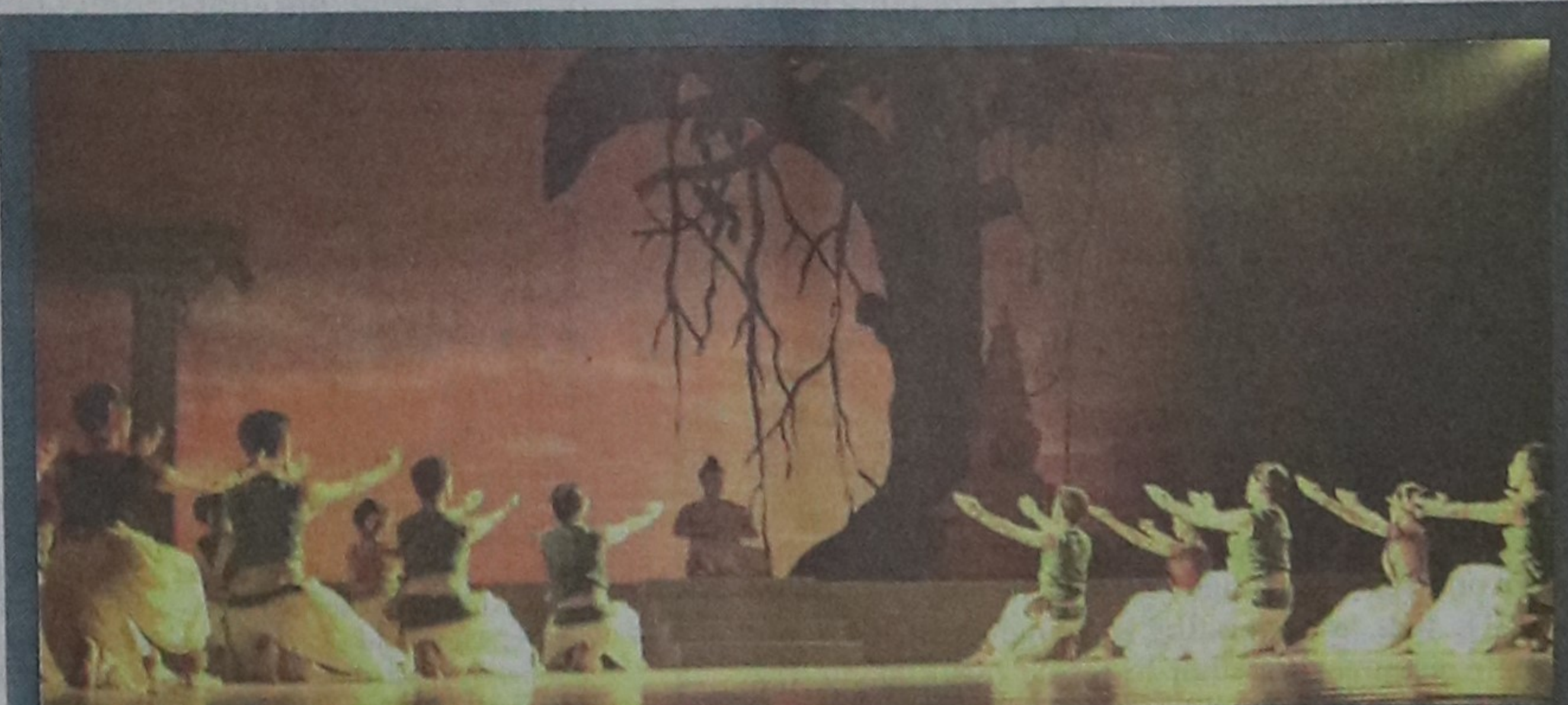
Renowned personalities including Mustafa Monwar (L), Bhashwar Bandyopadhyay (3-R) and Hasan Imam (2-R) attended the get-together at Paril.

Awami Krishak League.

From dawn onwards, the renowned personages began to trickle into Jahir Manjil, established in 1893. The guests had a veritable feast with 'Khejurer kacha Ras', 'Payes', 'Pitha-puli', 'Muri',

'Pataligur' and several other local seasonal culinary delights.

Later, the guests went down memory lane, while others recited poetry, and sang. After lunch, the local singers rendered folk songs.



'Shadhona' -- a centre for advancement of South Asian music and dance -- staged dance drama 'Hey Ananta Punya' at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on January 9. The dance drama is an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Notir Puja'. Directed by Warda Rihab, the production employs Manipuri and a blend of classical, folk and martial dance forms of eastern India and Bengal.