

# A look into the history of Bangladeshi dance

Photo exhibition at Shilpakala



Bulbul Chowdhury (right) and Laxmi Roy.



Gawhar Jamil (right) with Alpana Mumtaz.

## CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Despite being perhaps the oldest performing art form, dance, has not witnessed the kind of research or studies it deserves in Bangladesh. Fortunately, in recent years, some dance exponents and enthusiasts have taken the initiative to conduct researches and in-depth studies on the medium.

Shaikh Mehedi Hasan, who is currently doing a PhD on dance at the Department of Theatre and Music, Dhaka University, understands the need for such endeavours. In this regard, Mehedi has formed Centre for Dance Research (CDR). The organisation made its debut with a photo exhibition at the ongoing 'mela' (fair) at the Plaza of National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). The 'mela' and exhibition are part of the 4th National Dance Festival that ends today with a grand celebration of International Dance Day.

Mehedi, who is also a cultural correspondent for the daily Prothom Alo, decided to consider 1947 as the formative year in the contemporary history of dance in our country. "In December,



A national delegation of Bangladeshi dancers with Indira Gandhi (1st row- 2nd from left), the then Prime minister of India.

1947 Gawhar Jamil and his friend Rabi Shankar ('tabla' player) founded the first formal institution for dance -- called 'Shilpakala Bhaban.' The school started with three students -- Rawshan Jamil (who later went on to become an accomplished actress), Tapoti and Gawhar's sister Shipra Roy," says Mehedi. Rare black and white photos of the late Jamils (Gawhar and

Rawshan) trace that history.

In total there are 49 photographs at the exhibition; 30 of them feature legends and stars of the medium including the late Bulbul Chowdhury. A pioneering dancer born in this part of Bengal, Chowdhury mastered the art form with unbridled passion and determination, leaving behind a legacy. BAFA (Bulbul Academy of Fine

Arts) is named after the legendary dancer. Also featured are the maestro Uday Shankar, who popularised Indian classical dance in the west, and his disciple Amala, performing the "Shiva-Parvati" dance. Despite a 19 year age difference, Amala decided that she would get married to her 'guru' and eventually she did.

There's also a photograph featuring a scene from "Nakshi Ka(n)thar Math." First staged in 1961, "Nakshi Ka(n)thar Math" remains the dance-drama performed the most here.

Photos of season dancers and dance gurus from outside the capital have also been included. Mehedi pointed to photographs of the late Jogesh Chandra Das (from Mymensingh) and the late Rasheduddin Talukdar (from Khulna).

Other images highlight indigenous traditions, like Ora(n) dancers performing at their 'Karam Utshab' and spirited Garo artistes at a 'Wanggala' celebration.

Handwritten notes and letters by renowned dancers are on display, and so are publications on dance, including "Prachya Nrityer Roop o Bikash," compiled and edited by Mehedi.

## 4th National Dance Festival observed in Chittagong

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Chittagong

After a long lull, dance lovers of Chittagong were treated to a superb recital on April 27. The Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS) organised the programme at the Theatre Institute of Chittagong (TIC) as part of the weeklong countrywide 4th National Dance Festival as well as to mark International Dance Day 2009.

Eleven dance groups from Chittagong, Khulna and Dhaka performed at the festival, which was held in association with the Alliance Française, Chittagong.

The show began with traditional drum-beats as a group of dancers took the stage. Dance teachers from local schools -- Shubhra Sen Gupta, Prama Abonti, Gargi Majumder, Jahanara Faruque Moli and Swapan Barua -- performed a group dance that combined classical and folk forms.

Director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) and renowned cultural personality Kamal Lohani was the chief guest at the inaugural with President of BNSS Chittagong, Sharmin Hossain, in the chair. Assistant Indian High Commissioner Subrata Bhattacharjee and director of Alliance Française, Chittagong, Samuel Berthe were special guests.

Calling for greater patronage of dance, BNSS central general secretary, Sajju Ahmed said that many promising dancers, who have completed their higher studies in classical dance abroad, cannot pursue dance as a profession for lack of support.

Kamal Lohani said that culture has not been given its due in our country as politicians failed to realise its potential for social development. Terming both politics and culture as inter-dependent phenomena,

Lohani pointed out that the struggle for independence began with the Bengalis of the then East Pakistan expressing their unique cultural identity. He assured all that the 64 Shilpakala Academies throughout the country would be run by committees formed by cultural activists within one year.

Subrata Bhattacharjee termed dance as a 'primordial medium of expression' and hoped that with more practice of the art form, the barriers formed on religious, political and linguistic lines would be removed.

The participating groups performed 14 compositions, presenting different classical forms such as Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam as well as creative pieces accompanied with folk, Tagore and Nazrul songs.

Several Chittagong-based institutions -- the School of Oriental Dance, Odissi and Tagore Dance Movement Centre, Fame School of Dance Drama and Music, Gurukul Nrityakala Academy and Nataraj Nrityangan Academy -- presented various dance items. Shubhra Sen Gupta, Prama Abonti, Tilottama Sen Gupta, Gargi Majumder and Sanchita Dutta directed the dances respectively.

Other participating troupes at the event were Sanchari Nrityakala Academy, Prapan Academy and Surangama Nrityangan all from Chittagong, along with Kathak Nritya Sampradaya and Mridanga from Dhaka and Abbas Uddin Academy of Khulna.

Five artistes of Odissi and Tagore Dance Movement Centre captivated the audience with a fusion of classical dance forms Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathak and Manipuri, as well as folk. Prama Abonti directed the dance.

The School of Oriental Dance performed 'tillana' of Bharatnatyam while Nataraj Nrityangan Academy staged 'tarana' of Kathak.



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Dancers of Abbas Uddin Academy, Khulna perform at the festival.

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

## On Air

### BTV

- 08:45 Selected Programme
- 09:05 Talk Show
- 09:30 Musical Programme: Shaswata Sur
- 10:05 Open University
- 10:30 Laukik Bangla
- 11:20 Desher Gaan
- 11:30 Drama Serial: Shomoy Ashomoy
- 12:10 El Amar Bangladesh
- 12:30 Maa O Shishur Katha
- 01:00 Matri Basha
- 01:30 Hijol Tomaal
- 02:15 Debate
- 03:05 Cartoon
- 03:30 Shukhi Poribaar
- 04:05 Arjaan
- 04:30 Dolon Chapa
- 05:05 Sisimpur
- 05:30 Computer
- 06:10 Nobo Anondey Jago
- 06:50 Maati O Manush
- 07:15 Band Show
- 07:45 Documentary Programme: Phirey Dekha
- 08:35 Drama Serial: Oroney Adhar
- 09:05 Drama Serial: Shubarno Rekha
- 09:30 Dance Programme: Tarana
- 10:25 Special Programme on International Dance Day
- 10:50 Katha O Shur

### ATN BANGLA

- 08:15 Aker Shanbadpotro
- 08:30 Drama Serial: Bakhsho
- 09:15 Asian City Top Spin 2020
- 10:30 Hello Bangladesh
- 11:05 Drama: Mirza Shaheb-er Dui Jibon
- 12:15 IT Zone
- 01:25 Band View
- 03:15 Drama Serial: Rupali Manush
- 03:45 Children's Programme
- 04:20 Islamic Programme
- 05:10 Islamic Programme
- 05:35 Talk Show: Proshongo
- 06:15 Take Care
- 08:00 Drama Serial: Easy Marriage

### Media

- 08:40 Drama Serial: Ghar Jamai
- 09:20 Drama Serial: Joyotsna Kaal
- 11:30 Talking Point
- 12:00 Grameenphone Lead News
- CHANNEL i**
- 08:05 Tagore Song
- 08:30 Shokaal-er Gaan
- 09:30 Shangbadpotrey Bangladesh
- 09:45 Public Reaction
- 09:50 Grameenphone Tritomatra
- 11:05 Sports Time
- 12:30 Citycell Taroka Kathan
- 01:05 Ebong Cinemazir Gaan
- 01:30 Musical Programme: Sa Re Ga Ma
- 03:05 Channel i Abiti Chhondey Anondey
- 04:30 Apnaader Shushathyo
- 05:30 Muktiyuddho Protidin

### ntv

- 02:30 Drama Serial: Ekey Shunya Das
- 03:15 Ta Na Na Na
- 03:30 O Bondhu Amar
- 04:00 Drama Serial: Tomtom
- 04:30 Desh Jurey Shanglaap
- 05:30 Sports Plus
- 06:30 Campus-ey Campus-ey
- 07:45 Drama Serial: Ishkool
- 09:30 Drama Serial: Tomtom
- 10:10 Dhinaak Dhinaak Taa
- rtv**
- 08:30 Aker Shokaal
- 08:55 Drama Serial: 1920
- 10:05 Drama Serial: House Full
- 10:30 Musical Programme: Amaro Gailey Ichchha Holo
- 12:10 Talk Show: Ei Shomoy
- 01:05 Japan Video Topic
- 02:30 Drama Serial: Swapno Jatra

### 09:00

- Mega Serial: The Family
- 09:30 Bangla Feature Film
- 12:30 Ebong Class-er Bairey
- 01:30 Gaanlalap
- 02:40 Drama Serial: Maa Bhagney
- 03:20 Anyo Nayan
- 04:10 Shamol Bangla
- 05:20 Daily Soap: Gulshan Avenue
- 06:00 Citycell Din-er Sheshey
- 06:20 Cinebit
- 08:15 Drama Serial: Swapney Boshobash
- 09:05 Home Care
- 09:45 Drama Serial: Gulshan Avenue
- 11:25 Shapludur Gaan
- 12:00 Shangbaad Protidin
- 12:30 Bashudha Cinemar Gaan
- RTV**
- 09:00 Very Filmy
- 10:00 Drama Serial: Ei Bari O Bari

### 04:30

- Bazarey Notun
- 05:02 Cartoon
- 05:30 Baati Ghar
- 07:45 Ebaar Jombey Khela
- 08:15 Bishwa Doley Nrityey Taley
- 09:30 Drama Serial: Kuyashay Onhokaar
- 10:02 Drama Serial: Bindu Thekey Brityo
- 11:30 Total Sports
- 11:45 Talk Show: Shoja Katha
- HBO**
- 08:45 Excess Baggage
- 10:45 Jesse Stone: Sea Change
- 12:30 The Game
- 03:00 Meltdown
- 05:00 The Score
- 07:30 Jaws III
- 09:30 No Reservations
- 11:30 Cloverfield

### 01:30

- World Business Report
- 01:45 Sport Today
- 02:00 BBC World News
- 02:30 HARDtalk (r)
- 03:00 BBC World News
- 04:00 BBC World News
- 04:30 World Business Report
- 04:45 Sport Today
- 05:00 World News Today
- 06:00 BBC World News
- 06:30 World Business Report
- 06:45 Sport Today
- 07:00 World News Today
- 08:00 BBC World News
- 08:30 HARDtalk (r)
- 09:00 BBC World News
- 09:30 Fast Track (r)
- 10:00 World News Today
- 11:00 BBC World News
- 11:30 World Business Report
- 11:45 Sport Today

### STAR WORLD

- 08:30 Friends
- 09:30 According To Jim
- 10:00 My Name Is Earl
- 10:30 Hope & Faith
- 11:00 My Wife And Kids
- 11:30 Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?
- 12:30 Beauty And The Geek
- 01:30 Heroes
- 02:30 The Ellen Degeneres Show
- 03:30 Desperate Housewives
- 04:30 Ugly Betty
- 05:30 Hope & Faith
- 06:00 My Wife And Kids
- 06:30 Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?
- 07:30 Friends
- 08:30 According To Jim
- 09:00 My Name Is Earl
- 09:30 Beauty And The Geek
- 10:30 Bones
- 11:30 Ghost Hunters

### ZEE STUDIO

- 08:30 The Defender
- 10:25 Alex And Emma
- 12:25 Out Cold
- 02:25 Down and Out in Beverly Hills
- 04:40 Sweet Home Alabama
- 07:00 Mansfield Park
- 09:30 Dick Tracy
- 11:40 Pinocchio

### BBC WORLD NEWS

- 09:00 BBC World News
- 09:30 Asia Business Report
- 09:45 Asia Today (r)
- 10:00 BBC World News
- 10:30 World Business Report
- 11:00 BBC World News
- 11:30 World Business Report
- 12:00 BBC World News
- 12:30 World Business Report
- 12:45 Sport Today
- 01:00 BBC World News

abc radio 89.2 FM

06:00am Shomoy Jangal

09:00am Muktiyuddho Jibon

12:00pm Dhan Dipukey

03:00pm Duronto Bikash

05:00pm Shomoy Tara

07:00pm Shajar Wava

09:00pm Raakeer Akashy

**Radio Forth 88.0 FM**

07:30am Hello Dhaka

10:00am Morning Express

12:00pm My Time

01:00pm No Tension

04:00pm Dhaka Calling

09:00pm Night Rizee

01:00am Back to Back music

**Radio Today 88.4 FM**

07:15am Good Morning Dhaka

11:00am Must Unlimited

01:00pm Today's Adde

04:00pm U-Turn

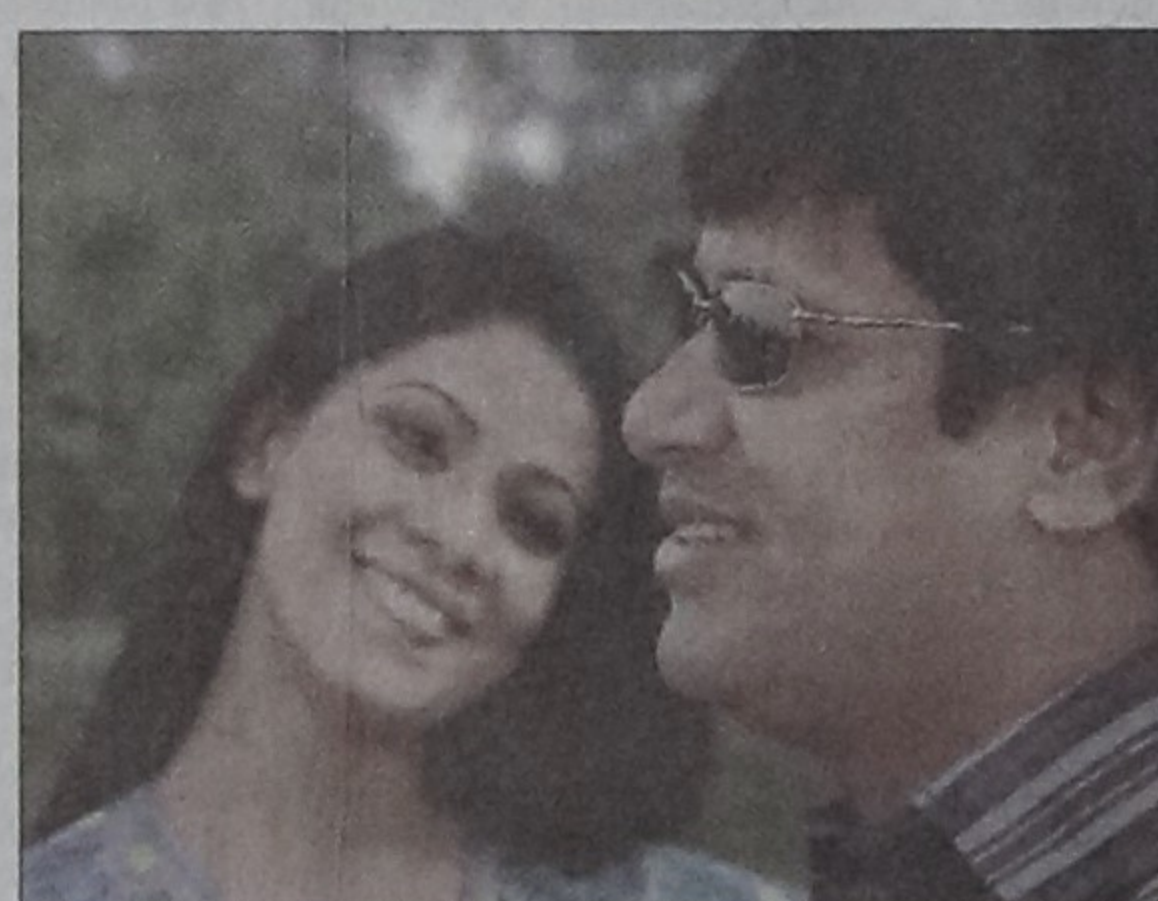
09:00pm Today's Talk

11:30pm Raak Shor Gaan

RESE POON SPOON

**SWEET HOME ALABAMA**

On Zee Studio at 4:40 pm



Tom Tom  
On Ekushey TV at 9:30 pm  
Drama Serial  
Cast: Litu Anam, Lara Lotus

- 05:30 Mukti Yudhyo Protidin
- 06:00 Mega Serial: Shath Goenda
- 06:20 Cookery Show: Arku Desh Bidesh Ranna
- 07:50 Chondro Bindu
- 08:25 Drama Serial: 24 Ghonta
- 09:35 Drama Serial: Suphi
- 10:00 Drama Serial
- 11:30 Drama Serial: Thikana
- 12:00 Grameenphone Aker Shanbadpotro

### ETV

- 10:02 Ekushey Business

- 03:15 Drama Serial: Jhuthamela
- 04:10 Quiz Show: Ispahani Janar
- 05:25 Itihash-er Ei Diney
- 06:45 Rupali Pordaar Golpo
- 08:15 Cookery Show: Siddiqua Kabir's Recipe
- 09:00 Kichhu Katha Kichhu Gaan
- 09:45 Drama Serial: Trinor Golpo
- 11:30 Talk Show: Ei Shomoy

### BANGLAVISION

- 08:30 Drama Serial: Lucky Thirteen

- 11:03 Lata Herbal Tarokalap
- 11:30 Drama Serial: Naiyor
- 01:03 Nari O Nokhyotro
- 03:00 Bangla Feature Film
- 06:03 Protidin
- 07:00 Look at me
- 07:30 Road to Democracy
- 09:15 Drama Serial: Jiboney Ano Alo
- 11:00 Alor Othitli O Shompa Reza

### DESH TV

- 09:02 Potrikla Protidin
- 12:15 Dur Path