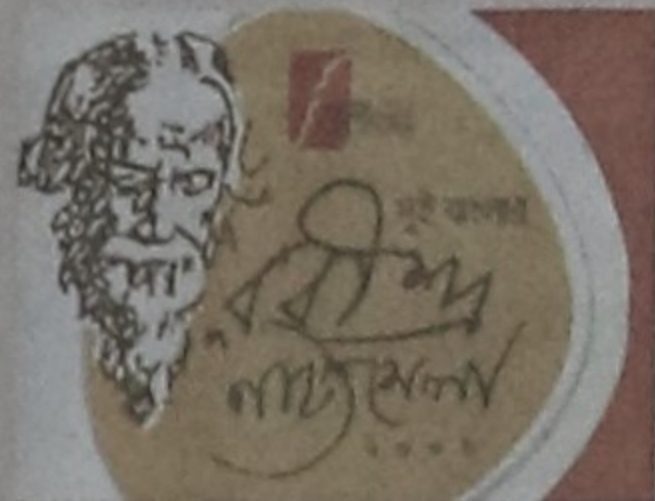


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Rabindra Theatre Festival
 Organiser: Pranganey Mor
 Venue: National Theatre Hall, BSA
 Date: May 1-8
 May 1 at 6pm
 Play: Chaturanga
 Troupe: Hritwik (India)



Musical Soiree
 Title: Praner Khela
 Artistes: Yasmin Mushtari and AzzurRahman Tuhin
 Organiser: Bengal Foundation
 Venue: Bengal Shilpalay, 275/F, R-27/Dhanmondi
 Date: May 2
 Time: 7pm



Lecture
 Lecturer: Mofidul Haque
 Organiser: Chhayanat
 Venue: Ramesh Chandra Datta Auditorium, Chhayanat
 Date: May 2
 Time: 7pm



Clay Art Exhibition
 Title: Clay Art by Harappa
 Organiser: Harappa
 Venue: Drik Gallery, H58, Rd 15A(new), Dhanmondi
 Date: May 2-8
 Time: 3-8pm
 Inauguration on May 1 at 5pm



Going beyond hedonism

4th National Dance Festival ends with high hopes

KARIM WAHEED

Curtains came down on the 4th National Dance Festival on April 29 -- marking the International Dance Day -- at National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). Chief guest at the programme -- organised by Bangladesh Nriya Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS) -- was Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Saju Ahmed, general secretary of BNSS, explained why the organisation chose the Education Minister as the chief guest. "We, dancers, have an appeal to the minister. We want a better public understanding of dance. The purpose of dance goes beyond mere entertainment; dance can inspire, motivate, educate, enlighten. We believe if this art form is included in our education system, it would truly benefit us as a nation."

Presided over by veteran dancer Laila Hasan, the first session of the evening featured a discussion. Member of the Parliament, Rashed Khan Menon and Chairman of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, M. Hamid were special guests. The discussion also had media personality Muhammad Barkatullah reminiscing on his 'guru,' renowned dancer, the late Gawhar Jamil.

Seasoned dancer and exponent Amanul Haque was honoured with this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. Haque was awarded a crest and an 'uttariyo.'

The second session featured performances



PHOTO: SAIKAT MOJUMDER

Performances by Abbasuddin Academy, Khulna (top) and Tamanna Rahman.

by members groups of BNSS and Dancers' Guild (from Kolkata, India). Dancers of 'Natraj' began with a composition choreographed by Laila Hasan. The message of the piece, seemingly performed at a leisurely pace, was patriotism. At one point, Laila Hasan joined in with her team on stage.

The next performance by artistes of Nriyadhara shook up the muted ambience

Featuring a re-arranged version of Nazrul's ever-familiar classic "Duar dwipbhashini" -- that sounded absolutely unfamiliar and fresh -- the piece choreographed by Minu Haque was greeted with rounds of applause. Fusing 'mudra' of several dance forms that were restrained and effusive, the composition invoked unbridled passion.

Next on stage were three dancers of Kathak

Sampraday, performing a composition choreographed by Saju Ahmed.

Nriyanandan staged a Manipuri-based performance. Choreographed by Sharmila Bandopadhyay, the immaculately executed piece presented the country in the mother form. The message: the motherland blesses us, nurtures us unconditionally; yet blinded by greed, we often carry out actions that leave her wounded. But the flow of her love and blessing doesn't die down.

Other noteworthy performances were by Abbasuddin Academy (from Khulna) and Nriyalok. Featuring a stirring recitation of Nazrul's "Bidrohi" (by Kazi Sabyasachi), the latter, choreographed by Kabirul Islam Ratan was innovative.

It is imperative that a show of this stature does not include anything in poor taste. Two particular performances -- by Chattagram Nriyashilpi Sangstha and Sukanya -- were literally eyesores. Apart from hideously loud and outlandish costumes, the crass moves and expressions seemed like a cross between avoidable Bollywood and Dhallywood "item numbers." The composition (if it can be called that) choreographed by Sultana Hyder and staged by Sukanya, featured a dancer in the centre who was seemingly having trouble keeping up with the others. Under the guise of "creative composition," these "dances" that do not follow any particular classical or folk principle but rather demonstrate crassness and lack of refinement, should not be allowed stage time at a national event. Organisers should have avoided these



embarrassments.

The last attraction at the event was "Jajnaseni," performed by Dancers' Guild. Concept and choreography by Jonaki Sarkar and Aishika Chakraborty, the 40-minute composition featured the 'Navanriya' (new dance) style -- a spectacular mélange of dance forms including 'Mayurbhanj,' 'Chhau,' 'Bharatnatyam,' 'Kathakali,' 'Manipuri,' 'Odissi,' 'Thang-ta' and the 'Kandyan' dance of Sri Lanka. Featuring eight scenes, "Jajnaseni," enacted episodes in the life of Draupadi, the central female character from "Mahabharat."

Rokeya Prachi turns director

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Talented actor Rokeya Prachi recently made her debut as a director. Her maiden directorial venture was a TV play that was aired on Rtv as an Independence Day special. The play was challenging for Prachi, as the central character was a 'razakar' (Pakistani collaborator during the Liberation War).

"Many have worked on the subject (Liberation War) from different perspectives and I had my own ideas," said Prachi on her work.

Though Prachi started with a TV play, she is keen on making documentaries, in particular on the Language Movement veterans. At present she is working on Language Movement martyr Shaheed Abul Barkat. "Language Movement initiated the nation's struggle for independence, but not enough work has been done on this historic event."

"Shaheed Barkat is significant both in Bangladesh and West Bengal as he was born on the other side of the border," said Prachi about her reason behind making the documentary on Shaheed Barkat.

Not only on Shaheed Barkat, Prachi wants to make films on other issues related to the Language Movement as well as pioneering personalities like Anwar Hossain, Rani Sarkar and others.



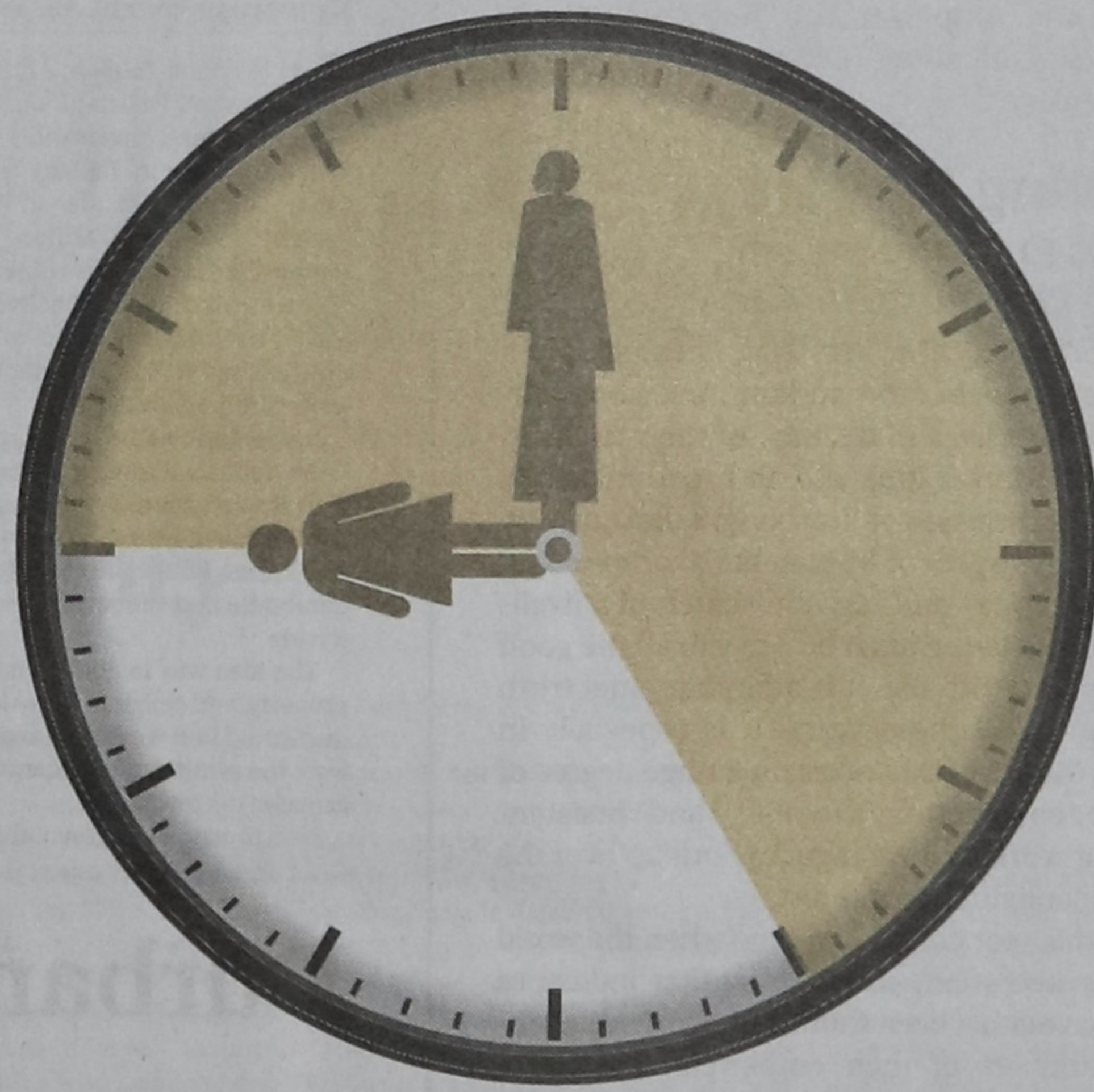
"They have tremendous contribution in the society and I feel it's high time they were honoured with documentaries," said Prachi.

Prachi also has plans to make documentaries on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artistes and a psychoanalytical study of the female mind.

At present, Prachi has significantly reduced her work as an actor to give more time to direction. However, she finds the latter more difficult than acting. "A director has to consider every aspect

of a film. On the other hand, actors only have to concentrate on their own work. But in both cases, you have to be sincere and passionate. There is no shortcut to success," she said.

Prachi was lauded for her role in Abu Sayeed's feature film "Swapnodanay." Currently she is working in Anwar Shahadat's feature film "Ustagarer Talika," where she plays an NGO worker conducting a research on the civilians' contribution during the Liberation War.



How many hours make eight hours?

More than one hundred years ago started the struggle to establish eight hours as the work day. This was the struggle that culminated in what we today celebrate as 'May Day'. Behind this was a even greater intention -of the rest of the sixteen hours eight hours could be spent on fun and recreation and the balance eight hours for complete rest.

On this May Day let us ask ourselves how many of the women of our country have the privilege of spending eight hours relaxing and doing what they want to do and resting for eight hours? Let us all consciously put in a little extra effort and extend a helping hand to let women spend the 24 hours of their day the way we all would like to do.

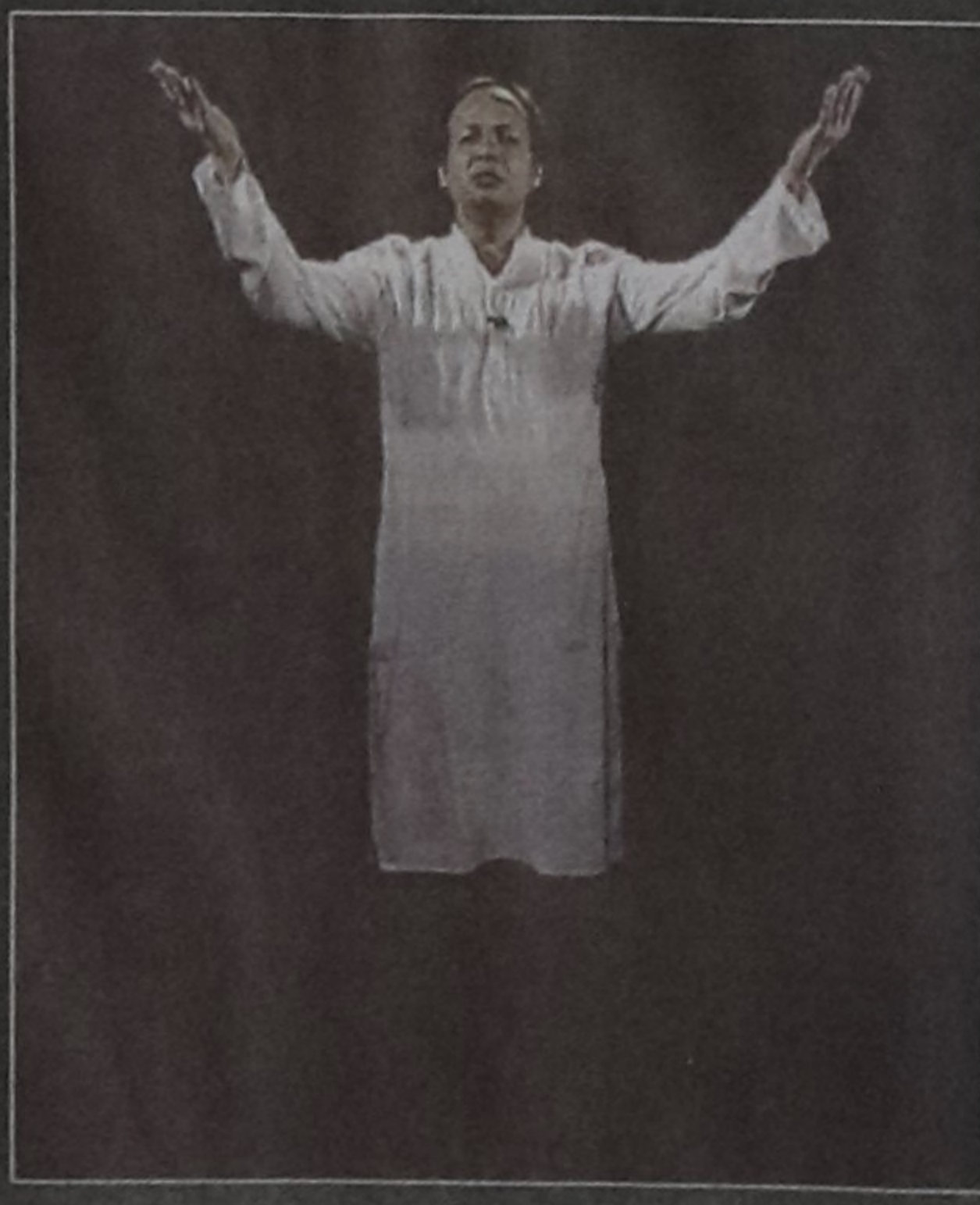
May Dibosh Special programme on Labour Day

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

"May Dibosh," a special programme on the occasion of Labour day, will be aired on Banglavisat at 6:20 pm this evening.

Noted columnist and politician Haider Akbar Khan Rono is the moderator of the programme, featuring a discussion on workers' rights, recitation and songs. Member of the parliament, Rashed Khan Menon and Professor M.M. Akash are the discussants. Mahidul Islam will recite Kazi Nazrul Islam's celebrated poem "Kuli-Majur" at the programme. Gano Sangeet artiste Fakir Alamgir will render a song.

Rose Islam is the producer of "May Dibosh."



Mahidul Islam recites on the show.



Empowering women benefits the country & its people