

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Sarod Recital

In honour of Sarod legend Ali Akbar Khan
Artists: Rajrupa Choudhury and Ashim Choudhury
Venue: Chhayanaut Sanskriti Bahaban
Date: July 9, Time: 7pm



Musical Soiree

Title: Srotar Ashor
Organiser: Chhayanaut
Venue: Ramesh Chandra Dutt Memorial Auditorium, Chhayanaut Sanskriti Bahaban
Date: July 10
Time: 7:30 pm



Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Pahariya Pathay
Artist: Shohag Parvez
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Francaise of Dhaka
Date: July 3-16
Time: 9-12am & 5-8pm



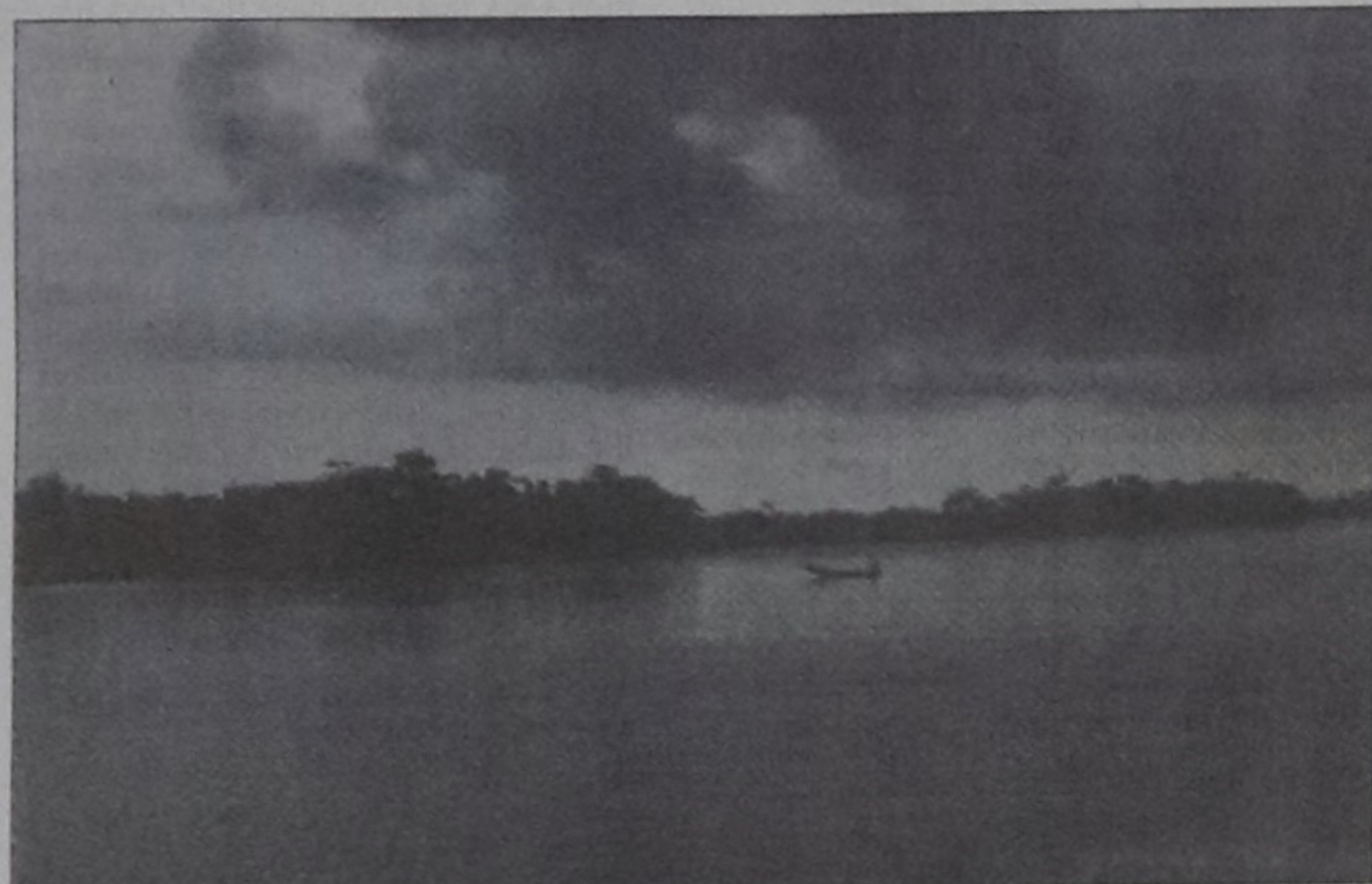
Photography Exhibition

Title: The Face of Bangla
Photographer: Nayeem
Venue: Drik Gallery, H-58, R-15/A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka
Date: July 3-11
Time: 3-8 pm



The familiar face of Bangladesh

Nayeem's solo photo exhibition at Drik



Photographs by Nayeem

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Rivers get polluted and dry up, traffic jams become even more intolerable, natural calamities continue to decimate localities but the frequent pure, wide smile on the face of a hungry street urchin never fades. And this is the familiar face of Bangladesh.

As photographer Nayeem puts it: "Bangladesh, as we all know, is ridden with problems...But even in the depths of despair that I sometimes find all round me, I like to see a positive side...Despite their desperate poverty, the friendliness and goodness of the common people of my country is a shining example of inner strength. It is this strength that I try

to capture and reflect in my photographs."

Nayeem's solo photo exhibition, titled "The Face of Bangla," is now on at the Drik Gallery in Dhanmondi. The collection includes photos taken between 2007 and this year.

Photos at the exhibition have been arranged as part of several series. For instance, "Prakriti O Jibon" (nature and life) highlights riverine life in rural Bangladesh. Sailboats get the focus. The photos (shot in Patuakhali, 2007), however, seem to lack sharpness/clarity. Perhaps, the resolution or the original images was not high enough.

"Kailanjir Baich" (Ghagor river, Tungipara, 2008) series features

traditional boat race. One image that stands out is of a participating boat rowed by women; older women singing and cheering the rowers in the back.

"Panam Nagari" (Sonargaon, 2007) series shows the facade of a mansion that had evidently seen grander times. The two images -- fittingly in black and white -- articulate the crumbling glory of a once thriving city and its beautiful architecture.

"Naach" (Dhaka, 2009) shows swirling forms on stage. A split second of dancers in motion has been captured, as the title suggests.

"Padma" (Rajshahi, 2009) does not feature a mighty river and its tides. Instead the viewer sees a sandy plain from one end of the frame to

the other.

"Bok" or Cranes (Amua, 2007) series includes some of the most visually stunning images from the collection. The cranes are seen resting, taking off, and frolicking with each other -- in all their glory.

Then there are individual photos. "Bedey Polli" (Ghorashal, 2008) shows a serpentine queue of gypsy boats anchored. "Bali Sromik" (Mawa, 2009) features Safar Ali from Brahmanbaria, who works as a labourer. He shared his tale of woes with the photographer thinking his story might be published in some newspaper.

"Three Boys" (Dhaka, 2009) shows children with their backs to the camera. Covered in mud, two of them flash brilliant smiles.

One noticeable aspect is that the viewer can sense Nayeem's growth as a photographer from the exhibition, as the collective quality of his photos have gradually improved.

UK-based writer and translator Norman Thomas di Giovanni wrote in his appreciation, "...Twice over, with my own eyes and Nayeem's, I came to witness the unforgettable face of Bangla -- and, joyously and miraculously, they were one. Now, with the gift of Nayeem's vision, it is the landscape of the country and the intrinsic dignity of the Bangladeshi that I hold with me and that I have brought back to England."

The exhibition will continue till July 11.

Book fair, celebrating monsoon, in the city

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A book fair, titled "Borshar Boimela 2009," is currently on in the city, at the Concord Emporium Shopping Complex premises, Katabon.

The fair, starting from July 2, was inaugurated by Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury.

"Apart from the one on 'Ekushey' (in February), we rarely have other major book fairs in the city. During this 11-month gap, many new books come out but don't get the kind of exposure they need to reach the readers. If more book fairs are held regularly, readers will be able to get the newest publications as soon as they come out of the press. This would benefit both readers and the publication houses," said Robin Ahsan, convenor of 'Borshar Boimela 2009' and owner of Srabon Publications.

"Book fairs can be held every season. Like 'Borshar Boimela' in the rainy season, fairs can also be held in winter, spring, autumn and other seasons and on special occasions," Ahsan added.

A diverse range of books are available at the fair -- from bedtime stories for children to fiction/ adventure/ thriller for teenagers and adolescents. Collections of poetry, and novels for mature readers, and even text books for students are

also available.

Featured litterateurs are Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Humayun Ahmed, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and others. Books of poems by Asad Chowdhury, Nirmalendu Goon will likely draw poetry enthusiasts. Works of the late Humayun Azad, Selina Hossain, Nasrin Jahan, Badruddin Omar, Taslima Nasrin and others are other highlights. Publications featuring young writers are also available at the fair.

A bookseller said, "The response is quite unexpected. With record sales, the fair has been a major success."

A total of 30 publication houses are taking part in the fair, including Srabon Publications, UPL, Agami Publications, Shahitya Prokash, Ankur Publications, Meera Publications, Bangla Prokash, Onnesha, Bornayon and Pragati Publishers.

Added attractions were a visit by celebrated novelist Zafar Iqbal on July 4, a cartoon exhibition by Ahsan Habib on July 3 and recitation of poetry by eminent poets on July 5. Nirmalendu Goon, Asad Chowdhury, Ashim Saha, MD Nurul Huda and others recited poems at the event.

"Next year we hope to hold the fair on a broader scale, with participation by more publication houses and hopefully at a better venue," said Robin Ahsan.

"Borshar Boimela 2009" ends tomorrow.

Hyder Husyn concert for a noble cause



Hyder Husyn sings at the fundraiser.

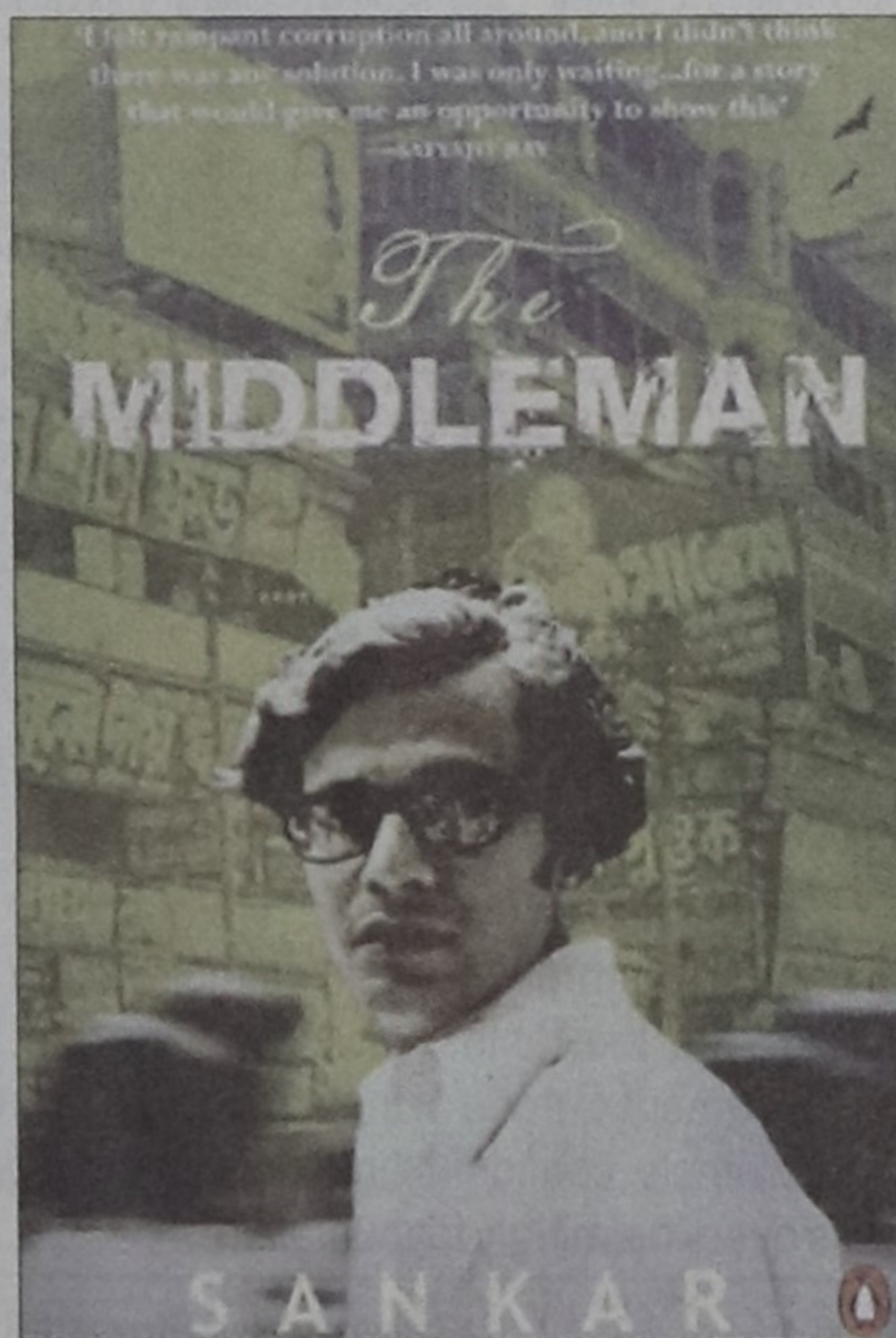
CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The Association of Mymensingh Ex-Cadets arranged a concert at the Cadet College Club, Gulshan recently to raise funds for a Mymensingh Cadet College student Farzana. Farzana has been suffering from cancer.

Singer Hyder Husyn performed at the concert, "Farzana's Jonno Amra." At the show, the artiste performed some of his popular numbers.

Banglavision will air the concert in two parts. The first episode of the concert will be aired tonight at 9:05pm, while the second will be aired on July 10 at 4:10pm. The programme has been produced by Nahid Ahmed Biplab.

Sankar's Jana Aranya translated into English



Cover jacket of "The Middleman."

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

First it was "Chowringhee" and now "Jana Aranya." The Penguin publisher must be thanked for bringing out the English translation of two immensely popular Bangla novels by Mani Sankar Mukherjee.

While the English version of "Chowringhee" was released two years ago, "The Middleman" -- translation of "Jana Aranya" -- was made public at a function here recently in the presence of 76-year-old Mukherjee, better known as Sankar.

Apparently, the main reason for the Penguin choosing these two books by Sankar was the popularity of the films made out of "Chowringhee" starring legendary Uttam Kumar, Supriya Chowdhury and Biswajit, and "Jana Aranya" directed by maestro Satyajit Ray in 1976.

"Jana Aranya," the story of a young man named Somnath Banerjee and his search for a job at a time of acute unemployment, reflects the socio-political realities of Kolkata in the 1970s. At the function, Sankar briefly told the audience how his personal experience helped him get the material for his novels including "Jana Aranya."

Even at the ripe age of 76, Sankar is not relaxing. He is busy working on two projects -- biographies of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh.

Arunava Sinha has translated "Chowringhee" and "Jana Aranya" into English.

Vatican Radio starts carrying ads

BBC NEWS, Rome

Vatican Radio -- the voice of the Roman Catholic Church -- is starting to air advertisements for the first time in the station's nearly 80-year history.

The first company to run its commercials will be an Italian gas and electricity company -- Enel.

Until now Vatican Radio has been wholly funded by the Catholic Church at a cost of some \$30m (£17m) a year. But the Holy See's latest finances show that it too is suffering from the global economic downturn.

Founded in 1931 by Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi, Vatican Radio is the international broadcast platform for the Catholic Church.

It transmits its programmes in 45 languages on FM and the Internet with the aim of spreading the message of the Pope and the Church's Christian teachings.

But the station -- like other organisations -- it has recently been looking for out-

side financial help.

That has now come in the form of Enel. Its commercials are likely to be in keeping with the measured conservative tone of the station.

In return, Vatican Radio could receive some \$250,000 (£155,000) over the next six months.

Enel says it is an honour to be chosen as the first advertiser on Vatican Radio as, it says, the company has some of the shared values of the Catholic Church.

Until now Vatican Radio has been paid for out of the Church's central funds.

The Holy See has just published its finances, showing that it had a deficit for the second year running. The costs of Vatican Radio were partly to blame for the deficit.

The Church says donations were down in the past year because of the world's current economic problems.

It will be a few months before it is known if the commercials are working and whether the audience accepts them.

Ishkool on Ekushey TV tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

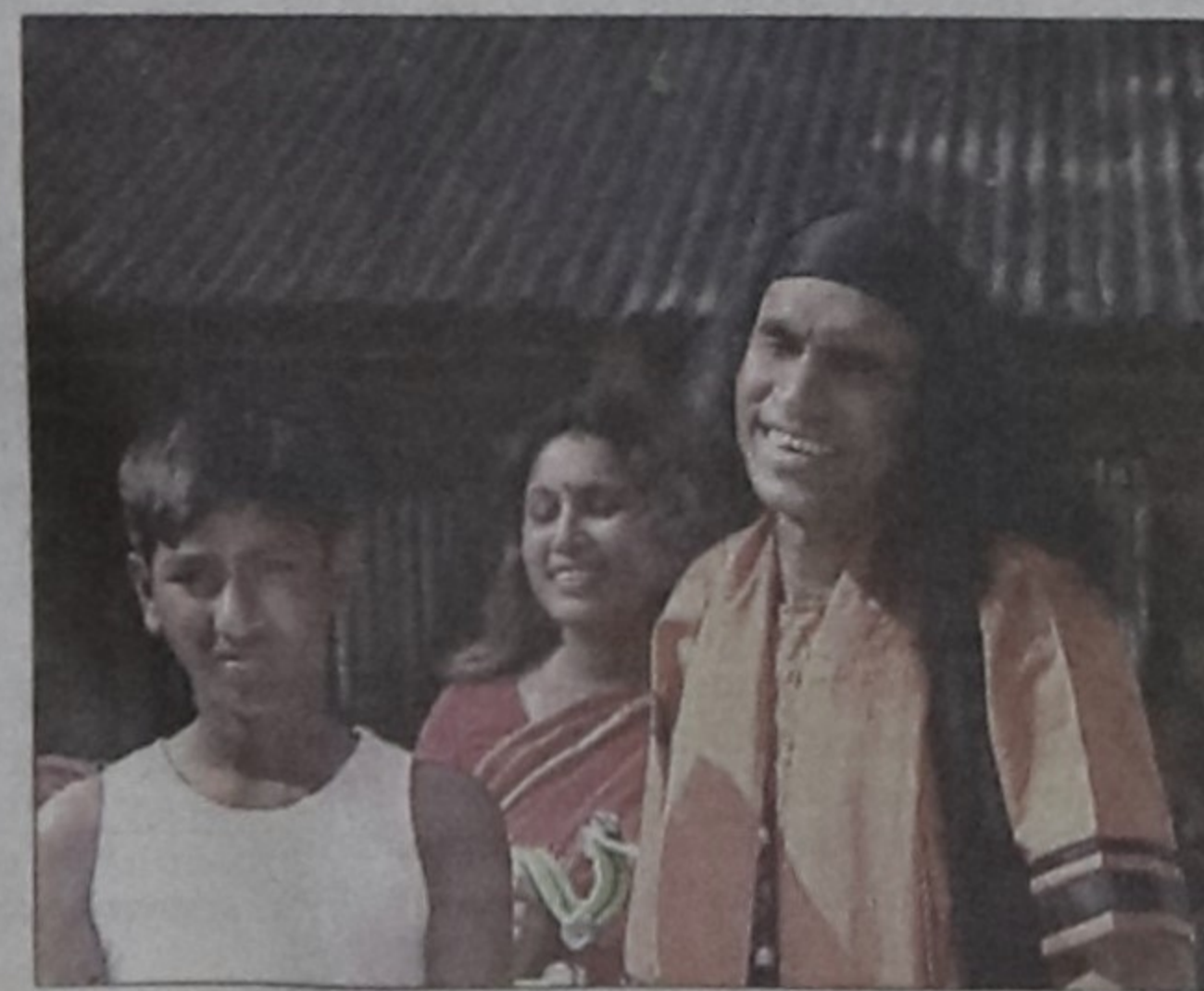
Ekushey TV will air the entertainment-educational programme "Ishkool" tonight at 7:45 pm. The programme aims at generating awareness on the public education system in Bangladesh.

Jointly produced by Ekushey TV and Plan Bangladesh, the programme focuses on issues like corporal punishment at schools, drop outs, absence of students and teachers in the classrooms, an education system that forces students to memorise without understanding the study material and so on. A live discussion follows, highlighting the problems shown in the drama section of the programme, and possible ways to change the situation. A government officer working in the education sector, a

representative of Plan Bangladesh and three invited guests participate in the discussion.

"Ishkool" is written by Anzir Liton and directed by Atik Rahman. Swagata, Majnun Mizan, Arman

Parvez Murad, Abul Hayat, folk artiste Abdul Kuddus Boyati and others are featured in the drama part. Produced by Rishita Jahan and Saiful Islam, the programme is hosted by Prabak Karim.



Abdul Kuddus Boyati (right) in a scene from "Ishkool."



PHOTO: BANGLARCHONK.COM

Theatre troupe Natya Kendra staged its production "Pratisharan" on July 4 at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Written and directed by Tauquir Ahmed, the play narrates a surrealistic vision of life through six characters and their interactions with each other.