

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Jatra Pala**  
Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 6-12  
Time: 7pm  
May 7: "Swami-Stri" (Agrogami Jatra Unit)



## Group Art Exhibition

Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Venue: National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 4-10  
Time: 12pm-7pm



## Cultural Programme

Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Venue: National Theatre Auditorium, BSA  
Date: May 9-10  
Time: 7pm



## Poster and Film Show

65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Great Patriotic Day  
Organiser: Russian Language Department and RCSC  
Venue: Auditorium of Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka  
Date: May 10-11  
Time: 2.30pm-4.30pm



# Weeklong Jatra Festival draws large audience

## "Shami-Stri" staged on the second day



The melodramatic 'pala' depicts the upheavals of a middle class family.

JAMIL MAHMUD

On the second day (May 7) of the ongoing weeklong Jatra Festival at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) entertainment-seeking Dhakaites took advantage of the weekend to enjoy the traditional performing art.

Agrogami Jatra Unit staged its production "Shami-Stri" on the day. Depicting the upheavals of a middle class family, the melodramatic 'pala' was a successful production. A large audience-- sitting on the ground as well as standing-- cheered and enjoyed it till the end.

With the help of Shadhona-- a centre for advancement of South Asian music and dance-- and under the supervision of BSA, the Department of Drama and Film has arranged the festival with an aim to generate awareness as well as to safeguard the once most popular performing art from extinction.

Directed by Purnendu Roy, "Shami-Stri" is set against the backdrop of contemporary Kolkata society. It depicts how ambition can destroy one's ethics. Shovon, the younger son of a schoolteacher, falls for Tanuka, the only daughter of a shrewd entrepreneur. To fulfil the demands of Tanuka's

father, Shovon leaves his family and begins to live with his future-in-laws.

As the 'pala' progresses, it is revealed that not only Shovon but his elder brother Mohon is a highly ambitious individual. Mohon aspires to become a millionaire quickly and joins forces with one of his friends. To realise his ambitions, Mohon even asks his wife, Mandira, to be up to date. Mandira, a good housewife, follows her husband's bidding but deep down wants to see the fall of her husband.

The pala takes an interesting turn when Mohon grabs his father's estate through a false deed. Finding no other



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

way out, Mohon's father and mother leave the house. The story takes an interesting turn when Mohon's father receives a national award for his writings.

Improvisation is an important component for 'jatra' artistes and the actors in the pala successfully followed the narrator, to improvise dialogues and act at times according to the demands of the sequences.

Today, New Rang Mahal will stage "Manobi Debi". Nirmol Mukhopadhyay directs the 'pala'. The ongoing festival will also feature "Amalendu Biswas Memorial Lecture". Veteran theatre personality Mamunur Rashid will deliver the lecture on May 12.

# Bold and bright colours on canvas

## Monica Jahan Bose's art exhibition in Paris

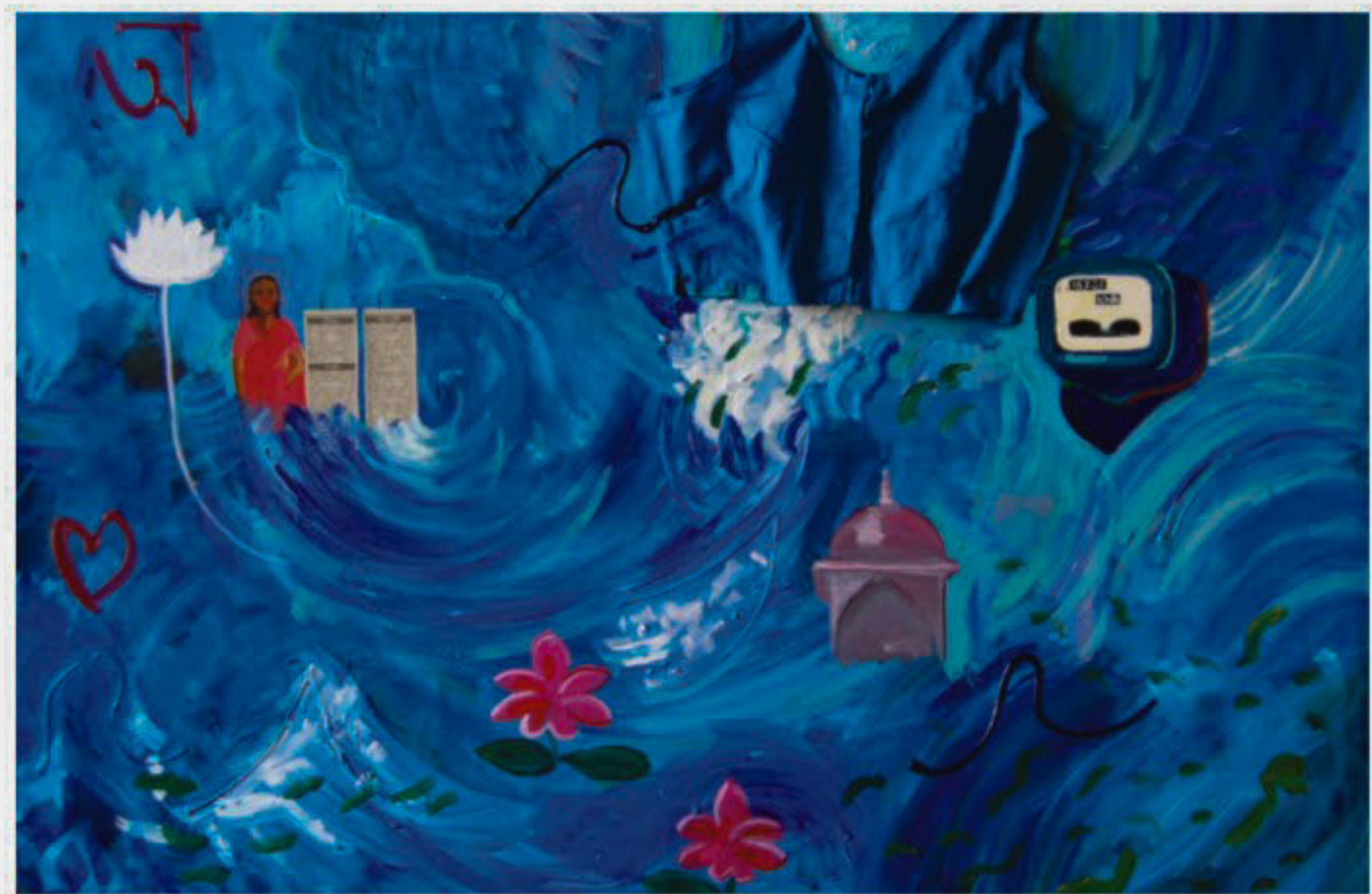
Monica Jahan Bose is a Bangladeshi painter who now lives and works in Paris. Her second solo painting exhibition titled "Tumi Ami Spring Heat" was recently held at Galerie Deborah Zafman, Paris. Bose has been nominated by noted Bangladeshi expatriate painter Shahabuddin Ahmed for this year's Prix Antoine Marin, a prestigious annual prize for emerging painters in Paris, says a press release.

Bose studied art at Wesleyan University, the University of California at Berkeley as well as Shantiniketan. Her last solo painting exhibition was held at Alliance Francaise de Dhaka in Bangladesh.

Bose is mainly a figurative and objective painter. Her approach and style often have a child-like quality. Her works focused on love and human connection in our complicated

world. The exhibition included 21 mixed-media paintings, some of which used real sari blouses and collages from photographs she had taken. The sari blouse is a recurring motif in her works and she used the sari as a symbolic link to her culture and heritage. The motif simplifies her works and helps to create a personal hallmark for her bold and vivacious colours paintings. Her theme is deeply connected to women's freedom and various socio-economic and political aspects of our country. Her works also represent our folk culture.

Bose feels comfortable working on a large canvas in keeping with her thought-provoking theme and composition. Her works are simplified by a powerful engagement with figures, objects and space, with bold and sweeping brushstrokes.



Artwork by Monica Jahan Bose.

# Abhishek Bachchan: "I don't compete with my wife"



Aishwarya and Abhishek Bachchan in the film.

One has to admire Abhishek Bachchan for being so incredibly frank.

Recently, at the music launch of "Raavan", junior Bachchan said of the film's director, "Mani (Ratnam) keeps on launching me. Every time there is a down in my career, Mani comes from somewhere and my career goes upward."

There might be some truth in this. Look no further than his hits "Yuva" and "Guru".

Abhishek plays Beera in "Raavan", which is loosely based on the "Ramayan" epic. He stars alongside his wife Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Tamil star Vikram.

The question remains: Will "Raavan" revive Abhishek's career? In a recent interview the actor talked about his latest movie and more:

the trailer. How are you in real life?

Abhishek: Yes, that is definitely a side of me that I would like to exhibit more often, but good behaviour doesn't allow it. However, if you do a film for Mani Ratnam, he will ask you to do all that.

You have worked with your wife Aishwarya before. Is there a challenge to perform better than her?

Abhishek: No. I don't compete with my wife. I think she is one of the best actors we have in the film industry. Her work speaks for itself. I don't need to compete with anybody; the only person with whom I have to compete is me.

For me, it is important to improve upon every performance. If you haven't managed to improve upon your last performance, then you don't deserve to be an actor. First do that, and then think

of competing with other people.

It is said that both Ram (good) and Raavan (evil) are in every human being. How close are you to Raavan?

Abhishek: In the film, my character, Beera, has a pet name: Raavan. I think every human being has a good side and a bad side. There has to be balance to stay stable, so that one doesn't overpower the other. I think that somewhere there is a dark side to me too; and it comes out from time to time. It came out a lot while working on this film.

Mani gave me license to do whatever I wanted, because Beera is unpredictable. He will smile one minute and cry the next. He can fall in love with you in a minute and hate you the next. He is a character with whom you can experiment, because you can do anything with him and not go wrong.

When Mani and I made "Guru", there was a very definite framework within which we had to place the character. There were certain things that Gurukant Desai (Abhishek's character in the film) just would not do.

What's wrong in being Raavan?

Abhishek: I don't know Raavan. But I know Beera. He feels he is right in whatever he does, and is a very clear person who sees things in black and white. There is no grey in the film.

To Beera, you are either right or you are wrong. If you are right, he will love you. He will give his life for you. But if you are wrong, he will take your life. Beera is very pure, and it was very interesting and difficult to make somebody an anti-social element on the surface whose heart is actually very clear.

You said that Mani Ratnam has re-launched your career many times?

Abhishek: You are remembered by the work you do. I am lucky that I have a director like Mani. The films I've done with him will always be remembered. I walk down the street and people still call me Gurubhai, though nowadays they call me Idea sirji. People remember you by your character. He gave me Lalaan Singh (Yuva) when no one was giving me work and my films were not doing well.

What was best compliment you got from the trailer of "Raavan"?

Abhishek: My father turned to me and patted me on the back, and said, "Well done." And then he said Aishwarya was better than I was.

Compiled by Correspondent

## Book launch

# Capturing the spirit of our times



Hasan Azizul Haque(C) seen with the writer and others at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The publication ceremony of a children's story book, titled "Mamar Golpo", by local writer Monoranjan Nandi, was held at Rajshahi Bholanath Biseswar Hindu Academy in the city on Friday.

The book carries 14 stories, of which two, "Ful" and "Samay Ar Nei", are set against the backdrop of the Language Movement of 1952 and the

Liberation War of 1971 while other stories invoke children to build morality with fun, said speakers at the ceremony.

Highly appreciating the book, eminent litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque who attended the function as the chief guest said, "The writer's effort for children is very timely and essential at a time when instability and violence grip the educational field."

He compared the publication of a book to the birth of a

child and said everyone takes a respite through literature.

KP Munshi, Assistant Indian High Commissioner, Rajshahi attended the function as the special guest and praised the book.

Zulfikar Matin called upon publishers and sponsors to come forward to help children's writers.

Anik Mahmud said the book would help children to grow up as liberal individuals.

Speaking on the occasion,

"Mamar Golpo" author Nandi said, "I will regard my hard work behind the book as well worth it if this literary work is of use to anyone."

Nandi, an employee of the local office of the Indian High Commission, has written another children's book, "Sabuj Deeper Itikotha" which was published in 2005. A regular Bangladesh Betar playwright, Nandi also writes essays and satires in local newspapers. Nadi Prokashan has published his latest book "Mamar Golpo". Rajshahi Sahitto Parishad organised the book launch with assistance from Nikkon Nritta Shilpi Gosthi while Fevicol was the sponsor.

Sahitto Parishad president Zahangir Ali, Academy headmaster Rajendranath Sarker spoke among others, while Serina Sarker, Achintya Kumar Sarker, Nurjahan Khatun read out three stories from the book.

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