

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-Str" (Arogami Jatra Unit)



French Drama Festival
Organiser: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka and Natukay Theatre Group
Venue: National Theatre Festival, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: May 15-21
Time: 5pm onward



Documentary Screening
Organiser: Desh TV and Water Aid
Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, House # 510, Road # 7, Dhanmondi R/A
Date: April 11
Time: 5pm



Poster and Film Show
65th Anniversary of Great Patriotic Day
Organiser: Russian Language Department and RCSC
Venue: Institute of Modern Languages, DU.
Date: May 10-11
Time: 2.30pm-4.30pm

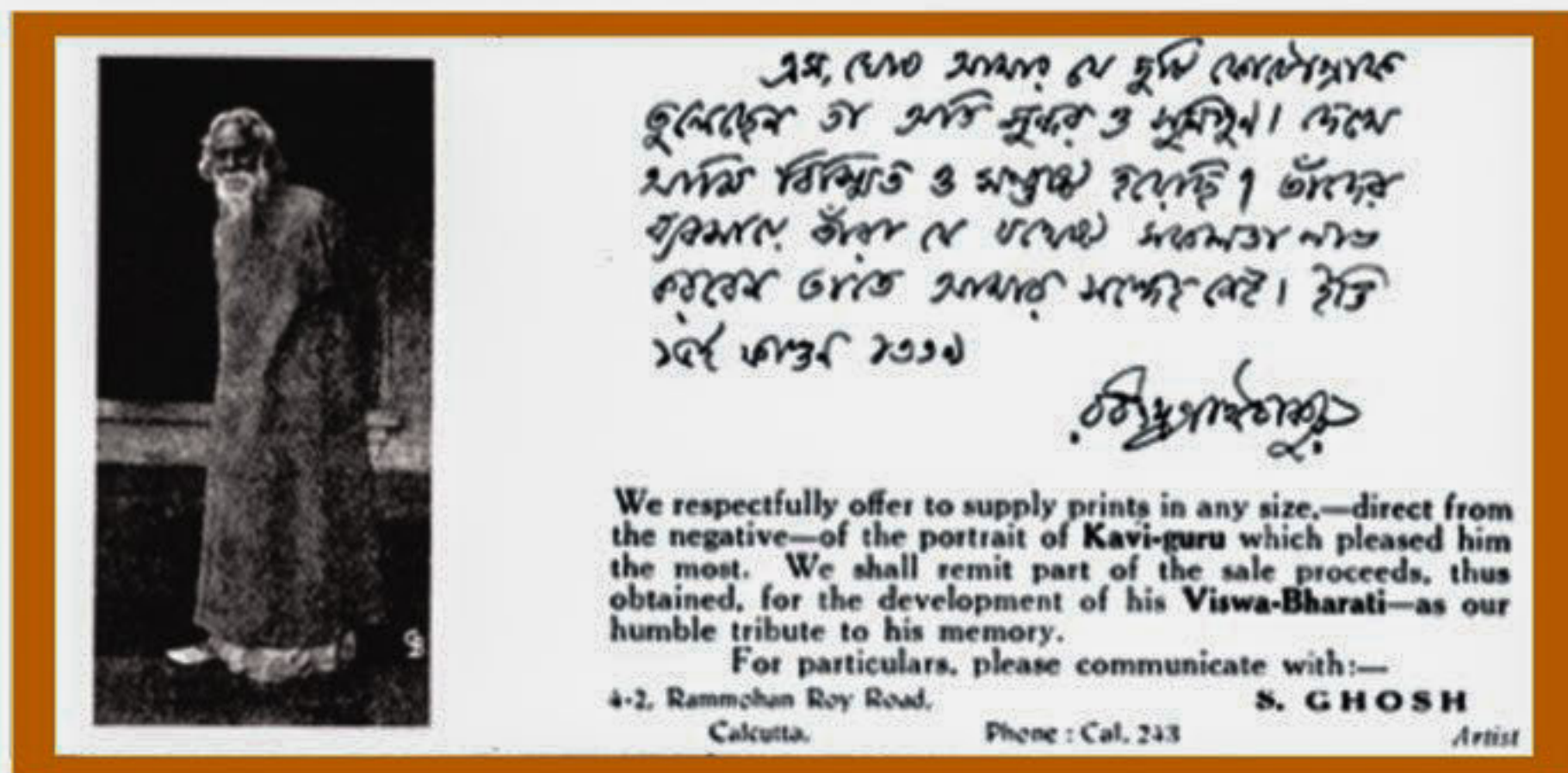


A poetic selling point

Rabindranath featured in over 100 advertisements, promoting ghee to face creams to harmonium in his day

Celebration of Rabindranath's 149th birth anniversary is in full swing and the poet is everywhere. A certain unfamiliar side of the Nobel laureate poet has emerged. In his lifetime, Tagore was a man much featured in advertisements. The poet, when he was alive, was as popular in Bengali advertisement as Shah Rukh Khan is to Indian ads today. The similarity ends there.

There would, of course, be several factors that would



year of Tagore's death, he came across about 90 such advertisements. From ghee to skin creams to sweets to harmoniums, Tagore endorsed a wide range of products. Advertisers used his celebrity the way they use that of film actors and cricketers now, says Roy, who edits Purasree, the monthly magazine of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

life." About Radium Cream, he says: "Those who use beauty products like snow and cream or eau de cologne, on using the products manufactured by the Radium factory will find no difference between them and foreign products" and encouraging this "swadeshi enterprise" was a "duty".

Tagore had also endorsed Napier's Paint Works ("The founder of this factory who through difficult steps has reached a remarkable height of success deserves the gratitude of his countrymen"), a young artiste from Senola Records, paper merchants Bholanath Dutt & Sons Ltd ("Sjt. Bholanath Dutt should inspire our unemployed young men with hope and courage") and Dwarkin's Harmonium. Of these the record company is extinct, the paper business is almost extinct and Dwarkin's Harmonium has had to face some music.

D. Kachari may be lost forever

When will the authorities step in?

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

D. Kachari, an old two-storied house situated at Jhorbaria village under Phulbaria upazila, seems to be yet another heritage site in danger of being lost forever. Once crowded with hundreds of people round the clock, it has been in a derelict state for over two decades. Due to slipshod maintenance by the authority concerned, all the wooden doors and windows of the house, some two kilometers away from upazila headquarters, are missing. Unless the authorities step in, the house cannot be saved.

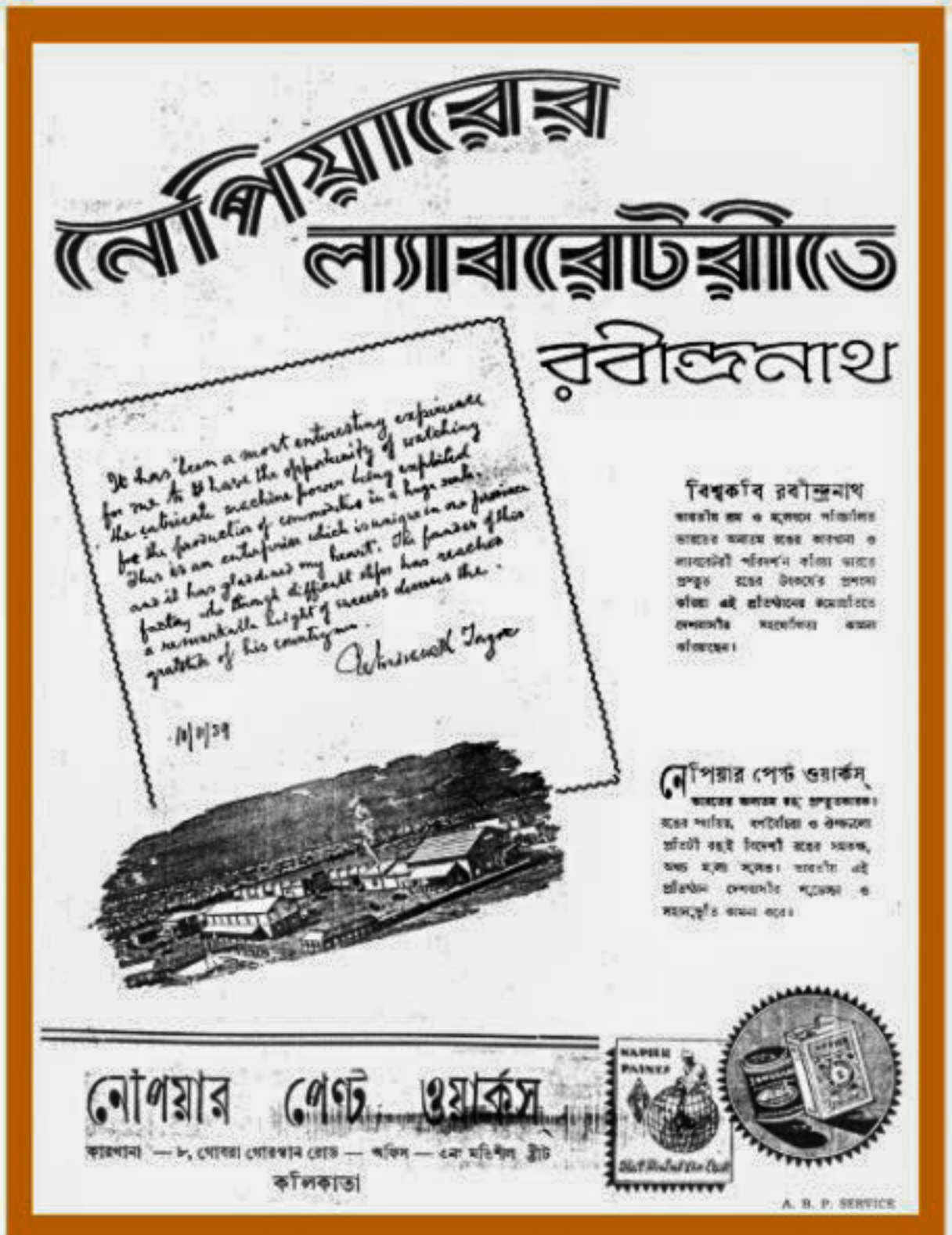
Commissioned some 100 years ago by the then Muktagacha Zamindar Maharaja Shashi Kanta Acharya Chowdhury, the building was used as a revenue collection office. Sprawled over three acres of land, the estate, surrounded by trees, has a large pond in front. The pond is still a major

water source for villagers in the vicinity.

This Kachari has now lain vacant for over two decades. Doors and windows of the house are stolen, but none has been charged in connection with the stealing, said Abul Kalam, an inhabitant of Jhorbaria village. Abdus Salam, a farmer from the same village, told this correspondent that the tin-roof of the house blew away in 1989 and was repaired later.

Villagers also allege that some portion of the estate has been usurped by vested quarters and is in danger of being entirely lost. Reazuddin, an assistant teacher of Jhorbaria Govt. Primary School, told The Daily Star that the historic site should be preserved for future generations.

People of the village demand immediate steps to prevent further ruination of the house and the estate.



hundred advertisements. Arunkumar Roy, who is researching Tagore in advertisements, says that going through publications between 1889 and 1941, the

distinguish a Tagore ad. For one, he is not known to have been charged in crores or their equivalent amount a century ago; two, he endorsed a product to often push the

nationalist agenda; three, though the ads were tiny pieces of work, they would often hint at the power Tagore had over words. They were laconic, often almost matter-of-fact, but a wry sense of humour could break through them.

In the well-known ad for Jalajoga, Tagore says: "I tasted the sweetmeat prepared by Jalajoga. It is satisfying. It has a distinct taste, which is why it is to be appreciated. The curd (dadih) that was served with it deserves special praise." Jalajoga is not famous for its sweets any more. It is known for its cakes, if at all.

The nationalist agenda surfaces in the ad for Radium Cream, which does not survive, or Sri Ghrita, one Bengali institution that does survive. About Sri Ghrita, Tagore says: "With the decline in the standard of ghee in Bengal, the decline in the condition of lives has become inevitable. I wish that Sri Ghrita drives away this malady and helps Bengalis lead a better

life." About Radium Cream, he says: "Those who use beauty products like snow and cream or eau de cologne, on using the products manufactured by the Radium factory will find no difference between them and foreign products" and encouraging this "swadeshi enterprise" was a "duty".

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Tagore had also written a tribute to Haren Ghosh after his death. Ghosh was an impresario whose office was

at 8 Dharamtala Street.

Rabindranath was not alone. He was the most popular choice when it came to promoting a product. The use of his name was unparalleled in advertisements, says Roy. With Tagore, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose were popular choices too.

The ads occurred most frequently in magazines and journals such as Probasi, Basumati, Calcutta Municipal Gazette, Bhandar, Shonibar Chithi, Sadhana, Tattvabodhini Patrika, etc., and in the newspapers Anandabazar Patrika, Amritabazar Patrika, The Statesman and Advance. Among newspapers, the largest number of advertisements appeared in Anandabazar Patrika.

Roy says that Tagore's presence in advertisements is one aspect of his life and works that has not been discussed and hopes for further research in this area.

Source: The Telegraph, Calcutta.



The facade of the building.

PHOTO: STAR

Legendary singer-actress Lena Horne passes away

AP, New York

Lena Horne, the enchanting jazz singer and actress who reviled the bigotry that allowed her to entertain white audiences but not socialise with them, slowing her rise to Broadway superstardom, died last Sunday. She was 92.

Horne, whose striking beauty and magnetic appeal often overshadowed her sultry voice, was remarkably candid about the underlying reason for her success.

"I was unique in that I was a kind of black that white people could accept," she once said. "I was their daydream. I had the worst kind of acceptance because it was never for how great I was or what I contributed. It was because of the way I looked."

In the 1940s, she was one of the first black performers hired to sing with a major white band, the first to play the Copacabana nightclub and among a handful with a Hollywood contract.

In 1943, MGM Studios loaned her to 20th Century-Fox to play the role of Selina Rogers in the all-black movie musical "Stormy Weather." Her rendition of the title song became a major hit and her signature piece.

On screen, on records and in nightclubs and concert halls, Horne was at home vocally with a wide musical range, from blues and jazz to the sophistication of Rodgers and Hart in songs like "The Lady Is a Tramp" and "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered."

In her first big Broadway success, as the star of "Jamaica" in 1957, reviewer

Richard Watts Jr. called her "one of the incomparable performers of our time." Songwriter Buddy de Sylva dubbed her "the best female singer of songs."

But Horne was perpetually frustrated with the public humiliation of racism.

"I was always battling the system to try to get to be with my people. Finally, I wouldn't work for places that kept us out...it was a damn fight everywhere I was, every place I worked, in New York, in Hollywood, all over the world," she said in Brian Lanker's book "I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America."

Early in her career Horne cultivated an aloof style out of self-preservation, becoming "a woman the audience can't reach and therefore can't hurt" she once said.

When Halle Berry became the first black woman to win

the best actress Oscar in 2002, she sobbed: "This moment is for Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, Diahann Carroll... It's for every nameless, faceless woman of colour who now has a chance because this door tonight has been opened."

Lena Mary Calhoun Horne, the great-granddaughter of a freed slave, was born in Brooklyn June 30, 1917, to a leading family in the black bourgeoisie.

By the 1960s, Horne was one of the most visible celebrities in the civil rights movement, once throwing a lamp at a customer who made a racial slur in a Beverly Hills restaurant and in 1963 joining 250,000 others in the March on Washington when Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech.

"I wouldn't trade my life for anything," she said, "because being black made me understand."



Lena Horne

Updates on Arun Chowdhury and "Lilaboti"

A CORRESPONDENT

Dramatist and director Arun Chowdhury has adapted Humayun Ahmed's novel "Lilaboti." The Daily Star (TDS) recently caught up with the director who talked about the upcoming 52-episode drama serial.

TDS: Why did you choose "Lilaboti"?

Arun Chowdhury: Humayun Ahmed is my teacher. I'm familiar with his writings. I decided to make a drama serial right away after reading the novel "Lilaboti"

TDS: Where was the serial shot?

Arun Chowdhury: We shot the serial at an idyllic village

in Manikganj. Parts of the serial were shot in a moving train.

TDS: What's the USP of "Lilaboti" and when will it go on air?

Arun Chowdhury: The plot is full of drama and mystery. Highlights are vignettes of rural life like a storm hit bullcock cart, musical soiree, fishing in a huge lake, a moving train halted by heavy shower and more. It will go on air on ATN Bangla from June 5. The serial will be aired twice in a week -- Saturdays and Sundays at 9:20 pm.

TDS: Yesterday was your birthday. What was the best gift you received?

Arun Chowdhury: The best gift that I received this

year is the rights to Humayun Ahmed's "Rumali". Humayun Ahmed generally does not give rights to his works to anyone.

TDS: When do you plan to start shooting "Rumali"? Have you decided on the cast?

Arun Chowdhury: I intend to start shooting for "Rumali" in October. Suborna Mustafa, Tisha and Anisur Rahman Milon are set to play the lead roles.

TDS: Are you considering film direction?

Arun Chowdhury: I'm hoping to make a film, titled "Chhaya Manush" next year. "Chhaya Manush" will depict the stories of extras (junior artistes who work in films).



A scene from "Lilaboti".



Artistes of Anondo Opera in a scene from the Jatra "Kohinoor". Written by Brajendra Kumar Dey the jatra was staged recently at the ongoing weeklong Jatra Festival at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH