



TAKIR HOSSAIN

Yesterday (October 23) marked the first death anniversary of eminent Indian writer Sunil Gangopadhyay. Equally adept at prose and poetry, Gangopadhyay authored many memorable poems, novels, short stories, travelogues, and plays. He also brought his considerable talents to reviews, and comments as well as literature for children. In his novels, Gangopadhyay created characters –romantic, serious, eccentric, comic, and loveable – to which readers readily related, while some characters became larger than life. He explored the ups and downs of urban middle-class life of Kolkata with a keen eye.

It was at a dinner in the Dhaka Club in 2007 that I met the iconic personality. Kobita Sankranti, a cultural organisation, was the host of the dinner. The organisation accorded him a reception in the evening at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Poet and architect Rabiul Husain introduced me to him. Although he spoke to me warmly, the venue was crowded and I did not get the chance to talk to him at length. Fortunately, just two days later, I had another opportunity to meet him at Rabiul Husain's apartment in Dhanmondi.

"One of the most significant chapters of my life was spent in this country, in the district of Faridpur. That's one of the prime reasons behind my tremendous fascination for the country," Gangopadhyay said in the course of our conversation. "I feel that I have a strong readership in this country because the contents of my novels have great similarities with the country's socio-economic, cultural and political aspects," he added.

I could clearly comprehend how deeply he

# Literary reflections on the middle class

## SUNIL GANGOPADHYAY'S first death anniversary

observed our current literary trends. He was very hopeful about our poems, particularly the experimental trends and variation of the scholarly contents. He was very well informed about our literature. My impression of him has always been of a man who loved life and adored literature. He was secular, soft spoken and amicable. Although a diehard atheist he believed in equal rights for believers of all religions.

Gangopadhyay's writings are simple, easily understandable, and poignant and one can easily go through most of them cover to cover in one sitting. He was the founder editor of "Krittibaas", a seminal poetry magazine that became a platform for a new generation of poets experimenting with many new forms in poetic themes, rhythms, and articulations. His poetry is urbane, romantic, vibrant and cheeky and lends itself simply to Bohemian myth-making, which appears to have been cultivated consciously by the Krittibaas group.

Gangopadhyay is recognised for his outstanding style and alluring language. Above all, he was a poet. His series of poems titled "Nikhilesh" and "Neera" are tremendously popular among readers of all ages. He created an individual language for his essays and novels. He was a popular writer but his writings could reach the territory of the intellectual readers' circle in both Bangladesh and India. Many of his novels' protagonists appeal to the middle class of our society. He splendidly elucidates their hopes, joys, sorrows, family feuds, wants, romances and more. The stories reflect the writer's engaging prose and ability to conjure highly-fascinating stories out of most ordinary daily events. He portrays history, politics and contemporary issues in many of his poems and novels. Many of his novels are based on the history of the subcontinent.

"Ordhek Jibon" is a biography depicting his early life in Faridpur, Kolkata. It highlights his bohemian lifestyle and how he moved on to writing prose, his poetic struggles, depression and successes. His family moved to Kolkata before the Partition -- a city that saw the blossoming of his talents shaped by a zeal for reading and endless adda with literary and other geniuses and with ordinary people from all walks of life.

However, it was Gangopadhyay's father, a teacher, who played a significant role in bringing his poetic talent to the fore. In "Ordhek Jibon", Gangopadhyay mentioned how his father kept him engaged in translating Alfred Lord Tennyson's poems after his school final examinations. After translating some of those poems, he considered trying his hand in writing poems of his own and sent some of them to literary magazines which eagerly published them.

Gangopadhyay's "Chobir Deshe Kobitar Deshe", is a simple travelogue recounting his journey to the land of painting and poetry. The book is about his journeys to France, the people he met there, cuisine, theatres, discussions, the culture, art and literature. In the book, he also wonderfully portrays New York -- the city, its people and literary life.

Gangopadhyay's remarkable novel "Shei Shomoy" provides insights into history and its mysterious intricacies. It could easily be proclaimed as one of the best novels ever written in the historical fiction genre in Bengali. Among his other notable works are "Prothom Alo" and "Purbo-Paschim", a novel on the Partition and its effects seen through the eyes of generations of Bengalis in West Bengal and Bangladesh. The pleasures, joys and untold stories of Bengalis are the major themes of this literary work.

# 123rd death anniversary of LALON Preserve the Baul king's songs, say speakers

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A five-day discussion on the 123rd death anniversary of Baul king Fakir Lalon Shah ended at Chauria, the den of the bard.

The programme was inaugurated on October 17.

Speakers, including Baul exponents and Baul singers voiced a strong demand for immediate steps by the government to preserve Lalon's original songs. With the passage of time, they reiterated the songs had been distorted out of recognition.

"The preservation of Lalon songs is a pressing need as the popularity of these songs is at its

ples, preserved the authentic lyrics of Lalon under the guidance of Fakir Kokil Shah. Shah also took the assistance of Fakir Abdul Gani Shah (aka Bader Shah), Fakir Durlabh Shah, Fakir Abdul Karim Shah and Fakir Bazlur Rahman Shah. Shah listed around 600 songs in his book "Lalon Sangeet" (three volumes).

According to Lalon experts, after a great many years of Lalon's death, many pseudo-Bauls have labeled songs composed by other Baul gurus as Lalon's. For example, many songs composed by Gopal Shah, Adam Chan, the followers of Sati Mayer Ghar,



A follower of Lalon sings at the fair.

PHOTO: STAR

peak. This has resulted in many people who are not even Bauls, singing and even recording songs in the name of Lalon, the King of Bauls," said Professor Dr. Sahinor Rahman, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Islamic University also a mystic song exponent. Professor Sahin was one of the chief discussants on the occasion.

According to experts, Lalon composed about 1,000 verses which were noted down by Fakir Maniruddin Shah, a direct disciple of Fakir Lalon Shah. He was authorised to do manuscripts, which were composed by another disciple Fakir Manik Shah.

Later, Montu Shah, one of the key figures among Lalon disci-

have been later attributed to Lalon. But the philosophical essence of the song is not that of Lalon.

With Kushtia Deputy Commissioner (DC) Syed Belal Hossain in the chair, the programme was addressed among others by Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu, researcher Lalim Haq, M. Moniruzzaman and Kushtia municipality mayor Anwar Ali.

Lalon Academy organised the programme with the support of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. A five day mela was held on the occasion.

Banglalink was the sponsor of the programme.

## NEWS bytes

### Tim Burton to direct Beetlejuice 2



Tim Burton is in talks to direct Michael Keaton in "Beetlejuice 2", according to Hollywood trade magazines.

Burton directed the first cult hit movie, which was released in 1988 and starred Keaton as a fast-talking, devious ghost from the underworld.

The Frankenweenie director is currently working on the film Big Eyes, before going on to direct Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children.

The original "Beetlejuice" spawned an animated TV series produced by Burton.

The film also starred Geena Davis, Alec Baldwin and Winona Ryder.

Burton has been nominated twice for Oscars in the animated feature category - for Corpse Bride in 2006, and last year for Frankenweenie.

"Beetlejuice" won an Academy Award for best make-up in 1989.

Source: BBC

## IT'S TRUE!



American film and TV actress Katherine Hepburn, a leading lady of Hollywood for six decades, famously shunned the publicity machine, and refused to conform to society's expectations of women. She was outspoken, assertive, athletic, and wore trousers before it was fashionable for women to do so. She married once, as a young woman, but thereafter lived independently. A 26-year affair with her co-star Spencer Tracy was hidden from the public. With her unconventional lifestyle and the independent characters she brought to the screen, she came to epitomize the "modern woman" in 20th-century America, and is remembered as an important cultural figure.

## Nazrul melody in DALIA NAUSHEEN'S voice

### New album "Dol Purnima Raat-e" set to be launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted artiste Dalia Nausheen's solo Nazrul Sangeet album titled "Dol Purnima Raat-e" is all set to hit the audio market. The artiste's Guru, Sudhin Das, as chief guest, will unveil the album today.

The album, featuring diverse genres of Nazrul Sangeet includes raga-based, kavyageeti, kirtan, adhunik and folk.

On the cover jacket of the album, Sudhin Das has made a complimentary comment recalling the first formal music lessons that he gave to Dalia when she was hardly five years old.

"Even back then, Dalia's untainted voice and authentic interpretation of Nazrul songs enchanted and filled me with delight, and continues to do so



today," he added.

Several familiar and unfamiliar Nazrul songs like "Dolonchapa Bon-e Dol-e", "Mon-e Rakhari Din Giyeche", "Bon Bihongo Jao Rey Ure", "Jaye

Jhilmil Jhilmil" and "Shokhi Sajaye Rakhlo" have been included in the album.

"I am greatly privileged at recording songs for my latest album in Kolkata, India. Rahul Chatterjee, son-in-law of legendary singer Manabendra Mukherjee, has directed music for the album that was accompanied with live music by Ustad Rawshan Ali Khan (sarangi), Rahul Chatterjee (sitar), Gautam Shom (keyboard), Pradyut Banerjee (guitar), Shushanto Nandi (flute), Sanjibon Acharya (percussion) and Joy Dev Nandi (tabla)," stated Dalia Nausheen.

Though trained in both classical music and Nazrul Sangeet, Dalia Nausheen also performs songs of yesteryears, thumri and kirtan.

## Documenting Bangladesh 5 in December

A four-day Bangladesh Documentary Festival 2013, titled 'Documenting Bangladesh 5' is beginning on December 13 at Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Shahbagh, Dhaka, says a press release. Bangladesh Documentary Council, the organiser of the documentary festival stated that

documentaries made on various subjects on Bangladesh in the time frame of 2011 to October 2013 by Bangladeshi and foreign filmmakers will be eligible for entry to the festival.

Interested documentary filmmakers can submit their films by collecting the entry form, which is available at the website of

Bangladesh Documentary Council; www.documentarycouncilbd.org

There will be two competitive sections at the festival and the winners will get the Bangladesh Documentary Festival Award 2013. The last day for submission of the films is November 15.

## Music all the way

### Eid celebrations in Sirajganj by Amor Ekushey Library

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking Eid-ul-Azha and Durga Puja, Amor Ekushey Library, Sirajganj recently organised a musical programme at Brohmogachha Government Model Primary School at Raiganj in the district.

Classical vocalist and ghazal singer Alope Kumar Sen together with noted tabla artiste Biblob Sharma and keyboard player IK Razon performed a number of semi-classical and raga-inspired songs, ghazals, adhunik and timeless Hindi film tracks at the event. The trio kept the audience enthralled by playing their requests.

Alope Sen started off the event with a Manna Dey record "Abhinandan Noy Proshongsha Noy" that was a tribute to the ailing artiste. His second presentation "Jodi Kagoje Lekho Naam", another Manna Dey hit, earned many hearts.

The artiste rendered ghazals - "Faasle Aise Bhi Honge", originally recorded by Ghulam Ali; "Chand Angraiyan Le Raha Hai", by Anup Jalota; "Peyar Bhare Do Shar Miley Nyan", by Mehdi Hassan and "Nodite Tuphan Ele", by Jagjit Singh at the programme.

Alope Sen's rendition of a Mohammed Rafi record "Yeh Dunia



Alope Kumar Sen (C) performs at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

Yeh Mehfil" captivated the audience while his other repertoire included "Josna Bheja e Raat", "Ami Jamini" (recorded by Srikanto Acharya); "Ami Banglar Gaan Gai", (recorded by Pratul Mukhopadhyay) and "Briddhashrom" and "Jakhon Shomoy Thomke Daraye", by Nachiketa.

Tabla artiste Biblob Sharma accompanied Sen with the unique styles popularised by his guru Ustad Kamruzzaman Moni. Keyboard artiste IK Razon fashioned a whirlpool of

melody beautifully harmonising with Alope Sen's harmonium.

President and general secretary of Amor Ekushey Library Zahangir Alom and Zubayer Khan delivered the welcome addresses. Chief adviser of the library Rezaul Karim presented bouquets to the featured artistes. Local artistes also entertained the audience with dance, drama and skits.

Amor Ekushey Library is dedicated to the promotion of education and culture.

## Sudip Chakroborthy sets sail for UK Theatre workshop on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sudip Chakroborthy is gearing up to set sail for his directorial debut in UK.

Chakroborthy, a faculty member at the Department of Theatre of Dhaka University, begins his voyage today to conduct a two-week theatre workshop with local artistes and performing arts groups in East London, UK. The workshop is being held between October 24 and November 5, 2013 (1st phase) and during May-June 2014 (2nd phase).

The first phase of the workshop has been designed for assessing the skills and resources of the local diaspora Bangladeshis and British Bangladeshis to stage an experimental Shakespearean play in the Sylheti-Bangla language through which Bangladesh traditional performing arts can be presented to a wider audience in 2014.

Shamim Azad, a diaspora Bengali poet, has adapted a Shakespearean play for the final presentation. Bishwa Shahityo Kendro, UK is organising the theatrical ven-



ture. UK based Bishwa Shahityo Kendro, Udhichi UK Sangsad, Satyen School of Performing Arts and other local theatre groups will perform in the experimental play.

The workshops are being held prior to the "Season of Bangla Drama" (starting on November 2) at Brady Art Centre in East London. East London-based local artistes and theatre groups will perform in the "Season of Bangla Drama," a theatre festival organised by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, UK. The theatre venture is being supported by British Council, Bangladesh.

## SAMRAT SHAJAHAN staged in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

"Samrat Shajahan" was staged by noted cultural organisation of Bogra town Amra Ka'jan Shilpi Goshai on the 150 birth anniversary of illustrious playwright and composer Dwijendralal Roy. The event was held at Shaheed Titu Milenayatan in Bogra on Saturday.

The play, regarded as the best and unique creation of the poet was staged for the forth time by the organisation.

A dance was performed prior to this with a popular patriotic song of the poet "Dhono Dhanney Pushpo Bhora". A discussion was also held. The guest speakers were Director of Environment Department of Rajshahi division Ali Reza Majid; president of Shammilito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ), Monowarul Islam and secretary of SSJ Ziaul Haque. The discussion was presided over by president of the organisation Abdus Samad Polash.

Secretary of AKSG, Abdul Mobin Jinnah directed the programme. Around 50 artistes of the organisation took part in the entertaining play and cultural programme.