



# DHAKA RONGGOPITH

With the emergence of online media such as Facebook and YouTube, theatre is often referred to as a 'dying art'. The case is more so with street theatre, where artists try to connect to the masses in their own way. 'Dhaka Ronggopith' is a prominent theatre group who perform tirelessly around the year to try to send a message to the audience. The leader and founder of the group, Shakil Ahmed, talks to us about its journey.

**How did Dhaka Ronggopith begin its journey?**

We officially began as a theatre group in 2004. Sharif Uddin Ahmed was the General Secretary of the group at the time. When we began, we did not have much resource but we did have a very dedicated and hard-working crew, which propelled us to somewhat instant popularity with the theater audience.

**Tell us about the members of the group.**

We had some extremely talented actors with us. Along with me and Sharif there were Imran, Masud, Shihab, Sujana, Lipi and many others. Our currently active members are Mithila Chandni, Arpita, Morium Bonna, Rishad Shahriar, Samad



Azad, Israfil Raj and Sohag Al Mamun. We always had a dream, and that was to spread patriotism and raise awareness against hypocrisy through our work.

**What are the prominent plays that Dhaka Ronggopith does? Do you change your style in certain situations?**

As we do both theatre and street theatre,

we have a wide variety of plays which change according to the type of audience that we have. For example, if we are performing in Shilpakala Academy, we have to keep in mind that the audience will be fairly sophisticated. Some of our most popular plays are "Provat Phire Esho" and "Paliye Beray" by Manoj Mitra, "Jamai

Babu" by Anindo Sundor Chattopadhyay, and "Hottakari" by Baidyanath Mukhopadhyay among many others. When we perform in the streets, the unanimous favorite of the audience is "Bornochora", which is written by Momtaj Uddin Ahmed. "Somutpaton", which is written by me, is also popular.

**Are you affiliated with any unions?**

We have previously been affiliated with the "Shommilito Shangskritik Jot" and "Potho Natok Porishod".

**Where do you plan to see yourselves in the future?**

We want to be true to ourselves. The love of our audience is what keeps us alive, and we want to do many more plays in the future. I just want to point out that it is indeed very hard to be a theatre actor in this day and age. We need all the help we can get from the authority to keep this from being forgotten and to make it a healthy and thriving scene. As for Dhaka Ronggopith, we will move forward no matter what the hurdles or obstacles are.

By Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz

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