

**TRIBUTE**

# POTUA AND FREEDOM'S COLOURS

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

*As the mercury steadily dropped, the chill in the air felt starkly different from the fiery situation prevailing everywhere across the country. This was early February, the year 1971. The mass upsurge of 1969 followed by the non-cooperation movement in 1971 against the Pakistani regime had pushed the country to a point of no return.*



Shumona faintly recalls her days with her father, acclaimed artist Quamrul Hassan (1921-1988), at their Central Road residence. Quamrul was then chief designer of the erstwhile East Pakistan Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (EPSCIC), now Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC). But his day job was quite different from what occupied his time at dead of night. For then, his home would become the gathering place for scores of artists from the Arts College, who shared a similar dream of an independent Bangladesh.

The group would tirelessly work under the maestro's guidance, designing and creating huge anti-regime posters. Little Shumona Hassan enjoyed watching the young artists make buckets of glue and using poster colours from big jars. Before sunrise the students would fan out, boldly setting up the anti-oppression posters all across the capital. February 21 was approaching. In that ongoing fervour of nationalism, political, social and cultural activists had united under a single banner. Working non-stop over the following days, Quamrul Hassan and his



group used their brushes to completely transform the road leading to the Central Shaheed Minar, turning it from a blackened pathway to one painted with bright and traditional alpina. The crimson was a vivid reminder of the blood that the country had pledged to keep the dream of independence alive. A huge tree beside the Shaheed Minar was chosen as a symbolic landmark. It was decorated with Bangla alphabets and named the Okhhar Brikkho (alphabet tree) to reflect the vitality of the Bengali language. This was Quamrul Hassan. Active, energetic

and ever innovative, he would spend hours doodling in his sketchbook, the cigarette packet or whatever served as a drawing board. Even while serving in-exile as director of the art division of Bangladesh's information and radio department, he drew the ferocious caricature of Yahya Khan, titled "Annihilate These Demons", that later attained an iconic status. Besides his mastery in the art world, Quamrul Hassan was also extremely adept in the performing arts. He used to frequent Vastukalabid, at Paribagh, the gathering place

of stalwarts from the political, cultural and intelligentsia. Students of all ages would gather at the lush green gardens to get Brotochari Nrittya lessons from Quamrul Hassan. As the month of February dawns upon us, it seems an opportune time to reflect on Quamrul Hassan's contribution to the spirit of freedom. It is an opportune time to realise how it is not always violence that prevails, but rather the deep-rooted spirit of liberty that pulls the country through the darkest times. It is an opportune time to wish that his crimson brush-strokes on the Shaheed Minar had not merely painted the pathway, but tinted the spirits of millions to keep the spirit of freedom alive. Today marks the 30th death anniversary of Patua Quamrul Hassan. The Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka (DU) together with the Department of Graphic Design has organised a discussion with a documentary screening today at 10:30am at Lecture Theatre, FFA, DU. Eminent artists -- Professor Samarjit Roy Choudhury and Professor Rafiqun Nabi, Sumona Hassan, daughter of Quamrul Hassan, Abul Hasnat, Editor of Kali O Kalam, and Dr. Syed Azizul Haque, Professor, Department of Bangla, DU, will discuss and share their memories of the artist. Professor Nisar Hossain, Dean, FFA, DU, will preside over the programme while Reza Asad Al Huda Anupam, Chairman, Department of Graphic Design, DU, will deliver welcome addresses at the event. They will place wreaths at Patua's grave at 9am this morning.



## A series of fortunate events

Arifin Shuvo celebrates birthday, movie release

A CORRESPONDENT

Aptly regarded as Bangladesh film industry's most popular hero, Arifin Shuvo's next venture, "Ekti Cinema'r Gopo" has just cleared the censor board. While the audience was hotly anticipating the film "Bhalo Theko" today, the movie release has been postponed till February 9. But things take a brighter turn for the actor and his fans today, as it is his birthday. The censor board granted "Ekti Cinema'r Golpo" with more than just a clearance certificate; members of the board were full of praise regarding Arifin Shuvo's acting on screen, as well Alamgir's direction and script. The news put the leading actor in a great mood, who said, "All praises are for God, and I am also grateful to Alamgir sir for giving me an opportunity to be a part of this film." Excited fans can gear up for the movie's April 13 release date, which coincides with the national Pohela Boishakh festivals. Meanwhile, Arifin Shuvo returned from a filming stint in Kolkata yesterday, where he was working on the sets of "Ahaar", a film directed by Ranjan and featuring West Bengal actor Rituparna Sengupta as his co-artist. The actor is also playing the lead in the Arindam Sil helmed "Balighar". The actor revealed that he returned to Dhaka in order to celebrate his birthday with family. "This day is not about me, it's about the ones I love, and sharing happiness in being together," he said.

## Poetry gathering at BIPS

A CORRESPONDENT

An enchanting cultural evening took place at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Experimental Theatre Hall on January 31, which hosted the Dhaka International Poets Summit 2018 (DIPS). DIPS began their journey 25 years ago, with the objective of gathering poets and poetry lovers from around the globe under one roof. International poets including Agnes Meadows from the UK, Tendo Taijin from Japan, Joyce Ashuntantang from the USA, Ibrahim El Masri from Egypt, Miao Yi Tu from Taiwan and Mario Mather from Colombia presented original poems written in their own languages. Bangladeshi poets who attended the Summit were Aminur Rahman, Asad Chowdhury, Hayat Saif, Mohammad Nurul Huda, Habibullah Sirajee and Zahidul Huq. The event set off with an enthralling classical music performance by students of the Classical Music Academy. State Minister of Foreign



Bangladeshi and international poets awarded with crests at the programme.

Affairs Shahriar Alam attended as chief guest, and sent ripples of laughter through the audience when he humorously surmised that he was invited on account of his relatively young age, to be able to repeatedly stand up to hand over awards. He also gave special reverence to Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose works enriched and defined our poetic heritage. Poet and organiser of the Summit Aminur Rahman also delivered a welcome address thanking all those who supported the cause. The literary evening also observed

the launching of many poetry books, such as Dhaka Anthology of World Poetry 2018, and Biswo SHERA Shamakaleen Shaath Kabir Kobita. The six international poets were awarded with the Kathak Literary Award 2018 for their contributions in literature.

## Celebration time for Deepika Padukone

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone seems to have put the intense controversy over "Padmaavat" behind her and basking in the audience response to the movie and her performance in the most difficult role of her decade-long film career. Three days into the release of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's film after weeks of violent protests and threats, Deepika, who essays the title of a 15th century mythical Rajput queen, said the rough times had been overtaken by the love of the audience. "At this point, I am not thinking about the last three months. The last three days have been so overwhelming that nothing else matters. I am in a mood to celebrate. I am grateful for all the love and support," Deepika told the media in reply to a question in Mumbai on Saturday night. "Padmaavat" has been facing endless hurdles in the form of protest and death threats by the fringe outfit Karni Sena since the shooting began in Rajasthan state last year. Stray protests are on even now. The period drama is based on the 16th century epic "Padmaavat" by poet Malik Muhammad Jayasi. Karni Sena has alleged that it distorts history and undermines Rajput valour, a charge denied by the filmmakers. Deepika said that the story of "Padmaavat" is as relevant today as it was several centuries ago. "It looks at the power of women. Today again we are standing up for ourselves with dignity... I find her journey so relevant today," Deepika said about her character queen Padmavati. The film also stars Shahid Kapoor, who plays the role of Maharawal Ratan Singh and Ranveer Singh, who plays Alauddin Khilji, but it was Deepika who faced the wrath of Rajput commu-



nity who issued death threats to her. "When Rani has so much strength, why would she need others? In my personal life I fight my own battle, I don't need anyone," according to the actress. A section of the protesters had said there was a dream sequence featuring the characters of Rani Padmavati and Khilji, which Bhansali had denied. "We (Ranveer and I) don't have even a moment together in this film. When I was shooting he was not there and vice versa. I was not aware what work he has done in the film," she said. When lyricist Javed Akhtar called "Padmaavat" the "Mother India" of her career, Deepika was on cloud nine. But what gratified her more was that her parents praised her performance. "My parents have seen the film and they were proud of my work, but there was a sense of disbelief, like they were thinking is she our daughter?" She said she was always confident the film would be released, but what she did not anticipate was the love and support of the audience. "When someone does something right, at the end, truth, prevails," she said. "Padmavat" has so far garnered Rs 83 crore at the box office and Deepika is overwhelmed with the response. "The amount of love, support is unprecedented and most important the blessings that I am getting. I feel what have I done to deserve this (love)," she said. For Deepika, playing the role of queen Padmini in Bhansali's film was the most difficult role in her career. "This role of a queen had no crutches like she doesn't have a sword, she doesn't get on a horse and goes on battlefield -- but there is sheer inner strength and resilience which I had to show through my eyes," she said.

## Chris Pratt's "Cowboy Ninja Viking" taps director Michelle MacLaren

Michelle MacLaren has come on to direct Universal's adaptation of "Cowboy Ninja Viking" starring Chris Pratt. Based on the Image Comics graphic novel by A.J. Lieberman and illustrator Riley Rossmo, the pic was most recently written by Craig Mazin. The original draft was written by Zombieland writers Paul Wernick and Everett David Reese. The film is an adaptation of the graphic novel revolving around an assassin who manifests the toughest skills of three different personas: a cowboy, a ninja, and a viking. Entertainment 360, the production arm of Management 360, Mark Gordon via the Mark Gordon Company, Michael De Luca for Michael De Luca Productions, and Pratt will produce. VP of production Sara Scott will oversee production on behalf of the studio. The pic is set to be released on June 28, 2019. The film marks yet another collaboration between Pratt and Universal, which recently wrapped production on "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom." That movie is set to open on June 22. Best known for taking episodic TV and giving it a cinematic feel, MacLaren most recently executive produced and directed the pilot of the critically acclaimed series "The Deuce," starring Maggie Gyllenhaal and James Franco. She was the EP on "Breaking Bad" and directed some of the most successful television series of all time, including "Game of Thrones," "Westworld," and "The Walking Dead."



Source: Variety