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MOHUA MOULI

For the past five years, Open Space Theatre (OST) has been an important catalyst in creating a new sub-culture of theatregoers from all walks of life.

Hence, it was no surprise that their latest and newest production, of Arsenic & Old Lace had two sold-out shows the very first day on February 11, at Bangladesh Mohila Samity. With their rendition of American playwright Joseph Kesselring's 1939 classic, OST showcased the best of fascinating genre of dark comedy.

The plot centers around two sisters, their three nephews and their deranged and murderous activities. The two aunts, Martha and Abby Brewster were played by S. Rahman and the founder of OST herself, Tisha Mahjabeen Chowdhury.

The scene opened with the sisters conversing with Reverend Harper, played by Iftakhar Mahi,

about their mentally unstable nephew Teddy Brewster, played by Raihan Ahmed Dip. Two officers, played by Auvishkeh Bhadra, and Zakaria Khan Rony, soon enter the chat to raise concerns about Teddy's activities. Their conversation unfolds to disclose how the late patriarch of the family was a mad doctor, who performed dangerous experiments on people that would lead to countless deaths.

We then meet Mortimer Brewster, played by the director of the show M Arifur Rahman, the eldest nephew. After a delightful encounter with his lovely girlfriend Elaine, played by Ummay Marium, Mortimer has a chance encounter with a corpse hiding under a window-seat.

The plot continues to thicken once he finds out that his sweet and charitable aunts have been the ones behind this murder. This sets him off on a quest to save his beloved aunts from

indictment.

The shining stars of the show were the comically villainous duo, Jonathan and Dr. Einstein, played by A S M Mosabbir Tanim and Hadi Akash. Their entrance into the dimly lit stage was the perfect foreshadowing for the twists and turns that would soon bring us to the edge of our seats.

Another standout was Officer O'Hara, played by Tahmid Suprav, who entertained the audience with live music during his performance, creating a truly immersive atmosphere for the spectators.

The show ended with the hilarious antics of Police Lt. Rooney, played by Sharif M Tarik, while the sisters find another plausible victim in Mr. Witherspoon played by Johayer Mahtab Khan.

The show's narrative style beautifully stitched together every scene, with strong emphasis on making the delivery

feel natural. "I encourage our actors to add their own instinctive improvisations to bring more relevance to the script," said M Arifur Rahman about his adaptation.

The set design was the impeccable execution of Tisha Mahjabeen Chowdhury, "Since the genre is dark comedy, vibrant pops of colors were incorporated throughout the set to make the set look more visually striking", she said. The lighting, done by Dhiman Chandra Barman, breathed life into the set.

The atmospheric music also perfectly encapsulated this grand cinematic world of delusion for the live audience.

While the curtain fell on this show, the actors thanked its audience and reminded them to find things to laugh about, even during the darkest of times. Is there a better way to do that to watch dark comedy live on stage?

UNCHARTED hits Star Cineplex tomorrow

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Directed by Ruben Fleischer, the film, "Uncharted", based on the popular series of action-adventure video games of the same name, releases at Star Cineplex tomorrow. Tom Holland will play the film's protagonist Nathan Drake, with Mark Wahlberg taking on the role of Drake's sidekick and mentor Victor Sullivan. The movie, which is a prequel to the games, will show the meeting of Drake and Sullivan, along with their early adventures together.



Kabir Suman collaborates with Asif Akbar for International Mother Language Day

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Marking International Mother Language Day (February 21), eminent Indian singer-songwriter and composer Kabir Suman penned and composed the song "Ekushey Februaryr Daak", which has been voiced by popular Bangladeshi singer Asif Akbar.

Asif has collaborated with the veteran musician in five other songs, including "Amar Ekar Noy", "Syriar Chhele", and "Lukono Manik". He mentioned that Kabir Suman made the new track keeping him in mind.

Under the banner of ARB Entertainment, the music for "Ekushey Februaryr Daak" is arranged by Ujjal Sinha.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

COUNTRYWIDE

UP member Bobita's fame counterproductive

Several photographs of the newly-elected UP member working as a labourer go viral on social media

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

When many public representatives draw flak because of their negative activities, some stand apart setting an example to others. Bobita Khatun, a newly-elected member of Mulgram Union Parishad in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila, has attracted the attention of the netizens.

Her photographs, in which she was seen working as a day labourer, have gone viral on social media. However, her sudden rise to fame has proven to be counterproductive as the UP chairman has insisted that she not continue her work being a local representative.

Bobita Khatun, a worker under Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme (RERMP) under the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED),

had been earning Tk 250 a day over the last few years and she continued her work even after winning the election held on November 28 last year.

"I belong to a poor family. My husband left me and my son over a decade ago. Since then I have been working as a day labourer to survive with my son," Bobita said.

"After being elected a member, I continued my work; recently some of my photos went viral on social media and few reports were published highlighting my work," she said adding, that "as the UP chairman has asked me to discontinue my work, I have stopped working as a day labourer from the begging of this month. However, I am now struggling to survive."

"I contested the UP elections borrowing around Tk two lakh

from different organisations. I spent the money for election campaigns and now I have to repay the loan but I don't know how," she said.

Asked why she contested the elections borrowing money, Bobita said she did so to fulfil her late mother's dream to work for the poor people.

"As a poor woman, I know how others like me survive in society. I will try my best to work for the people in my area," she also said.

Contacted, Mulgram UP Chairman Md Rashidul Islam Bokul said, "As a UP member she has some duties, therefore, I have asked her to leave her work as a labourer."

The chairman said as a UP member she will get TK 3500 as allowance and they have assured her of help.



Mulgram UP member Bobita Khatun (holding basket) wants to sustain her family working as a day labourer besides serving the people of her locality in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ukraine crisis

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situation, reports UNB.

Moscow sought to portray the troop movements it announced yesterday as proof that Western talk of war had been both false and hysterical.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, on the latest Western diplomatic mission to defuse the crisis, began talks with President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin.

A medieval

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informed everyone that shots were fired and stretchers must be taken out. Around 40 stretchers were brought out.

When I returned to the area, the medical college hospital looked like a medieval battlefield.

Tarkbagish, Khairat Hossain and Anwara Begum came out of the assembly first.

Meanwhile, Akram Khan asked Abul Kalam Shamsuddin how much he gets paid as an MLA. Kalam said he get paid 250 rupees.

Akram them said said, "I will increase your salary by 300 rupees from today if you resign."

Akram Khan did this as he was angry at the firing on students and for opposing the Nurul Amin government.

MR Akhtar Mukul was a university student during the language movement.

Source: This is an abridged version of MR Akhtar Mukul's interview published in Bhasha Andolon Prasanga: Katipay Dalil (Ed. Badruddin Umar, Bangla Academy, 1995.)

Translated by Shamsuddoza Sajen

Political parties have time

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The Business Standard, were present at the meeting.

The committee earlier held talks in three phases with civil society members, election experts, media personalities and eminent citizens to hear their views on the formation of the EC.

The six-member search

committee was formed on February 5. It asked 39 registered political parties the following day to submit their nominations for the EC posts. Out of the 39 parties, 24 responded.

The Cabinet Division on Monday published the 322 names proposed by political parties, professional bodies

and individuals.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam yesterday said, "The committee will start holding formal meetings tomorrow and then will decide how to shorten the list."

The committee has 15 work days to finalise the names.

Why kazi's daughters

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for discriminating the daughters of registrars.

Secretaries to the law and public administration ministries are respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice SM Maniruzzaaman issued the rule following a writ

petition filed by six rights organisations including Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and Ain O Salish Kendra.

The organisations mentioned in the petition that the provision in the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Rules, 2009, is discriminatory and

contradictory to the constitution.

Lawyers ZI Khan Panna, Sara Hossain, Sharmin Akhter and Shahinuzzaman appeared for the petitioners while Deputy Attorney General Samarendranath Biswas represented the state during the virtual hearing of the petition yesterday.

8 more held for Khagaria polls

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Rab, Nasir is a company employee in the port city. Wearing maroon scarfs and green-red masks, the gang, led by Nasir, opened fire. After the incident, he went into hiding in Bandarban, the Rab official said.

Absar is the manager of an association in Dhaka. He went to Satkania before the election. He coordinated the armed men during the violence. After the incident, he returned to Dhaka, the

official said.

Morshed is a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver. Arrestee Jasim, a painter, carried a sack filled with cartridges. Mintu is a driver who carried the outsiders to Khagoria in a microbus, said the Rab official.

Rab said Korban is a security guard who abetted the criminals by providing them with lethal weapons and other firearms. Ismail is a land broker.

THREE STILL AT LARGE Three more criminals who were seen wielding

firearms in photos run by media outlets were still on the run. They are: Kamrul Alam Azad, Md Ezhar and Md Shakhawat.

With the eight arrestees, 10 suspects have been arrested.

Shots were fired when supporters of Awami League chairman candidate Aktar Hossain and independent candidate Jasim Uddin clashed in two polling centres during the UP elections, forcing the authorities to suspend voting there.

Consumers paying

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accountability and transparency."

About the increase in gas price, Hannan said a 50 percent price hike was proposed by all the profit-oriented organisations.

"They are already

benefitting after the matching of CNG price and with the price of purchased LNG [Liquefied Natural Gas] from the spot market. They still have proposed a 117 percent price hike."

Prof Badrul Imam said

the price hike would not let the power, gas and water prices remain at a tolerable level for most people.

"Bangladesh is a gas-rich country. Instead of exploring gas, they are purchasing LNG which is not acceptable," he added.