

Upholding the National Poet's legacy

In conversation with Nazrul Sangeet exponents Khairul Anam Shakil and Masuda Anam Kalpona

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SHARMIN JOYA

A two-day festival, titled "Nazrul Utsav 2022", was held at the capital's Gulshan Society Lake Park recently. Organised by Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, Arunaranjani, and Gulshan Society, it aimed to celebrate the work and philosophy of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Nazrul Sangeet exponents Khairul Anam Shakil, General Secretary, Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, convener of the festival and Masuda Anam Kalpona shared their plans of preserving the work of Nazrul. They intend to preserve the heritage of Nazrul and promote wider awareness of the depth of his work. "We also want to continue this festival annually, not only in Dhaka, but all over the country," adds Shakil. "We intend to inspire the younger generation of artistes to carry forward the legacy of Nazrul. We are trying to uphold the philosophy of the great poet, which he documented through his work." Artistes from both the Bengalis participated in the festival. Apart from the music, an exhibition on Nazrul's life was also organised. An audio anthology of 125 Nazrul songs performed in strict accordance with authentic lyrics and compositions by seasoned veterans and emerging artistes from Bangladesh and West Bengal was released at the festival. In addition, an online archive that will ultimately include 2,000 to 2,200 songs by Nazrul in authentic form was launched, which is available free of cost.

The archive includes all background information of making the songs, primarily collected from newspapers published before 1942. Shakil shares that Nazrul Sangstha has a team that is working on a project that will explain the context of the poet's works. "Nazrul's writings convey multi-dimensional messages, however, explaining the proper context will help people to refrain from misinterpreting his thoughts," he explains. Both Shakil and Kalpona are grateful to the late Dr Rafiqul Islam, one of the most distinguished researchers of Kazi Nazrul Islam, for his immense support and ensuring the



PHOTO: COURTESY

authenticity of the works they are preserving. Nazrul Sangstha is supported by researchers, who have been investigating Nazrul for many years, from Bangladesh and India. "We can sense the change already, as students from several divisions call us and say that they have been following the original tunes of Nazrul Geeti," says Kalpona. "This makes us happy and proud." The Nazrul Sangstha aims to arrange workshops four to six times a year. "Our workshops connect the students from all over the country, and also overseas," she explains. A panel of around 30 teachers, including noted artistes Salahuddin Ahmed, Yaqub Ali Khan, Nasima Shaheen Fancy, Sharmin Shathi Moyna, Mahmudul Hasan, Bijon Mistri, Rezaul Karim, and a group of young aspiring artistes conduct these workshops. "We provide certificates to the students, and our technical team is working hard to improve our virtual activities," adds Kalpona. Shakil sees a ray of hope, as this initiative will also increase cultural activities. "The young generation

needs to understand the philosophy of our National poet, it will certainly enlighten them and inspire them to raise their voice against oppression and help to come out from the compromising zone, they are in," he shares. Both the artistes conveyed their gratitude to Syed Ahsan Habib from Gulshan Society, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Gulshan Society, and the community police for traffic management during the festival.

"Above all, their around-the-clock supervision and coordination made the event a huge success. I would also like to thank BLUES Communication management, Ashfaq Swapan, for his creative and graphical works for the entire event including the emblem, main stage, backdrop, brochure, standees, Maasranga, our media partner, and last but not the least, HSBC in particular and all the other twelve sponsors without whom we could not have turned our dream into a reality."

'Thank God I didn't quit'



Yami Gautam, following many hit movies including the recent 'A Thursday', is firmly established in Bollywood. However, the actress told the media that she was thinking of quitting the film industry at one point. "I honestly thought that I would go back to Himanchal and start farming," said Yami to Indian Media. "This is a very uncertain industry, where you might not get your due even if you're talented." Yami further said that if it wasn't for movies like "Bala", she would have left a long time ago.

Denzel Washington on Will Smith: 'DEVIL GOT A HOLD OF HIM'

Oscar winner Denzel Washington recently appeared with author and pastor T.D. Jakes where the conversation soon turned to Will Smith's infamous slap.

"There's a saying: When the devil ignores you, then you know you're doing something wrong. The devil goes, 'Oh, no, leave him alone. He's my favorite,'" said the actor. "Conversely, when the devil comes at you, maybe it's because you're trying to do something right. And for whatever reason, the devil got a hold of that circumstance that night."



COUNTRYWIDE



Rainwater harvesting tanks have been set up at homesteads of the people living in the coastal areas, thanks to DPHE. The tanks are likely to come as a respite for the people who suffer from acute freshwater crisis in summer. PHOTO: STAR

Cry for freshwater gets louder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The crisis of safe drinking water has turned acute in south-western part of the country in the onset of summer causing untold sufferings. Both surface and underground water sources have become sparse in the area.

Bagerhat's Mongla, Rampal, Sharankhola, Morrelganj, Kachua and Chitalmari upazilas are the worst affected areas.

"All of the ponds in our area have dried up. Some have a little water which is not even suitable for bathing. We can hardly manage fresh water for cooking and drinking," said Kabir Molla, a resident of Kalmibuniya village in Kachua upazila.

"We cannot use water of nearby canals or rivers due to salinity. Very often, we become compelled to bathe in salt water. It causes skin disease," said Majid Sheikh, a resident of Chanderkhola village in

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has installed over 10,000 rainwater harvesting tanks in the affected upazilas in the last five years. Each tank has a capacity to contain 3,000 litres of water.

the same upazila.

"Even we don't get water from deep tube well. People have to buy a jar of 20-litre fresh water at Tk 35," he added.

It is a double blow for the villagers," said Ruhul Sheikh of Kalmibuniya area in Kachua.

Amid such a situation, the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has so far installed over ten thousand

rainwater harvesting tanks in the affected upazilas in the last five years.

Each of the tanks has a capacity to contain 3,000 litres of water, said DPHE officials.

"The tanks have proven to be very helpful for us. We will be able to preserve rainwater for three to four months. It will save our money bringing an end to freshwater crisis," Bappi Devnath, a resident of Raripara union in Kachua upazila.

"But these are not sufficient in comparison to the demand. So, we demand more tanks be installed at every doorstep," said Asis Das Kalu, a resident of Sree Rampur village in Kachua.

Contacted, Bagerhat's DPHE Executive Engineer Joyanta Mollick said the government will continue distributing the tanks.

"We have the plan to install the tanks at every homestead gradually," he said.

TIB warns of a surveillance-based state

FROM PAGE 16 countries, or defamation, TIB said in its comments on the regulation.

An intermediary must remove the content promptly, but in any event within 72 hours. Fundamentally, this requirement raises several concerns, it said.

"We have seen interpretation of the abovementioned grounds made arbitrarily to suit motivated objectives over the years," it also said.

Under Section 57 of the Information and Communication

Technology Act, 2006 and the Digital Security Act, 2018, thousands of arrests were made over a decade for expressions on social media, it further said.

Clause 7.03 of the draft law says upon receiving a court order or instructions from the BTRC, messaging service operator is required to track the originator of a message and disclose information about him or her to the authorities.

Effectively, this provision requires every message, photo, video and other communications sent over a messaging service to be

"fingerprinted", it said.

It added that most messaging services now use end-to-end encryption, which means that this clause will require the services to break those encryptions, violating the legitimate expectation of citizens regarding the privacy of their correspondence and other means of communication.

Ittekkharuzzaman said while formulating the regulation, the government has to consider that people's fundamental rights, especially freedom of speech and freedom

of expression, are not put at risk in the name of controlling digital, social media and OTT platforms.

The move's main aim should be controlling harmful elements or contents, the TIB recommended.

Ittekkharuzzaman urged the government to analyse good practices in different countries and take lessons from those while launching the mechanism in the country.

It is essential to bring significant changes to the draft based on such good practices, he added.

Boro on 700 hectares submerged

FROM PAGE 16 farmer of Golabari village in the Tangur Haor area.

As the Nazarkhali levee was not properly reconstructed, it posed a serious threat to all the harvest of two unions in the upazila, said Saidur Rahman, former chairman of Bangshikunda Dakshin union parishad in Madhyannagar upazila.

Najarkhali levee was not in the scheme but on request of the farmers, a few closures were reconstructed, said Md Shamsuddoha, executive engineer of BWDB in Sunamganj and general secretary for Kabita district committee.

However, the sudden

flash flood devastated it all and it could not be protected, he said.

"We are now struggling to protect the Muktarhola levee to protect the harvest," Rahman said.

Meanwhile, 500 hectares of boro paddy field outside the crop protection dam in different haor areas of Khaliyari upazila in Netrokona are submerged, said Md Jasim Uddin, Khaliyari upazila agriculture officer.

Boro paddy fields in Kirtankhola, Chunai, Monijaan, Hemnagar, Nayakhal and Bagani haors are affected due to the onrush of hilly waters from March 30.

Hilly waters through

Jadukata and Surma rivers in Sunamganj flooded the Dhanu river in Khaliyari, which caused the flash flood.

The water level has risen to six feet in the last four days and the situation was unchanged as of yesterday, Jasim Uddin said.

If the water level in Dhanu river crosses its danger point for the onrush of hilly waters, it will bring a disastrous effect for thousands of haor farmers in different areas of the district, he added.

The boro fields in several areas of Kishoreganj's Itna upazila are also affected due to the onrush of hilly waters in the last couple of days.

Contacted, Md Saiful Alam, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said the officials are visiting the affected areas and the actual figure is yet to be prepared.

About 3.8 crore tonnes of rice were produced in fiscal 2020-21 with the dry season Boro variety making up 53 percent of the total yield, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This season, the boro rice crop was planted on about 49.1 lakh hectares, up from 47.9 lakh hectares in the previous season.

The DAE has targeted acreage of 48.7 lakh hectares this boro season.

SC blasts govt for not rehabilitating

FROM PAGE 16 people's constitutional right to their properties, the apex court said yesterday.

Following a government's prayer, the SC fixed next Sunday for further hearing of the leave to appeal petition.

Acting on the instruction of the Dhaka district administration, the

police in 2010 beat Maleka, her sons and daughter and evicted them from the land illegally, Awsafur Rahman, the writ petitioner's lawyer, told The Daily Star.

Haq's wife and children later came to know that the land was acquired in favour of the BCS Administration Multiple Welfare Cooperative Society as

vested property.

In 2012, the state filed a petition with the Appellate Division challenging the HC verdict. The apex court then issued a status quo order on the land's possession.

It is now under the possession of the BCS society near Ad-Deen Hospital at Moghbazar

and Maleka, her sons and daughter are living nearby.

The other members of the SC bench are: Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice M Enayetur Rahim.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Additional Attorney General Mohammad Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury appeared for the government.