

CHITRANGADA

A story of women's individuality

Chitrangada to stage on Asia's largest theatre festival on February



Rabindranath's *Chitrangada* has mostly been adapted in dance-drama form, but theatre troupe Swapnadal was adamant on narrating the mythological princess of the Kingdom of Manipur into a modern day *jatrapala* styled drama for the audiences. Their unique adaptation of *Chitrangada* caught the eyes of Asia's largest theatre festival, as they are all set to perform at 23rd edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav, Delhi on February.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

"Our play, *Chitrangada*, is not merely a simple tale of love; it stands as a unique narrative of women's empowerment and individuality. Rabindranath Tagore's compelling story continues to resonate with audiences, touching the hearts of all who experience its production. Tagore penned the narrative in two distinct formats – one as a dance-drama and the other as a poetry drama. The dance-drama, enriched with soul-stirring songs, has gained widespread popularity worldwide. However, Swapnadal holds the distinction of being the first troupe to consistently organise the poetry-drama," said Swapnadal's director, Zahid Repon.

In 2011, On the occasion of Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birthday, *Chitrangada* received a government grant which continues to mesmerise the audience.

This isn't the first time that Swapnadal's play will be shown at the Bharat Rang Mahotsav. Earlier, their drama *Tringsho Shatabdi* was also showcased at the

festival in 2015. Zahid Repon and his team are super excited on showcasing *Chitrangada* for the Indian audience.

"We are thrilled that our play will be featured at Asia's largest festival. The festival invites numerous international troupes from around the world, selecting them based on video submissions. Out of nearly 300 submissions, only 11 international troupes, including *Chitrangada*, have been chosen. We are really happy that we will be performing in front of global audience," added Repon.

Rabindranath Tagore penned the poetry-drama of *Chitrangada* at the young age of 31, while the dance-drama version was written when he was 75 years old.

"As a director, I wanted to give the production a touch of modern day *jatrapala* by placing the stage in the middle of the audience so that the audience can feel like they are part of the drama. We also had live music so that audience get completely entranced within the drama. We have withdrawn the essence of European drama, which is what caught the attention of the festival organisers," said the director.

Chitrangada narrates the tale of a woman whose father raised her as a man, imparting skills of warfare.

However, upon encountering Arjun, her suppressed feminine desires were awakened, leading her to be drawn towards him. Unfortunately, Arjun rejected her advances, finding her lacking in the idealised standards of beauty.

Seeking transformation, she prayed to the goddess to become a beautiful woman.

Yet, Chitrangada soon found herself in a quandary, questioning whether Arjun was attracted to her newfound beauty or her true personality. In this drama, Rabindranath skillfully explores the intricacies of women's dignity and the complexities of personal identity.

"In the old format, Chitrangada was portrayed through one artiste but here we used two Chitrangadas to showcase the struggles and dilemmas of her character. Audience could visually witness the internal conflict of Chitrangada as the actors battled with the idea of physical beauty and spirituality," added Repon.

Apart from Delhi, the festival will be presented in 13 other cities. Our performance is scheduled for Bhubaneswar, Odisha, on February 10, and at the National School of Drama, New Delhi, on February 12. Furthermore, our 103rd production of *Chitrangada* will be showcased on December 25 at Shilpakala Academy.



Anthology film 'Jibon Jua' unveils trio of compelling stories

The anthology film *Jibon Jua* promises to captivate audiences with three compelling stories directed by distinct filmmakers. With a stellar cast, this cinematic endeavour offers an eclectic mix of narratives and performances.

The first story directed by Abul Khayer Chand titled *Khoyab*, brings together the on-screen pair of Ador Azad and Eamin Haque Bobby.

Fazlur Rahman Babu and Samia Othoi play crucial roles in the second film, *Film Kanon*, directed by Ashutosh Sujan.

The final story, *Priyo Prakton*, starring Prarthana Fardin Dighi and Sudip Biswas Deep, is directed by Iftakhar Ahmed Oshin.

Guru-disciple duo to release new song next year



Popular musician Imran who considers Habib Wahid his musical guru, acquired extensive knowledge from Habib since the start of his career. Imran has showcased his musical prowess over the past decade,

delivering numerous popular songs.

Imran has confirmed composing a song titled *Bokamon*, penned by Rajat Ghosh and dedicated to his guru. Directed by Saikat Reza, the music video is scheduled for release under the Rangon Music banner at the beginning of the new year.

In a brief conversation with The Daily Star, Imran highlighted the importance of the song expressing his joy in creating music for Habib *bhai*. He invested significant time in the project and hopes that the audience will appreciate the song.

COUNTRYWIDE

Primary schools see huge dropouts

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Several government primary schools situated in the Teesta river basin areas in Dimla upazila are witnessing an increase in their dropout rate due to relocation of those institution far from the actual place.

However, academic activities in at least three government primary schools, devoured by the flood in the past, have been badly hindered as a good number of students are compelled to left schooling due to the situation.

Besides, as all those institutions are yet to get new academic buildings, teachers and students are struggling to continue their educational and cocurricular activities in makeshift schoolhouses, either on the right embankment of the Teesta river or other temporary places.

During a recent visit to those schools–Purbo Satunama Aminpara primary school, Sotokhata Teestar Char Shishu Kalyan primary school and Kisamat Satnai primary school–this correspondent saw how teachers and local residents are struggling to run those institutions amid geographical adversity, poverty and increased rate of dropout.

Headmaster of Purbo Satunama Aminpara Government Primary School Khalilur Rahman said after the school was devoured by the flood in 2020, they build a makeshift schoolhouse on the right embankment of the Teesta river.

Though a total of 105 students are enrolled in the institution, the average attendance of students is only 20 to 25.

Many of them are reluctant to attend their classes as the actual catchment area of the school is about three kilometres far from the present location, the headmaster said.

Head Teacher Kisamat Satnai Government Primary School Merina Akhtar said the school, established in 2007, was devoured by the Teesta river thrice.

"We somehow managed a space on the neighbouring Doholpara School and College ground and built a tin-shed schoolhouse there to continue the kids' study, but recently the concerned authorities directed us to vacate the place," Merina added.

Now attendance of students has drastically fall due to frequent shifting of the institution, she said.

While visiting Sotokhata Teestar Char Shishu Kallayan Government Primary School, which is conducting its activities about a kilometre from its previous location, this correspondent saw only nine out of a total of 89 students were attending their classes.

Contacted, Dimla Upazila Assistant Education Officer Md Sazzaduzzaman said as per directives of the primary education directorate in order to build a school the land must be arranged, either purchased or donated, locally.

Martian material

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programmes have explored the use of dehydrating gypsum to form water vapour and a waste material known as anhydrite.

In the research, scientists developed a new method for extracting water from gypsum on Mars in which the waste product anhydrite could be further processed to sustain and support the future colonisation of the planet.

The team, including experts from the University of Sussex in the UK, processed the anhydrite into nanobelts and demonstrated these could provide clean energy and sustainable electronics.

"Unexpectedly, anhydrite nanobelts have remarkable electronic properties," with "semiconducting and insulating behaviours," the study noted.

"Our study takes what was considered waste, essentially lumps of rock, and turns it into transformative nanomaterials for a range of applications from creating clean hydrogen fuel to developing an electronic device similar to a transistor, to creating an additive to textiles to increase their robustness," study lead author Conor Boland said in a statement.

At every step of the process, researchers also showed that the water used could be continuously collected and recycled.

"We are optimistic about the feasibility of this process on Mars, as it requires only naturally occurring materials – everything we used could, in theory, be replicated on the red planet. Arguably this is the most important goal in making the Martian colony sustainable from the outset," Dr Boland said.

Tigers break the duck in New Zealand

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terms of balls in hand.

Even though the victory couldn't save Bangladesh from losing their sixth straight ODI series against the Black Caps in New Zealand, it ended a losing streak that began in 2007.

The Tigers had earlier ended their winless run in New Zealand in Tests last year with a remarkable win in the Mount Maunganui Test.

In that Test, it was pacer Ebadot Hossain's six-wicket haul in the second innings that pivoted the

match in the Tigers' favour.

Yesterday, it was the Under-19 World Cup winning pace duo of Sakib and Shoriful who set the tone at the start after skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto won an important toss and asked the hosts to bat first.

In their opening burst, Sakib and Shoriful tested the host batters with movement in the air and off the pitch.

Sakib reaped rewards initially, dismissing Rachin Ravindra (eight) and Henry Nicholls (one) in the first Powerplay.

From 22-2 in 7.2 overs, Young and Latham took New Zealand's score beyond 50.

But their resistance was brought to an end by Shoriful, who rattled Latham's stumps and got Young caught at gully in consecutive overs to reduce the hosts to 61-4.

After that, there was a procession of wickets with both Shoriful and Sakib getting their third and Soumya helping himself to a career-best 31-8.

Mustafizur Rahman bowled William O'Rourke to end New Zealand's

misery.

Bangladesh never looked under pressure chasing the meagre target as the only real hiccup came in the fifth over when Soumya had to leave the field retired hurt after a bug flew into his eyes.

Skipper Shanto hit an unbeaten 51 off 42 balls while Anamul Haque made a handy 37 off 33 balls to complete a dominant victory.

The two teams will next play a three-match Twenty20 series, which will begin on 27 December in Napier.

Three buses torched in 90 minutes

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In Gulistan, a bus of Rajanigandha Paribahan was set on fire beside Gulistan toll plaza around 9:15pm.

Two fire engines of Siddique Bazar Fire Station rushed to the spot and doused the blaze around 9:27pm, said Rashid Bin Khaled, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence control room.

There were no reports of casualties in the fires.

After a break of 10 days, the BNP and like-minded

parties are again going to enforce a day-long road, rail, and waterway blockade across the country today to press home their demand for an inclusive election under a neutral interim government, reports UNB.

It will be the 12th round of the blockade programme of the opposition parties since October 31, and the first one since the announcement of their non-cooperation movement against the government on December 20.

JP contesting polls for sake

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Quader, who had been saying for the last one-and-a-half-year that the incumbent Election Commission would not be able to hold free and fair polls, yesterday said the JP has confidence in the EC for now.

Regarding the JP's seat-sharing with the AL, Quader said seats were not shared as part of an understanding with the ruling party. Rather, this was agreed upon to create a congenial atmosphere for a fair election, he added.

"We didn't ask [the

Awami League] to form an alliance. We demanded holding the national election in a free and fair manner."

The AL has left 26 seats for the JP and six for the 14-party alliance partners. The ruling party has not fielded any candidates in those 32 constituencies.

Quader said all the JP nominees will have to win the polls, contesting against the independents.

He said the JP placed two demands before the AL – keeping the administration neutral and keeping the

election free from the influence of black money and muscle power.

"They [Awami League] have withdrawn their candidates from some seats. It does not mean that we have become a part of the grand alliance or that we have reached an understanding on sharing seats."

The JP chairman said the current political situation in the country is "quite abnormal".

"Although many are saying that everything is normal, the country is now going through a critical

time."

He said the JP in parliament always talked about corruption and irregularities by the AL government, and people have accepted the JP's politics.

Earlier in the day, Quader opened his electioneering by offering prayers at a local shrine and the graves of his parents and elder brother, HM Ershad, also the JP founding chairman, in Rangpur city.

The electioneering for the national polls began on December 18.



Students of Purbo Satunama Aminpara Government Primary School in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila have to walk kilometres on the sandy shoal to attend classes.

PHOTO: STAR