

Dhaka Day by Day

Whatever Happened to Our Films?

by Tulip Ibrahim

The educated class of the society no longer goes to the cinema houses for entertainment. The audience today comprises of rickshaw pullers day-labourers, and a few lower middle class families. Some more city toots and other un-identified law breakers make up the lot.

A few years back all classes of people, educated and uneducated, occasionally enjoyed going to the cinema halls. But now anyone with a "better sense" will shrink back at the idea of going to the movie theatres.

Bangladesh is still lagging far behind in various fields such as industry, agriculture, family planning, education, health etc. Cinema as an effective mass media can play its role in the balanced holistic development of the society, and the eradication of gender inequality.

Developed nations use cinema for entertainment purposes only. In developing countries it can be an instrument for over-all progress. Cinema can be considered as an art-medium. But in Bangladesh film making is nothing but a trade. A film trader wants to recover money invested in a particular film overnight and make huge profit out of it. The profit lies in the display of female body, sex appeal, violence etc. The themes in the films are not worth drawing the attention of the intellectual class.

The tendency of our film makers to imitate Hindi films is a draw-back to development of our own social or cultural outlook. The sizzling belly dancers, half-rape scenes, crime and violence in the Bengali films are echoes of the Hindi films.

No wonder the society looks upon people in the film line. But why should that be! The film industry could have been an institution where the art of acting could attain its maximum success — the film being the 'liveliest' art form.

Again, the image of women in the films is seriously impaired by stereotypes which are far removed from reality and impossible for an ordinary woman to own. The professional woman is generally depicted as a caricature, the 'modern' woman as a seductress and so on.

Our present-day cinema fails to track the social and cultural changes. Let a film make box office hit! The forthcoming films will invariably be following the same themes and, if possible, the same castings.

Fresh new faces would be welcome on the cinema screens. If absorbing stories and better characterisations were offered, then skilled and educated young people would perhaps be attracted to acting in films.

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Winners of US OP-1 brought out a procession in the city on Monday in protest against alleged suspension of issuance of visas. Story on Page -1.

More fund for Nazrul Institute assured

86 p.c. of development budget dependent on aid : Saifur

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman Monday said to survive as a self-reliant nation we must "keep our heads high" as exhorted by the national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, reports BSS.

He said a nation depending on others could not safeguard its sovereignty and live with dignity and honour.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of Nazrul's 100th birth anniversary lecture series and observance of his 15th death anniversary.

Organised by Nazrul Institute the three-day programme began at the National Museum Children's Auditorium in Dhaka. The programme includes lectures, discussions on the life and activities of Nazrul and cultural functions.

Presided over by Prof Anisuzzaman the inaugural session was also addressed by the Director General of Bangla Academy Prof M Haroon-ur-Rashid, Additional Secretary In-charge of Cultural Affairs Islamuddin Malik and the Executive Director of Nazrul Institute Prof Maniruzzaman.

The Minister said to make the country self-reliant the nation shall have to sacrifice and have patience. Referring to salaries of the government employees the Finance Minister said during 1984-85 the government had to spend Taka 600 crore as pay and allowances for the employees which is Taka 2500 crore now. He said the amount would rise to Taka 3,500 crore from July next year, whereas the Development Budget for the whole nation was Taka 7,500 crore.

He said 86 per cent of the Development Budget was not dependent on foreign aid which was 66 per cent before the autocratic rule of Ershad. He said it was self contradictory to increase dependence on foreign aid and on the other hand to speak of self reliance. He said the nation must come out of this situation through hard work and giving up short lived luxury.

Speaking on the present world situation the Finance Minister said East-West and North-South dialogue had lost its effectiveness and the world had become aid fatigue. He said we shall have to forget many conventional wisdom and reorient our thinking to lead the nation towards progress and prosperity keeping pace with the changing world.

Referring to the financial problem for development of Nazrul Institute, the minister assured allocation of more funds through ADP to meet the need.

Referring to the struggle of Nazrul against oppression and deprivation of the common people he said if we want to build an exploitation free welfare country as dreamt by Nazrul and Rabindranath Tagore there was no alternative to self-reliance only.

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What's on today...

WAPDA workers rally

Bangladesh Power Workers Union today (Tuesday) holds a rally at the WAPDA building premises at 10 am to press home its five-point demand including cancellation of the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), fixation of minimum pay scale at Taka 1400, office timing from 7.30 am to 2 pm, provision of festival bonus.

Bappi Shahriar Literacy Award

Bappi Shahriar Juvenile Literacy Award '91 will be offered to writer Motinul Ahsan Saber for his book 'Liliputera Baro Hobe' at a function at the Children's Auditorium of the National Museum in the city today (Tuesday) at 5 pm. Poetess Begum Sufia Kamal will attend the function as the chief guest. Bappi Shahriar Smriti Committee will deliver the award.

Rotary Club of Dhaka

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held today (Tuesday) at 5 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

... and tomorrow

Seminar of food preservation

A seminar on radiation processing and preservation of food will be held at the Atomic Energy Centre tomorrow (Wednesday) at 10 am. The Institute of Food and Radiation Biology (IFRB) of the Atomic Energy Centre has organised the seminar.

Dr G G Giddings, an international atomic energy agency expert on radiation processing will be the main speaker on the occasion.

Present status of the use of ionizing radiation in the preservation of food stuff, its prospects, problems etc will be highlighted in the seminar.

JU employees oppose pay-scale Call to try killers of JCD leader

J U Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Jahangirnagar University unit, observed the second death anniversary of Habibur Rahman Kabir, Prof. Ahmed said, "communalism is a threat to democracy and we all have to fight it."

JCD brought out a silent procession on the campus Monday morning to pay tribute to late Kabir.

Kabir was killed following an attack by the Islamic Chhatra Shibir on August 15 of 1988 on the JU campus.

Since the killing of Kabir, all the student organisations have been restricting political activities of Chhatra Shibir on the campus.

A special prayer was also offered for peace of the departed soul of Kabir at a milad mahfil.

Meanwhile, the third and fourth grade employees of Jahangirnagar University held a meeting in the campus in protest against the new pay-scale announced by the government.

Imams urged to help primary healthcare

By Staff Correspondent

The Imam training course of Islamic Medical Mission concluded at Chittagong Hijri Camp Sunday.

Certificates were awarded to the successful imams after an assessment examination. The function was attended by State Minister Abdullah Al Noman as chief guest, Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Advocate Mir Nasiruddin and BNP leader Dr A FM Yusuf attended as special guests.

The Mayor appealed to the imams to play a vital role in nation building activities in their own environment. Dr Yusuf stressed on the role of imams in primary health care.

State Minister Noman congratulated National Professor Dr N Islam for founding Islamic Medical Mission and including imams in Primary health care activities. Apart from health care, preservation of environment should be a responsibility of the imams.

We must develop our forest and fish resources, which can be done with much lesser cost than the establishment of an industry, he said.

In his presidential address National Professor Dr Islam said that the imams are underutilised manpower. It is not that they do not wish to work but that they do not get any guidance or opportunity.

Experience gained by the mission through this training programme he said, clearly indicates how greatly the imams can contribute towards primary health care on a self-financing basis.

He said the mosques are now being utilised by many trained imams in between prayers for health care delivery. In fact, other religious leaders and primary school teachers are also doing similar job after training by IMM in their places of work.

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Communalism a threat to democracy: JU VC

Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed urged all quarters to resist communalism and violence, reports BSS.

Speaking at the university campus in Sunday on the inauguration ceremony of 'Kabir, Toron' in memory of late student leader Habibur Rahman Kabir, Prof. Ahmed said, "communalism is a threat to democracy and we all have to fight it."

Later, the Vice-Chancellor also inaugurated the 'Kabir soronic', which will connect three-halls with the other parts of the university.

Habibur Rahman Kabir, a student of Salam Barkat hall and a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader was injured in a bloody clash with Islamic Chhatra Shibir on August 15, 1988 and died on August 26, 1989.

meanwhile the JCD university unit Monday brought out a silent procession in the University campus, wearing black badges to mourn the death of late Kabir. The Salam Barkat Hall Students Union also held a Milad-Mahfil at the campus in the day.

Dhaka-Delhi railway meet begins

A three-day inter-governmental railway meeting between Bangladesh and India began at the railway rest house in Dhaka Monday, reports BSS.

According to a Bangladesh railway press release this is the highest level inter-governmental traffic meeting which sits once in a year in the capital city of the two countries alternately.

GV Subrahmanyam, Adviser Finance, Indian Railway Board, is leading the Indian team while M Fazlul Haq, Additional Secretary, Railway Division, Ministry of Communications is heading the Bangladesh side.

The meeting will discuss various aspects of railway traffic inter-changes, wagon hire-charges and other factors relating to traffic movement between the two countries and recommend ways to overcome lapses, if any, the press release said.

Mustafiz to attend NAM meet Sept 2

Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman, will leave for Accra on August 31 to attend the conference of Foreign Minister of Non-Aligned countries, reports UNB.

Mustafiz will lead a three-member delegation to the NAM ministerial conference beginning September 2 in the capital of Ghana.

Officials said the delegation would include Director General (IO) at the Foreign Ministry Ruhul Ameen.

The six-day conference will assess recent developments in the international situation towards attaining global peace and security, particularly in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) member countries.

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Weather

Temperature likely to rise

By Staff Correspondent

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind with a few likely to occur at many places over Khulna and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions, according to weather forecast valid still 6 pm on Thursday.

Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius over the country.

Meanwhile, rain or thundershower occurred at most places over the country on Monday. The chief amount of rainfall recorded were Dhaka 5 cm, Comilla, Feni and Patuakhali 2 cm each. Day temperature remained nearly unchanged over the country. The highest temperature of 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded in Jessore.

Outlook for subsequent two days : Little change. Extended outlook for another five days: Rainfall activities likely to increase.

The temperature and humidity of some cities on Monday were:

| Cities / Towns | Temperature in Celsius | | Humidity | |
|----------------|------------------------|------|----------|------|
| | Max | Min | 9 am | 6 pm |
| Dhaka | 32 | 25.5 | 82 | 80 |
| Chittagong | 31.4 | 25.9 | 82 | 80 |
| Khulna | 32 | 26.5 | 86 | 100 |
| Rajshahi | 32.9 | 25 | 91 | 89 |
| Sylhet | 32 | 24.6 | 90 | 73 |
| Dinajpur | 32.5 | 26.6 | 81 | 90 |
| Barisal | 30.6 | 26.6 | 90 | 81 |

HERE and THERE

Hindu Buddhist Christian Parisad

Members of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Okkaye Parisad on Monday handed over a four-point memorandum to the authorities of Bangladesh Television which includes more broadcasting of their religious programmes.

Earlier they held a rally in front of National Press Club to press home their demands with William Gamage in the chair.

Nirmal Dey and Jagadis Mandal also addressed the rally.

Jatiya Tarun Sangha

Jatiya Tarun Sangha on Monday decided to strengthen its activities throughout the country.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Sangha at its central office with Aeting Chairman Golam Mostafa in the chair.

The meeting was addressed by among others Sheikh Sirajul Islam, Ataur Rahman and Khalitullah.

Peshajibi Parisad

Peshajibi Parisad (Society for Professionals) spokesman Dr. M A Karim on Monday said that the situation created over the implementation of Pay Commission Report as the professionals representatives were not included in the dialogue.

He demanded inclusion of professionals representatives in the discussion to resolve the issue immediately.

Jatiya Sramik League

Jatiya Sramik League on Monday expressed concern over the unilateral announcement of pay scale and its subsequent consequences.

In a statement by its President Rahmatullah and Acting Secretary Abdul Matin Master demanded to stop harassment and withdrawal of government's ultimatum to join duties.

The leaders also urged the employees to strengthen their movement.

CPB criticises anti-communist hysteria in USSR

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Monday criticised the current anti-communist hysteria in the Soviet Union and said the party is deeply worried over the developments in the country since August 19, reports BSS.

In a statement, Party general Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, said while the unconstitutional removal of Gorbachev from power can never be accepted, the banning and sealing off of the Communist Parties in different parts of the country and also in no way be supported.

The statement said the encouragement to anti-Communist activities at present, including harassment to Communists, can not be supported.

Manik criticised greater powers of federal government being now exercised by Boris Yeltsin as unconstitutional and not in conformity with democratic norms.

Bangladesh Buddhist Society formed in US

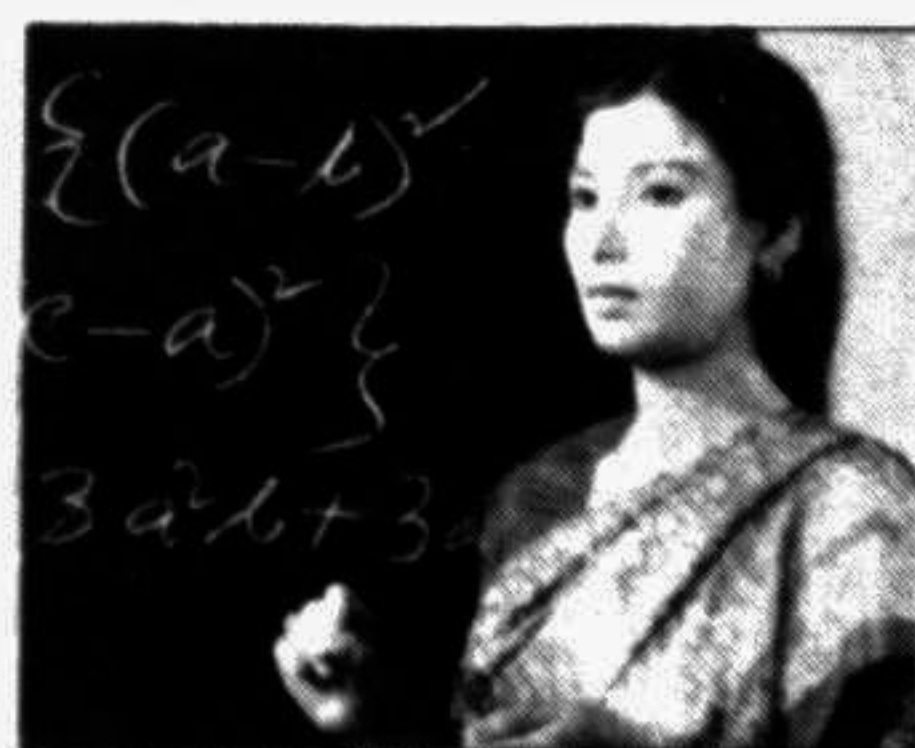
The members of Bangladeshi Buddhist Community living in New York held a general meeting and constituted an association 'Bangladesh Buddhist Society in America', to preserve their national heritage, culture and civilisation as well as build up a decent society, according to a message received in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Presided over by Ven Buddhapriya Bhikkhu, the meeting was attended by Ven Shmanatisha Bhikkhu from California as the chief guest.

At the outset of the meeting, one minute silence was observed seeking divine blessings for those who lost their lives in the recent devastating cyclone and tidal surge in Bangladesh.

A 21-member Ad-Hoc Committee was also formed on the occasion with Ven Buddhapriya Bhikkhu as President and Ashim Barua as General Secretary.

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