

Third National Rabindra Music Festival

Fresh Voices, Unconscious Style



The Third National Rabindra Music Festival, held in Dhaka, ran for three days between January 30 and February 1. The stage decor at the Shilpakala Academy was simple and soothing. Intermittently sitting at microphones, the sizable audience sat patiently through some painful singing, lightened by a number of laudable efforts and several truly pleasurable performances.

Though much of the country's Rabindrasangeet talent is to be found in the capital, familiarity sometimes breeds boredom. Singers from elsewhere bring fresh voices and an unconscious style with them. Among the many singers present at the festival, those young singers who travelled from Barisal, or Jamalpur, or several other towns, deserve a special hand for their enthusiasm and effort. Their singing may not have always been exceptional or even worth the trip, but a "national" festival should be just that.

The high points of the three-day programme were provided by young and old alike. In the recital portion, Prajna Laboni gave a lively reading of the poem 'Monerey aaf kaho je.' Her diction is clear, and if once or twice she

lapsed into affected tones, her wit and verve make it a pleasure to listen to her. Veteran Syed Hassan Imam's "Balaka" was strong and captivating, his modulations sophisticated.

Among the singers, Flora Ahmed, Ikhtiar Omar, and Habibuddin Ahmed were greatly appreciated for solid, pleasing performances. Mita Huq, as usual, charmed the ear with her sweet tones in "Aaj shobhar rangey rang mishate hobey." Mita's voice is unusual, and she sings with understanding, the basis of any mature presentation of Tagore songs. The other show-stopper was Moinuddin Nazir's folk-style "Bashonte ki shudhu" in his clear rich voice.

Salma Akbar sang a lively duet with her husband Sajed Akbar, and her solo "Dhoney joney achhi bhuley" deserves mention for a melodious voice and genuine effort.

Kishwar Kamal proved that hers is one of the most individual talents in the city. Her "Tumi aeto aalo jaalicho"



seemed to fill the auditorium with a different, somehow wistful, interpretation. A young British artist, Glen Armstrong, displayed an impeccable sense of tune and rhythm in his rendition of "Baahiro pathay bibangi hyaa."

Though better talent could be found in provincial towns, the festival's effort to promote and bring together artists of Tagore music is commendable. The audience was composed of a large variety of people, not an exclusive intellectual crowd, that kind of popular support is the lifeblood of any festival of this nature. Mixing young and promising talent with established veterans makes for a balanced and colourful programme, but some of the weaker performances should have been left alone. The festival cannot afford to lose the audience's support due to these weak links in an otherwise strong chain. Several prominent artists on the list failed to show up at all.

Dedicating the finale to all the martyrs of the country — from the 1952 Language Movement to the 1990 uprising — was a gesture the organizers of the festival can be proud of.

— S. Bari

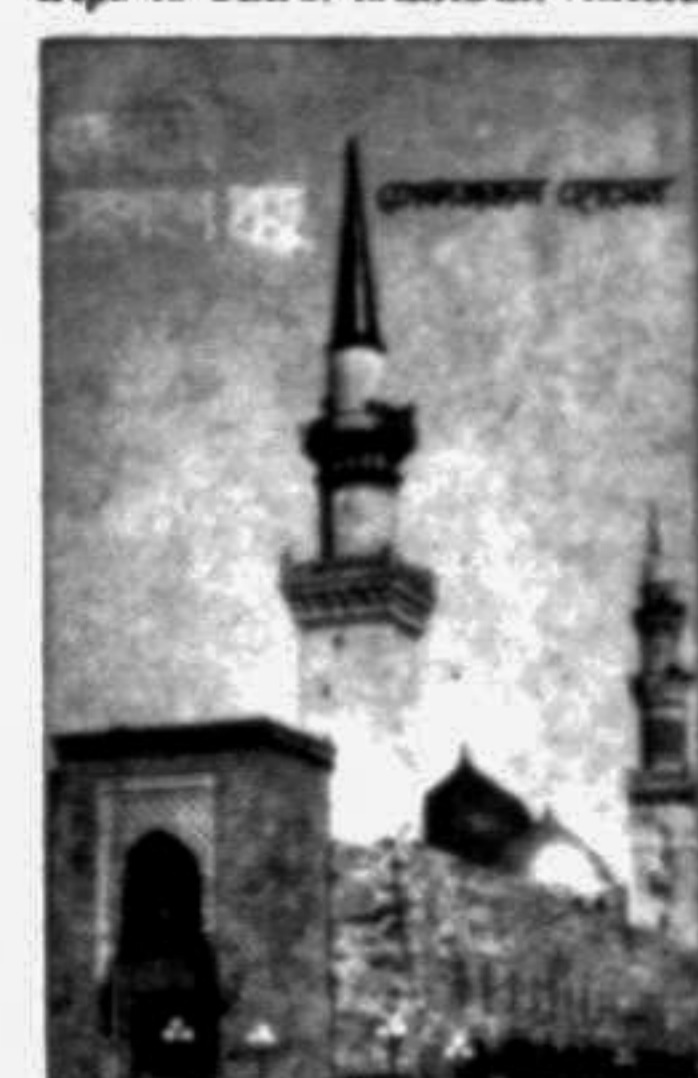
A DEVOTEE'S MIND

Tomari Sokashe Prabhu (Before Thee, Lord) by Tofazzal Hussain Published by Mitali Prokashani Distributor: Jatiya Sahitya Prokashani PP 124-Price: Taka sixty-five only.

Even a casual reader of this book should not take too long to discover that it is the work of one who is at the same time a devoted pilgrim, an enthusiastic traveller, a keen observer of places and people and, of course, an accomplished writer. Far from being a stay-at-home type, the author, Mr. Tofazzal Hussain, has an irrepressible urge — an itch, as they say, for going places. He has been abroad for nearly a couple of months in 1982 which has inevitably provoked this interesting book.

The book is divided into two parts — the first, appropriately titled 'Tomari Sokashe Prabhu', deals with his pilgrimage to Mecca in September 1982 and the second, 'The World Has Become Small', is an account of his impressions of the places he briefly visited in October the same year.

part is devoted to a short description of the ancient history of the country and sharia-based administrative system of the Saudi Kingdom. The second part of the book begins with the author's short trips to Cairo, Istanbul, Athens.



Cuts Put Manned Space Station Plans in Jeopardy

A movement is growing among American scientists in favour of unmanned spaceflights. Unmanned probes, they argue, provide a cheaper option, and can go where no man will ever go.

Probes like Ulysses can fly over the Sun's poles in an orbit that will long remain too expensive for manned spaceflight. The European probe Giotto was sent through Halley's comet on a mission far too dangerous to risk human life.

A manned presence in space is expensive because crews need a life support system, food and unlike remote sensors, cannot work 24 hours a day. Extra payload mass is taken up by devices to ensure crew safety.

It is claimed greater scientific return could be obtained by launching a large number of unmanned satellites instead of one manned space shuttle.

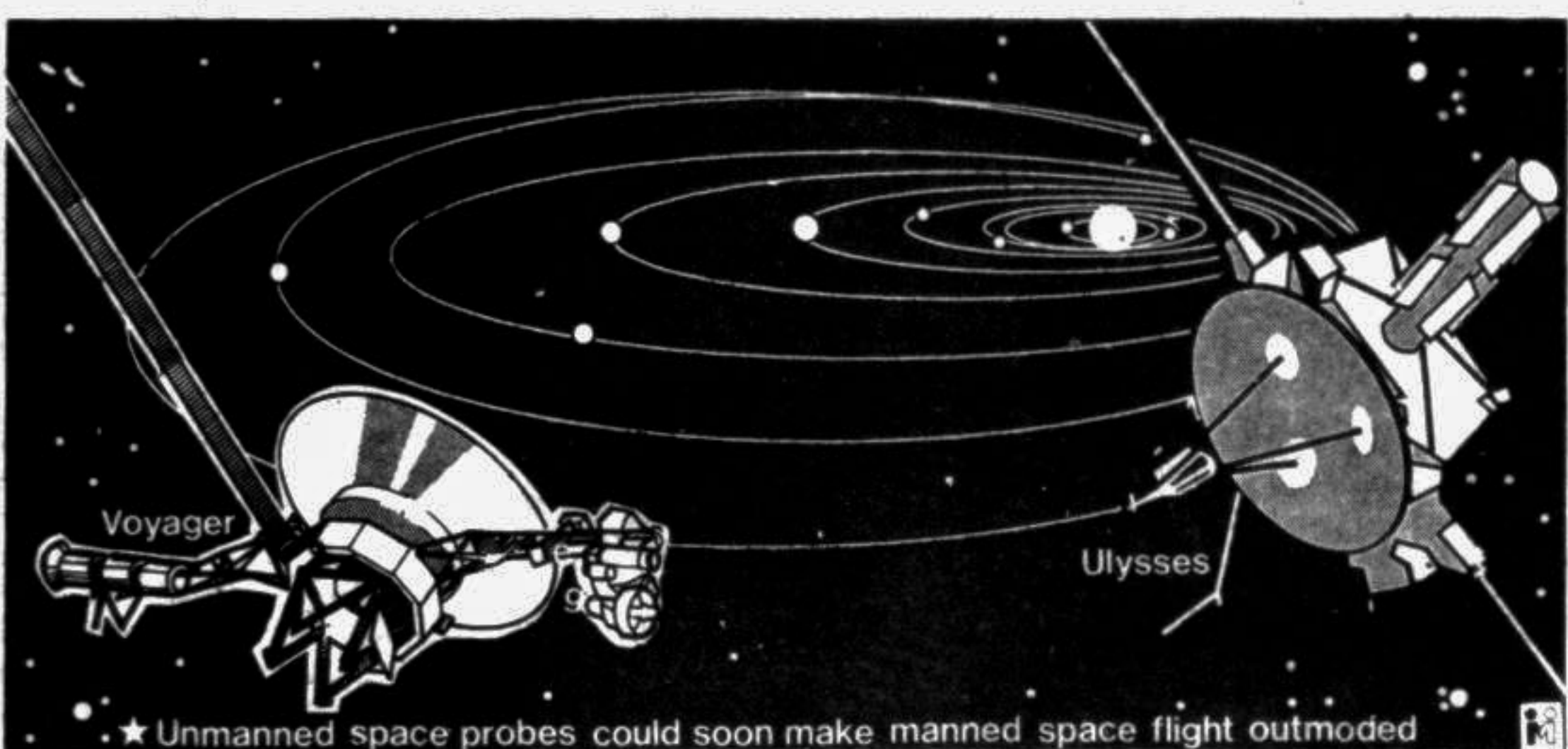
The argument is helped by the failure of the US Congress to approve the national Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) budget. The biggest cutbacks are in the manned spaceflight programme, with \$125 million chopped from the Space Shuttle and Operations programme alone.

The manned Moon and Mars landing missions have been abandoned altogether and further savings come from abandonment of unmanned Mars probes that would have preceded a manned landing.

These missions may be reinstated in later years. However, the space station budget is slashed by \$551 million, bringing it down to \$1.9 billion and forcing NASA to redesign.

Freedom Space Station is an international project involving Japan, Canada and the European Space Agency so there

US scientists are divided over whether manned space flights should continue. Some say unmanned probes are not only much cheaper. They can also go where man can never go. The debate has heated up by the decision by the US Congress to cut heavily the budget of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The cuts, report Gemini News Service, have major implications for the future of the Freedom Space Station and have led to the abandonment of plans to land a person on Mars. — By Geoffrey Hugh Lindop.



★ Unmanned space probes could soon make manned space flight outmoded

will be limits on how drastic the redesign will be. It may not be fully operational until the turn of the century — by which time the design will be 10 years out of date.

Congress has not approved the \$16 million funding for developing a space lifeboat for Freedom. Known as the Assured Crew Return Vehicle, it will be permanently docked to the station and provide a means of emergency evacuation.

NASA has two options. It could use some of its other funds to develop the space lifeboat or it could ensure a Union, Japan and Germany plan their own versions.

Despite the massive cutbacks, the manned space programme will still spend around \$6 billion in the year, leaving little cash for unmanned missions.

THE VIDEO SCENE

S.M. Mamoon

The news of the hour is definitely Gulf war and if you are interested to watch the real happenings, you better run to your nearest video library and ask for the video cassette: titled Gulf War (part 1 and 2). It's a five-hour cassette shown on the BBC TV. This documentary film shows the happenings of the first seven days of Gulf war, the power of Allied Forces, Saddam's arsenal, the planning of Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Well if you want to get away from the harsh realities of life you better take a nose dive in the world of Hindi movies because six new movies were released last week.

Top Ten (Hindi)

1. Hum—Stg. Amitabh Bachchan, Govinda, Kimi Katkar, Danny, A. Kher.
2. Saugandh—Mukesh Khanna, Pankaj Dheer, Rakhee, Rupa Ganguly.
3. Jeena Tere Galmain—Kavita Kapoor, Suraj, Tinnu Anand, Archana.
4. Patthar Ki Insaan (action)—Vinod Khanna, Jackie Shroff, Sri Devi Poonam Dhillon.
5. Saaya (social drama)—Satrughan Sinha, Poonam Dhillon, Danny.

end I have to mention sadly, this is a topical commercial Hindi movie. Saugandh, Patthar Ki Insaan, Saaya Deewane and Aag Laga Do Sawan Ko are also new releases and they have joined the hits chart.

Two new Pakistani dramas have arrived lately — Hawa Ki Beti (Two parts) and Khwaish (Three parts).

If you are interested to watch movies with your children, you better borrow the hilarious Blackbeard Ghost, Walt Disney's Swiss Family

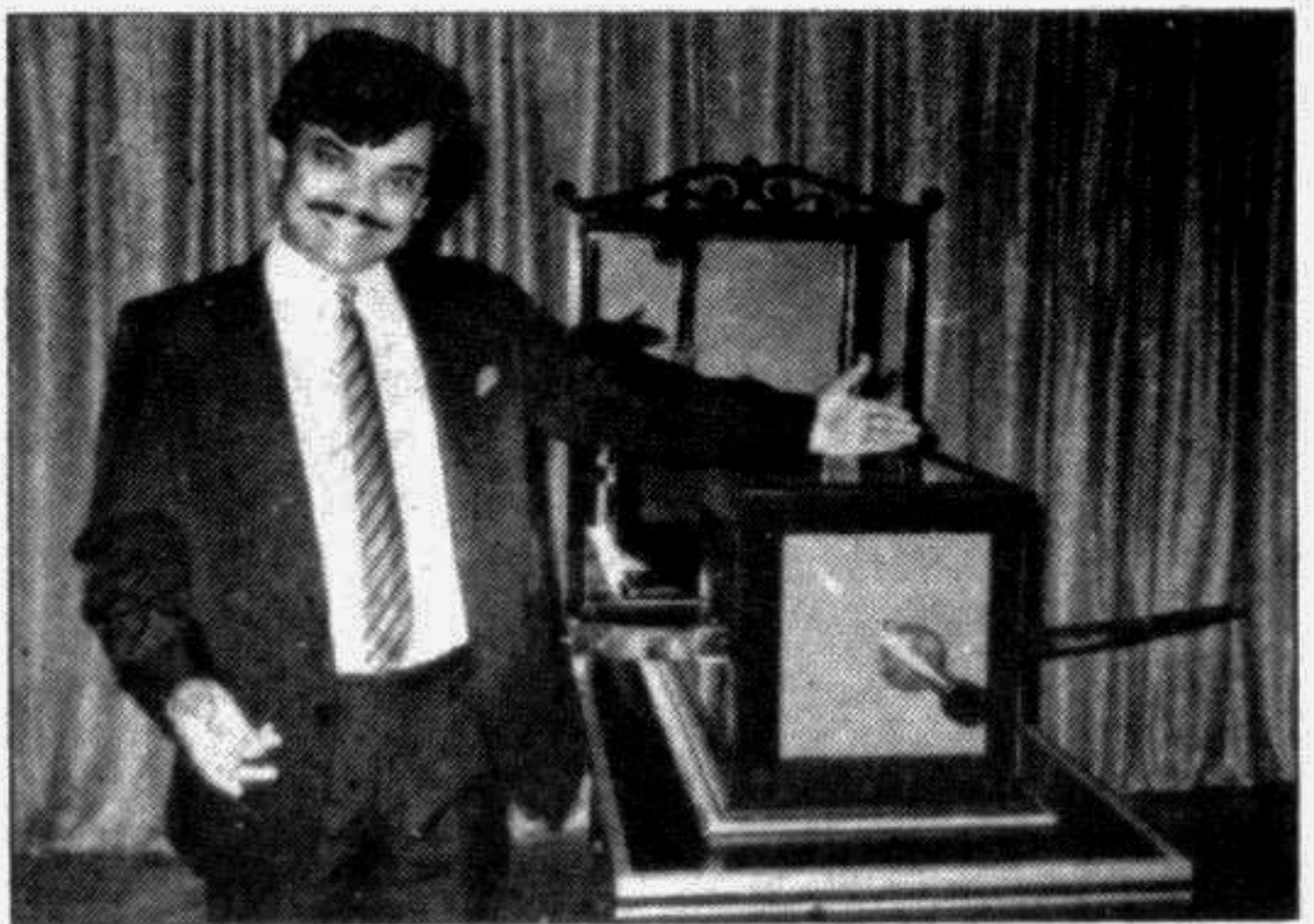
Robinson. In Search of the Castaways. Absent Minded Professor. My Dog the Thief and Home Alone.

The recently concluded Pakistan and West Indies one-day series is also available in the market for sports lovers.

6. Star Buzz-8 (video magazine program)
7. Deewane (romantic action)—Supriya Pathak, Anuradha Patel, Shekhar Sumon, Anupam Kher.
8. Aag Laga Do Sawan Ko—Kuldeep, Nandini, Sargam, Ajit.
9. Khilaa (romantic)—Chandkey Pandey, Madhur Dixit.
10. Aik Din Achanak (Directed by Mital Sen)—Shabana Azmi, Aparna Sen, Rupa Ganguly, Arjun Chakravarty.

Top Ten (English)

1. God Father (part-3)—Al Pacino, Andy Garcia (the movie is based on Mafia).
2. The Two Jakes (detective thriller)—Jack Nicholson (Second part of China Town).
3. The Rutantga Tapes (action thriller)—David Dukes, Susan Anspach.
4. 83+ hours till Dawn (thriller)—Robert Ulrich, Peter Straus.
5. Strong Medicine (part one and two)—Ben Cross, Patrick Duffy (Arthur Halley's thriller).
6. Crimes and Misdemeanors (drama)—Woody Allen, Mia Farrow, Alan Alda.
7. Psycho IV (horror)—Anthony Perkins.
8. Deaf Smith and Johnny Ears (western)—Anthony Quinn, Franco Nero.
9. State of Grace (action)—Sean Penn, Ed Harris.
10. The Bengali Night (drama based upon Calcutta life during the British period)—Shabana Azmi, Supriya Pathak, Utpal Dutta, Hugh Grant.



Jewel Aich presenting a breathtakingly new magic number at a fund-raising show in the city recently.

Write to Mita...

Dear Mita,

I am writing on behalf of a friend. She married the man of her choice 10 years ago and had a daughter in a year. I really do not know what started it, but after two years, their marriage started getting sour. It started with the usual argument, fights, verbal abuses and ultimately degenerated in the husband abusing her physically. Since the last 7 years he has been committing acts of violence against her and yet she refuses to leave him. Her excuses are, the child or that her husband really does not know what he is doing, etc. The child, on the other hand, is torn between the parents and shows signs of suffering psychological trauma. I would like to know what makes her stay in a situation like this or why doesn't she leave him? What can we do to help, as she refuses to take the advice of friends and relatives? I know she needs professional help but none is available. Please print my letter so that others like her will have the courage to write.

Samina (real name withheld)
Shegun Bagicha, Dhaka

Dear Samina,

Thank you for your letter. There are many incidents of wife abuse even in the upper class of our society but few people are willing to talk about it as this challenges the popular notion of our "stable marriages." This is a very complex problem and difficult to answer in this column. One of the reasons why abused women continue to stay with their husbands is because over the years her self-esteem has been so eroded that she has lost all the strength to protest. She has fallen into what is called the "dependency syndrome." The reasons she gives for staying are just excuses. She lives in a world of illusion that someday her husband will turn a new leaf and all will be well. Another reason of course is financial. Few women are economically self-sufficient enough to walk out on their husbands and be on their own. They will ultimately have to depend on someone. My only advice to your friend is to slowly start looking at herself and increase her self-worth. To get some kind of professional training and gradually start thinking of a career. Also to look back and try to think what went wrong in the marriage, why does her husband behave the way he does. I am sorry the advice is inadequate but it could be the beginning of something.

Dear Mita,

I am a working mother of a 2 year-old son. I am a banker and therefore my work is very demanding. After my son was born I took off work for a year which meant giving up a promotion, yet I do not regret my action. A year ago I rejoined for various reasons, one being financial and also because I enjoy working. Since then I have been finding it very difficult to balance the demands of my family and my profession. I feel guilty about leaving the baby alone all day with the maid and constantly worry about him. My husband is rather indifferent and suggests that I stop working if coping with it becomes too difficult. What should I do? Do you think my child will suffer psychological damage due to my absence from home? Do you think I am an unkind mother? Please advise.

Sonia
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Dear Sonia,

You have raised an issue which plagues all working mothers. In our society, where women are still expected to play the traditional role primarily of wife and mother, it is hard to balance family and professional demands. That children of working mothers suffer psychological damage has no scientific basis, and no, you are not an unkind mother at all. The fact that you took a whole year off from a demanding profession like banking proves that you are a loving and concerned mother. I also believe that a mother's primary responsibility is looking after her children, especially at the formative stage, but that does not necessarily mean spending 24 hours with the child. The kind of time you spend with the child is important, as there are mothers who do not work yet do not spend quality time with their children. Being very careful about choosing the caregiver for your child during your absence is something you should look into. What about the grandmother, or organizing groups with friends and neighbours who have children of the same age? What about your

husband? If he takes partial responsibility for the care of the child then that is the best solution. Talk to him, maybe you have never approached him in this way. Best of Luck.

Dear Mita,

I am 22 years old and studying final year honours at D.U. My problem is the same as some of my friends and therefore I am writing for all of us. Our parents want us to get married before the honours examination or will wait till just after. We want to study further, complete M.A., embark on a career, then think of marriage. Some of their reasons are that this is the best time to get married, since women, once they cross 23 or 24 do not remain so eligible, or are considered over-qualified by most males. We really do not see any logic behind this and are resentful of their attitude. What should we do, please advise. Are we burdens on our parents that they want to get rid of us? Why is it so important to get married? Please help!

Najma and Friends
Dhaka University.

Dear Najma & Friends,

The answer to your question is no, you are not burdens on your parents, who love you and want the best for you. And yes, it is very important to get married but the issue here is when should you marry? I was delighted to read that young women are thinking of careers before settling down, as this was not so when I was your age. I would like you to look at this problem from your parents' angle. They want their children to get settled during their lifetime and if they come across an eligible suitor they are obviously tempted to get you married. Being resentful does not solve the problem, rather communicate your thoughts and feelings on this issue to them. Demonstrate through your actions, your determination to pursue a career. The logical first step would be doing so well in your honours exams that continuing to the Masters program would be the logical next step. I am quite certain that if not all of you, most of you will be able to persuade your parents to put 'marriage' on hold for the time being.

Dear Mita,

The other day I read a shocking article of "doctor brutality" in this newspaper. The article was titled "Haunted Memories," and was written by a victim whose family had suffered at the hands of a gynaecologist. We have heard such stories many times before but have never taken any action just because it did not touch us personally. Why don't victims such as the one I mentioned take these doctors to court and sue them for malpractice? I am sure if more people did this, doctors would hesitate to commit such crimes.

Kashila
Mohammadpur

Dear Kashila,

Yes, I too have read the article, which was sad and shocking. People do not take these doctors to court because primarily they have no faith in our judicial system. Another reason they hesitate is because of the financial burden this might create. There has to be a joint, concerted effort to punish these doctors. One way is to form "support group", a concept very popular in the West. People who have gone through similar experiences could get together and draw up a plan of action. I am sure eventually that will get the co-operation of other concerned individuals as well.

Run by a trained and experienced Family and Marriage counsellor, assisted by a professional team of doctor, psychologist and lawyer, this column will answer questions relating to family, marriage, health, family laws, and social and interpersonal relationships. Please address letters to Mita, The Daily Star, GPO Box 3257 or to 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.

Highlights of TV's Ekushey Programmes

BTV authorities have chalked out an elaborate programme to commemorate Ekushey February, the great language martyrs' day.

Highlights of the programme include a week-long session of discussion, to be produced by Kazi Abu Zafar Siddiqui.

Kazi Quatium and Shahida Arabi will present 'Aa-mori Bangla Bhasha'—a children's drama and 'Abar Shet Fajun',

a special magazine programme respectively.

'Smaraney Baraney'—a special musical programme will be produced by Fakhrul Abedin.

'Samikaran' is the title of the special drama written by Abidur Rahman on the occasion of the Ekushey. The drama will be produced by Alauddin Ahmed.

— Mehdi Mahbub

TV Friday

MORNING TRANSMISSION

- 8-00 Opening and Recitation from Al-Quran.
- 8-10 News in Bengali.
- 8-15 Cartoon Film: Adventures of the Galaxy Rangers.
- 8-40 Notun Kunri.
- 9-10 Film: Mork and Mindy.
- 9-40 Probaha: Current Affairs.
- 10-00 News in Bengali.
- 10-05 Educational Film: The Ascent of Man.
- 11-15 Moner Mukurey: Rerecast of old drama.
- 12-30 Closing.

EVENING TRANSMISSION

- 3-00 Opening and recitation from Al-Quran.
- 3-15 Alor Dishari: Programme on Islamic teaching for children.
- 3-40 Movie of the Week: The Kid With the 200 IQ.
- 5-50 Sports programme.
- 6-45 Janamat: Population programme.
- 6-55 News in Bengali.
- 7-05 Modhu Chhanda: Modern songs.
- 7-45 Programme summary.
- 8-00 News in Bengali.
- 8-30 Film: Just Our Luck.
- 9-00 Bahurup: Variety programme.
- 10-00 News in English.
- 10-30 Film: L. A. Law.