

Dhaka Day by Day

One for All and All for One

by Fayza Haq



Visitors at the six artists' show.

It was not the three Musketeers but six young enthusiastic artists of the Institute of Arts and Crafts who had banded together to have an expose at the gallery of the Institute.

With the Bohemian life that art students lead at present, they were unable to gather the necessary funds for even a brochure. The gallery was free of charge, as every student is entitled to a display once in his career without any cost.

In order to simply go about hanging their works and finishing their pieces they spent from Tk 1,500 to Tk 10,000 each, depending on the media of the work.

Much of the works could have been improved, specially in the case of the canvas on oil. But where there were experimental work in etching and collage, on metal or tapestry, the effort was admirable, and considerable thought had gone behind each display.

Without a sponsor and without even adequate guidance from the teachers the six aspiring artists had put up a show that was creditable not only for its thought contents, as all or most artists feel and think more deeply than the average man on the street—such as a businessman or a computer mechanic.

Pradyut Das, 24, a 1st year M A student, born in Narasingdi, had an interesting symbolic creation in "Time Past". There was a clock and a dropping of ancient coins, which the artist had gathered from the villages, and those dated back to the Mutiny days.

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lineating how people had progressed from the throne to the parliament. The untidy greenish border on two sides of the metal collage expressed the idea that the people who rule, no matter at what time, remain selfish and self-seeking, despite all their well-meaning promises and declarations.

His tapestry was a world away from politics and the fever and fret of the masses. The work took the artist 25 days to complete and was splendid in presetting a modern yet idyllic scene from the Bangladeshi villages.

The "Untitled" etching "I" by Nazir Ahmed, 26, born in Dhaka, was again, inspired by the recent political movements in December. The faces of the tense men were shown in greys, blacks and whites. It took the artist six weeks to complete his work.

The pastels work of Sardar Aziz Ahmed showed portraits of women. But they were twisted beyond any recognition and had no intention to bring in themes of love or beauty.

The landscapes and still life of Mohammed Ali, 30, were very European and Impressionistic in approach. One could only hope that he will gain more maturity with time.

There were many more interesting entries by S.M. Mahmudur Rahman, 30, born in Dhaka. His "Goontana" and "Fishing" had Zainul Abedin's themes and styles in mind. The colours were fresh and the line strokes had subtlety.

Shamiran Chowdhury not less involved than the rest — an artist who had the time to actually show me around, had abstract subjects like "Dream" and "Alone" which he brought to life in the form of portraits of seductive women. He also had a number of portraits of women whose faces were destroyed by acid. To get the effect of the acid on the face he actually burnt the canvas and oil in places.

With a little more dedication, support from the part of patrons and help from the teachers and senior artists, these young artists should be able to carve out a name for themselves, or at least earn an adequate living if not more.

A K Khan's death condoled

The Finance and Planning Minister Md Saifur Rahman Thursday expressed his profound grief on hearing the death of A K Khan, a renowned industrialist and former Foreign Minister of the country on his arrival at the Zia International Airport after attending the ESCAP session in Seoul, reports BSS.

In a condolence message, the Minister recalled the contribution of Khan in development of industrial entrepreneurship and expansion of trade and commerce in the country. The Minister mentioned his close association and relation with A K Khan.

Programme Reception

Students of Bhola District now residing in Dhaka will accord a reception to DUCSU Assistant General Secretary Nazimuddin Alam at Jatiya Press Club auditorium tomorrow at 4 pm.

Education Minister Professor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury will be the chief guest while State Minister for Education Principal Md Yunus Khan will be the special guest. Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Rezauddin Ahmed and Jatiya Press Club President Mozammel Huq will speak. Eminent journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury will preside over the function.

Following is English rendering of the inaugural address of Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the fifth Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad on April 5, 1991:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Hon'ble Speaker,

Assalamu Alaikum.

May I congratulate you and, through you, the distinguished newly elected Members of the Jatiya Sangsad on the auspicious occasion of the inaugural session of the Fifth Parliament. Four more Parliaments came into being earlier. But this Parliament is markedly different from the previous ones. The election of this year was an historic event which will doubtless remain ever memorable. This election was completely free, fair and neutral. It was so because it was held under a neutral Government. This election drew attention of the whole world. Pollwatchers from various countries observed this election on the spot.

2. Many Governments have come and gone since the partition of India in 1947. But many of them failed to effect economic advancement of the country. The former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, is very small in size, barely 55 thousand square miles. But the size of the population, as it stands now, is 115 million. The number of people in 1947 was only 42 and a half million; it rose to 70 million in 1971. No worthwhile effort was made to reduce the demographic growth rate. Whatever done was paltry. The population growth rate is still 2.6 per cent. The country has limited resources. 85 per cent of the population depend solely on agriculture. The annual food requirement now is 19.2 million tons. The local production accounts for 18 million tons. The quantum of production declines whenever any natural disaster hits the country. As a result, the country has to import foodgrains varying from 1.2 to 1.5 million tons annually. It was the prime responsibility of each Government to make the country self-sufficient in food through progressive reduction of the deficit by developing the agriculture system rapidly. The present Government has paid attention to it ever since it took office. Population explosion, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are our major problems. The present Government will have to take measures for removing these problems.

Inside the Parliament



COMMON ANTI-AUTOCRACY STRUGGLE BRING THEM TOGETHER—Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League (from left), Shamsuddoha of Communist Party, Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Abdul Matin Choudhury of BNP are all smiles over a lighter issue.

Text of Acting President's speech

Newly-elected MPs true public representatives : Shahabuddin

It is 400 dollars in India and 450 in Pakistan. The per capita income in advanced countries ranges between 15 to 20 thousand dollars. Our balance of trade is always adverse. Import is approximately three times larger than our export in value. The average import bill is Tk. 120 billion. Against it, we earn about Tk. 45 billion through export. The situation calls for restricting import to only items used in industries and avoiding the import of luxury goods.

5. The quantum of foreign aid in 1973 budget was 74 per cent and the aim was to reduce it year by year. But the attempt failed and the degree of dependence on foreign assistance went on rising over the years. The projected income in the 1990-91 revenue budget is Tk. 90.5 billion against an estimated expenditure of Tk. 73 billion. A revenue surplus of Tk. 7.5 billion was supposed to be available to the development budget. But the collection till now shows that the revenue receipt in the year may decline by 4 to 5 per cent. A National Pay Commission was constituted in 1989. Its report was submitted only this year, barely 15 to 20 days back. Employees of Government, semi-Government and autonomous organisations have been allowed under their persistent pressure 10% dearness allowance from last December on consideration of the price hike. As a result, the revenue expenditure will go up by Taka 1.25 billion. On the other hand, the situation which evolved in the gulf region following the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait forced about a hundred thousand Bangladeshis employed in Kuwait to return home. Our budget deficit will

further escalate because of these all. That means, the entire money for the projected expenditure of Tk. 56 billion of the development budget would have to come as foreign aid. The lowest revenue income was from excise duty and land revenue. The land revenue has been renamed as land development tax. The quantum of agricultural loan has reached Tk. 55 billion. Not even 10 per cent of whatever money was pumped out from the nationalised banks as industrial loan can be recovered. Many persons receive industrial loans from the industrial bank, the Investment Corporation and other state-owned financial institutions in different names. But they have neither set up industries nor are repaying the industrial loan. The grand total of outstanding industrial loans stand at Tk. 100 billion. In the event of our failure to realise this outstanding loan, the implementation of our development programmes, which is dependent on foreign aid, may come to a halt.

6. As many as four Five-Year Plans were adopted since independence. The implementation of the latest one, which is the fourth Five-Year Plan, began in June last. Not a single Five-Year Plan attained its target as yet. The rate of growth was projected at 5 to 7 per cent. But in reality what was attained is 3.5 per cent. The total foreign loan stands at Tk. 400 billion at the current prices. The interest payable

against the loan is Tk. 5 billion now. Under the circumstances, expenditure will have to be reduced and austerity practised in all sectors to help save the country and the nation. Unproductive expenses and import of luxury items need to be stopped totally. All ministries, organisations, offices and establishments were directed at the beginning of the financial year to reduce expenses by 10 per cent. All but one or two have defied the instruction. Smuggling, which now takes place through land, sea and air routes, needs to be checked with firm hands. Our textile mills face closure as a result of the local market being flooded with smuggled textiles. True, emphasis has been laid on the private sector involvement in industrialisation, but the pace of industrialisation has not been up to the mark. I intend to draw the attention of the elected representatives and the new Government to these facts in the hope that it will keep you away from possible blunders and enable you to save and install the country and the nation in a dignified and honourable position.

7. Our international relations is based on the basic principle of friendship to all and malice to none. We have consistently followed the principles of respect for sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, peaceful resolution of international disputes

and full respect for international laws and the UN Charter. We have although maintained friendly relations with neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, we have played an active role in various international fora like the Commonwealth, SAARC, OIC and the Non-aligned Movement. We have scrupulously observed all the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

8. The students and the lawyers first began the movement of the last nine years for restoring democracy on unseating the autocracy. And subsequently people of all walks of life joined them. Many people, particularly students, laid down their lives in this struggle. The memory of these martyrs will be recalled for ever in the national history of our democracy-loving people. The former Government had to relinquish power at the conclusive phase of this movement.

9. I was called upon not to occupy the seat of the President — soon I discovered that I was invited to sit on a heap of powder-keg which could explode any time. The former President resigned on the demand of the major political parties. I had an impression that I could go back after holding free, fair and neutral parliamentary elections within ninety days with participation of all political parties irrespective of opinion. But the public rage towards the previous Government did not quickly subside. They went on demanding stern actions against the Ministers of the previous Government and their associates. The former President gave an interview to B. B. C at that time which infuriated the people further. I resisted all such demands which were illogical. I however, put under detention those who constituted a threat to peace and cause for apprehension of a grave danger. It was a time when large scale indiscipline broke out in offices and establishments being inspired by a notion that the Government has collapsed in face of a strong mass-movement. Demands for the removal of high officials were raised alleging that they were associates or collaborators of the former Government. Stages were laid on different places. But my Government did not succumb to this (illegal pressure. Garment factories which manufacture the country's one of the major export items were put on fire one after another. The motive was to cripple the national economy. This destructive activity came to a halt after the arrest of a culprit involved.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers. Includes sections for 'ACROSS', 'DOWN', and 'Answer to Previous Puzzle'.

World Health Day tomorrow

World Health Day will be observed on Sunday, 7 April, in Bangladesh as well as in all other parts of the world. The seventh of April each year is celebrated as World Health Day because it marks the date in 1948 when sufficient countries had ratified their signatures to bring the constitution of World Health Organisation into force, says a press release.

TV Saturday programme schedule listing times and titles for various shows.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

Weather report by Staff Correspondent, detailing rain and thundershower forecasts for various regions and temperature/humidity data for Friday.