

Dhaka Day by Day

Where does the Critic Stand?

by Fayza Haq



Universal Attachment. Oil. By Ibrahim. Inset: French critic and art historian Gerard Xuriguera.

A round table conference was held with writers, artists, journalists and photographers at the Alliance Francaise. It was presided over by the noted French critic and art historian Gerard Xuriguera. The conducting of the questions and answers was done by Sayeed Ahmed, noted playwright and critic.

Do we need a critic? is a pertinent question. Sayeed Ahmed in his opening talk pointed out that even God had a critic when he created the world in the form of Satan. He stressed that it was not necessarily an artist who has failed who becomes a critic.

Kabir Chowdhury said that a good critic is a link between a creation and the people. He lamented the fact that art critics were poorly paid in Bangladesh. At this point Nawaz Ali Khan commented that there was a tremendous deficiency of art criticism. "The newspapers are short of space and the critics are short of money", he said. Sadek Khan added that if he wrote anything adverse it was immediately resented. "If art criticism becomes too scholarly it is not read. Painters sell because of their already established name. If critics are honest this should help the artists," he insisted.

Cheryle, a photographer from Australia, working in Dhaka said, "There are not enough art write ups in Bangladesh. How are the reporters qualified to write about art?" Kabir Chowdhury, then pointed out, "The critic cannot give up his personal reaction but he must have a deep knowledge of the techniques."

Syed Manzurul Islam said, "The art critic is like a tightrope walker. There are often condemnations from his friends which includes the artist. Sometimes critics cannot express their own views as the editors intervene. The art critic has sometimes to lie. He colours his own perception by what others think. He has to say something good when the fact is that the painting may not be worth much."

Farouq Faisal, a journalist, said that art criticism is a hobby and only a part time job for writers in Bangladesh. "Often his friends push him to it. He loves his friend and not the art."

M. Gerard Xuriguera, who spoke at the gathering at Alliance Francaise also held a press conference at the residence of the French ambassador, later that evening, and there he spoke on the modern art movement in Europe.

Speaking exclusively to The Daily Star, during lunch break at Sonargaon, M. Xuriguera said that the work of an art critic was to consider the art market, promotion for the

artist, while keeping the sociological and historical background in mind. "I try to distinguish the essential characteristics of the work. You must know the synthesis of the work that is in front of you."

Talking about regular journalists who write reviews, the historian said, "The critic is often a man who could not make it as an artist himself. Similarly a writer, who does not have enough potentialities to write books turns to criticism. My advice to the critics is to study the artist closely."

Commenting on the Bangladeshi artists he said, "They are one of the most interesting in this part of Asia. There is a lot of originality and enthusiasm in them. I compare them with artists I have known in S. Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Singapore. There is an explosion of styles. There is no hanging on to the past for forms like Cubism."

He praised some of the artists and Shahabuddin in particular for his "strong expressionism and his ability to depict men in action." He admired Hamiduzzaman Khan, Md. Younus, Jamal Ahmed, Kanak Champa and Mithu.

Discussing the primary influences of the world art scene on the local scenario, M. Xuriguera said, "In the seventies and eighties the art scene was influenced by a world of minimalism. It was bombarded with ideas. The people here are very emotional. They are not driven by intellectual fads. This does not mean they are not intelligent."

Talking about the Asian Biennale in Bangladesh, he said, "It was a mistake to exhibit over 100 paintings by the local artists and only about ten each from different countries. The participation should have been equal." He thought the Biennale registered emotions in a fine manner. It captured the gentleness as well as the aggressive nature of the local people. As for countries like Japan and Taipei, "They have a lot of money to spend. They turn more to USA than France for guidance in the art world," the critic added.

"In many countries folk art like your clay figurines, 'nakshikatha', and 'alpana' is very fashionable. In countries like France and Australia folk art is being rejuvenated," he said about the local traditional art.

Commenting on the art scene in Paris, the art historian said, "There is nothing new after the fifties. All the movements after that are a heritage of the big movements of the century with Picasso, Matisse and Kandinsky."

The critic's favourite painters are Bacon in England, Peltyu in Spain, Krishan Khanna and Jagan Chowdhury in India, and Imai in Japan.

'Garments owners deprive govt of Tk 200cr revenue

The garments workers' union on Sunday placed a five-point demand to the government urging its implementation for increasing revenue earning from the sector, reports UNB.

"We simply want implementation of the workers' demands, we want to vitalise the sector and do not want it to be jeopardised by sheer mistakes", said Haroon ur Rashid, president of Sammilita Garments Sramik Jote (SGSJ).

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club this afternoon, he said the garments workers, who fetch for the country the highest amount of foreign currency, are deprived of their due wages and forced to an inhuman living.

Women and children, who

constitute about 85 and 20 per cent work force respectively in the sector, have been at the mercy of the owners' whim and caprice, he said alleging "their human rights are being denied."

He further alleged that the owners were not only depriving the workers of their due wages but also denying the government revenue to the tune of Tk 200 crore annually through fraudulent practices.

He urged the authorities for early implementation of their demands added a cautionary note that greater movement will be launched soon to press home the charter.

The demands, sub-sectored together, constituted about 30 demands including minimum wage fixation equivalent to prices of five maunds of rice,

issuing of appointment letters, safety measures for women workers, five per cent profit bonus, inclusion of worker representatives in wage board and labour court, education facilities for children and holidays, housing and medical facilities.

It also included separate ministry for the garments' sector, resumption of production in lay off factories, monthly allowances for the mother workers and introduction of shifting system for incorporating larger number of workers.

SGSJ City Committee President Babul Akhter Rani, Senior Vice President Shawkat Abu Taher and Organising Secretary Iqbal Karim were also present at the press conference.

Works of controversial painter on display

A weeklong solo exhibition of paintings and graphics by eminent Indian artist Shuvaprasanna was opened at a city art gallery Sunday evening, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the exhibition, his first in Bangladesh, the artist who has earned fame and controversy both at home and abroad, Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan stressed the need for exchange of such exhibitions between India and Bangladesh to have greater understanding among the people.

Khan, who himself was an amateur artist, said one of the basic duties of a government was to ensure best utilisation of people's creative genius. He said the present government

was working in this direction, so that talents get due scope to utilise their creativity.

Twenty oil paintings and graphics have been displayed in the 'La Galerie' at Banani, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, which sponsored the exhibition in cooperation with Hotel Purbani International. The painter Shuvaprasanna, who arrived in the city Saturday along with his wife, Sipra, also spoke briefly on the occasion.

The function was attended, among others, by Indian High Commissioner K. Srinivasan, poet Shamsur Rahman, artist Aminul Islam and the owner of 'La Galerie' Akku Chowdhury. The exhibition will remain open from 9 am to 8.30 pm every day till November 17.

Employees of private schools, colleges demand higher wages

Employees of the private educational institutions Sunday announced a phase-wise programme to press home their five-point demand for higher wages and benefits, reports UNB.

The programme, beginning on November 14 will include demonstration and campaigning culminating in one-hour work stoppage every day for two weeks from November 26 and a day-long token strike on December 9.

In the next phase, similar two-hour work stoppage for one week will begin from December 10, one-hour work stoppage on January 1, to be followed by a full day strike on January 2 and indefinite work stoppage beginning January 7, 1992.

Bangladesh Shiksha Pratishthan Karmachari Federation (BSPKF), which is the union of all 3rd and 4th

grade employees of the country's private schools, colleges and madrasas announced the programme at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club here in the afternoon.

BSPKF President Asadul Huq announced the programme and it was attended by Secretary General M A Khalil, Publicity Secretary Abu Syed Chowdhury, Organising Secretary Shahidul Islam and Treasurer Golam Murtaza.

BAU exams from Nov 13

All examinations of the Bangladesh Agricultural University due to be held from November 13 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Institute at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka will be held according to schedule, reports UNB.

Ravi Sankar may visit next month

Eminent artist of Indian sub-continent Pandit Ravi Sankar is likely to visit Bangladesh in December to take part in two solo musical recitals in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Indian High Commissioner K. Srinivasan informed this to State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum when he called on her on Sunday.

They also discussed matters of mutual interest.

Secretary in-Charge Ministry of Cultural Affairs Islam Uddin Malik was present on the occasion.

It's new just for you

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বদরুজ্জামানের মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী

আজ সোমবার বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের সাবেক ডিভিএম মহম্মদ কে. এম. বদরুজ্জামান-এর তৃতীয় মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষে ১০৩/৩ আর. কে. মিনন রোডে (গোপীবাগ ফোর্ড সেন) বাদ আসর মিসাদ মাফিক অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। 5-70

CU degree (pass) exams Jan 27

CHITTAGONG, Nov 10: The degree pass examination 1991 under the University of Chittagong will now commence on January 27, 1992, a University press release said Sunday, reports BSS.

The details about the examination will be announced in due time, the press release added.

Obituary

Zahed Ahmed, former General Manager of Fenchuganj fertilizer factory died of cardiac arrest Saturday. He was 60.

He left behind his wife, one son, two daughters, and a host of relatives.

The qulkhwan of Zahed Ahmed will be held at his 226, Bara Maghbazar residence tomorrow (Tuesday) after Asr Prayers. All friends and relatives have been requested to attend.

Bangladesh Navy

Appointment of Naval Stores Officer to Bangladesh Navy

1. Applications are invited from Bangladeshi (male) citizens for appointment to the post of Naval Stores Officer in Bangladesh Navy on temporary basis in the pay scale of Tk 2850-125-3725-EB-130-5155 with as usual others admissible Govt. allowances:-

2. Qualification:

A) Educational qualification: Second Class Master's degree with second class Honours from any recognised university.

B) Age: Maximum 30 years.

C) Nationality: Citizen and permanent resident of Bangladesh.

3. Intending candidates should apply in plain paper stating name, father's name, date of birth, present and permanent address, educational qualification and experience etc.

4. Application with two character certificates from two first class Gazetted Officers, attested copies of educational qualification certificates and testimonials, three copies passport size recent photographs and crossed Bank Draft for Tk 50/00, non-refundable, in favour of Savings Account No. 387, Sonali Bank, Naval Headquarters branch, Banani, Dhaka should reach the Director, civil employees, Naval Headquarters, Banani, Dhaka by December 15, 1991 (Agrahayan 30, 1398 BS).

5. Govt employees having required qualification may apply through proper authority channel.

ISPR-37 (N) 91/1287
DFP (G) 12947-6/11 G-863

Weather

Night temperature may fall

By Staff Correspondent

Met office forecast Sunday that weather will remain mainly dry over the country during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday.

Night temperature likely to fall by one to three degree Celsius during the period.

The lowest 14.7 degree Celsius temperature was recorded on Sunday at Mymensingh.

No appreciable change in weather would be noticed during subsequent two days, Met office said in its outlook.

Temperature and humidity recorded on Sunday at important cities and towns were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree		Celsius Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	29.5	19.5	79	62
Chittagong	29.6	18.6	79	71
Khulna	29.4	18.2	89	86
Rajshahi	30.2	16.3	81	82
Bogra	31.0	18.0	76	74
Mymensingh	30.5	14.7	80	78
Comilla	28.7	18.0	80	85
Srimangal	29.0	15.8	81	82
Cox's Bazar	29.5	20.5	68	82
Barisal	29.6	18.2	87	88
Feni	29.0	17.0	81	77

Sunset at Dhaka on Monday at 5-15 pm and sunrise Tuesday at 6-12 am.

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Monday

5.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary News in Bangla

5.10 Reading from the Geeta

5.30 Cartoon film: The Yearling

6.00 Sports Programme: Wrestling

7.05 TV debate contest

8.00 News in Bangla

8.30 Jansam

9.00 Drama: Bhara Nadir Bakay

10.00 News in English

10.30 Film show: Hot Pursuit

11.30 Khabar/The news

11.45 Close down