

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Politics on Stage

by S Bari



Theatre — mouthpiece of resistance

A military dictator was in power. All the usual restrictions were in force. But in a dark theatre of the capital city, people sat rapt in approving attention as actors on stage made pointed, blatant fun of the president and his childless marriage, his bloated self-importance and his fanatic sycophants. "Saat ghatar kanakori" was a hit.

Theatre in Bangladesh has been the one mouthpiece of resistance that tyrant after tyrant has been unable to silence. This week, the International Theatre Institute's Bangladesh branch has been hosting a seminar on the interaction of the different theatre traditions and organisations across the globe.

"Drama has always been a political force," says Margaret Semil of Poland, President of the IIT's Communications Committee. "In Berlin, before the Wall fell, just showing a wall in any context in a play was a political statement." When performing "A Midsummer Night's Dream," the wall between the lovers became a subversive image, both to the audience and to the censors.

Many such image cross national borders and find relevance in cultures totally alien to the play's country of origin. If "Galileo" can still condemn the shackles of pseudo-religious fervour, it rings just as true in Bangladesh as in Ireland.

"Islamic fanaticism is on the rise everywhere," warns director Hassan El Gerety, who runs a theatre troupe in Cairo and is in Dhaka

to network with other drama workers. Quietly again, the theatre is at war with extremism, Ershad may be gone, but there is always another bigoted thought to fight.

When Jamil Ahmed's production of "Bishaad Sindhu" hit the stage, moulvis everywhere must have gasped in horror. With agility and grace, Hindu chants are mixed into what Muslims consider a wholly Islamic enterprise. Incense is burnt, such icons of secularism as Sufia Kamal are evoked. In a country where women still have to cover their shoulders with their saris when reading the news on TV, drama on stage hits where it hurts most.

The IIT's programme is a celebration of that power of the theatre to keep hitting hard. Plays during the week were "Bishaad Sindhu," "Iblis," "Antigone" and "Galileo". The two-day seminar at the Purbani hotel covered the exchange of directors, themes, and social aspects of theatre.

Simultaneously, an exhibition at the Arts Institute presents material from the history of Bengali drama, from jatra and gambhira to post modern plays. Posters from some productions are among the most attractive exhibits, especially the poster for "Bhandu," an adaptation of Moliere's "Tartuffe."

The show proves that censorship of theatre has been around for a long time: in 1876, the British passed the Dramatic Performance Control Act in reaction to plays they deemed detrimental to the Raj.

## Democratic forces should work together to be in mainstream: Kamal

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Kamal Hossain of the Gonotantrik Forum has said that democratic forces of the country should now work together to be in the mainstream politics, not to build a mere third current, in future.

The envisaged mainstream, the Forum leader said, would aim at creating a political atmosphere where peoples of all walks of life would get scope to serve the nation best.

Creation of such a political stream which is capable of replacing the existing mainstream however would take time, Dr Kamal said.

The Forum leader was addressing a discussion held in observance of the second anniversary of announcement of the joint declaration of the three political alliances that provided guideline as to how Ershad would transfer state power to an interim government by constitutional means.

Organised by the Gonotantrik Forum, the meeting was addressed by politicians, student leaders, lawyers, cultural activists and leaders of the women organisations involved in the struggle against the autocratic regime of H M Ershad.

The speakers addressing the discussion bitterly criticised the ruling party and the main opposition in Parliament for their failure to meet the commitment envisaged in the joint declaration that include separation of judiciary from the administration, repeal of black laws, ensuring autonomy to the electronic media and making sure of the passage of no law contrary to fundamental rights of the people.

The ruling party came under fire for its reluctance in fulfilling the commitments it made earlier and the opposition in Parliament was critical of its failure to exert pressure on the former to implement the ideals inscribed in the joint declaration.

Saifuddin Manik and Shamsuddoha of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Pankaj Bhattacharya of the National Awami Party, Dilip

Barua of the Sammyabadi Dal and Alhaj Abdus Samad of the Gono Azadi League and Hasarul Hoque Inu of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, while addressing the meeting, underlined the need for a new political platform for effectively addressing different socio political issues confronting the nation.

an oblique reference to the activities of the Forum, said it was not the time for sermonising people on what to do, rather it was time to be united under a platform to fulfil people's aspiration.

Montu, supporting the view of political leaders addressing the meeting, felt the necessity for floating a new political platform without delay.

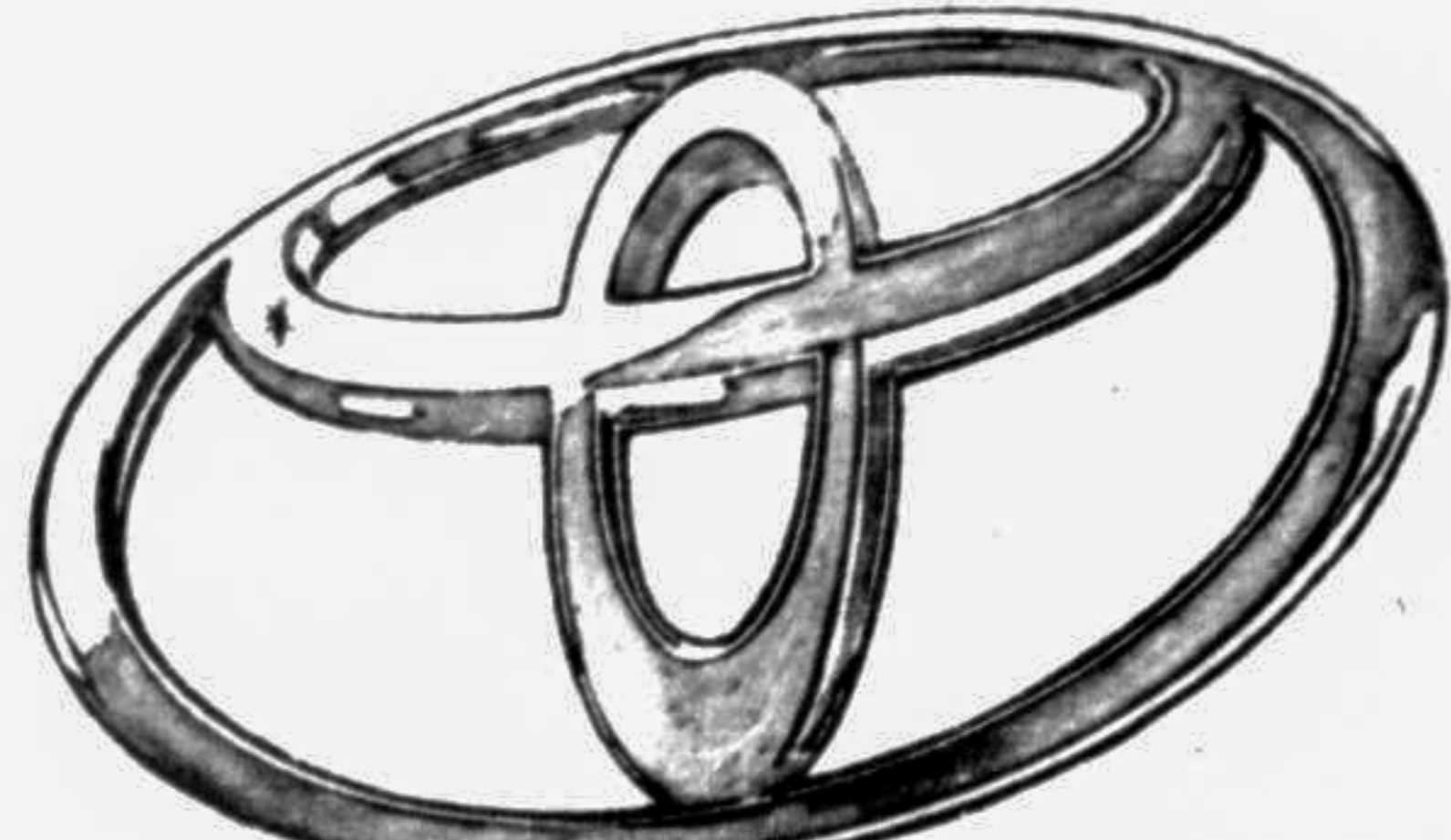
## 'Education sector given top-most priority'

RAJSHAHI, Nov 20: State Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Aminul Haq today said the BNP government has attached top most priority to education sector with a view to eradicating the curse of illiteracy from the country, reports BSS.

He said comprehensive programmes including compulsory primary education, mass literacy, renovation and nationalisation of educational

institutions in phases and other programmes for higher education have been undertaken by the present democratic government.

He was addressing a reception and gold medal award function accorded to the students of Tanore thana who secured outstanding performance in the last SSC and HSC examination at Talond Lohit Mohan Degree College premises under the district.



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### Immunization week begins today

The second National Immunization Week-92 begins throughout the country today (Saturday) with an objective to create mass awareness and motivate people for improvement of their health status, reports BSS.

The week, carrying the theme "the responsibility of the parents to immunize their kids on the first year of their birth," will be formally inaugurated by Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf at a function to be held at Shishu Academy at 9.30 am today.

The programme of the week, being observed by EPI programme of Health Directorate in cooperation with UNICEF and USAID, includes rally, street gathering, distribution of publicity materials, poster, organising women rally through various female organisations and inspiring media people for launching fruitful campaign to make the drive a total success.

### One crushed under bus wheels in city

An unidentified vegetable vendor was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Kawran Bazar yesterday morning, reports UNB.

Eyewitnesses said a Kamilar bound No six bus ran over the man while he was crossing the road.

### Programme on folk culture begins

A three-month long craft village, folk culture and games programmes got underway yesterday at the Bangladesh Folk and Craft Foundation Complex with enthusiasm to revive the past glory of our traditional folk culture and crafts, reports BSS.

### Weather

## Heavy rain likely

By Staff Correspondent

Moderately heavy to heavy rain or shower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind likely to occur at many places over Chittagong division with a heavy falls at places moderate to moderately heavy rain or shower may occur at a few places over Dhaka, Khulna divisions and one or two places over Rajshahi division during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday).

The maximum and the minimum temperature recorded in major cities of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Max	Min
Dhaka	29.2	21.1
Chittagong	25.5	21.0
Rajshahi	28.8	17.4
Khulna	28.3	20.5

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer PHE  
Stores Division, Khulna

### Tender Notice

Sealed tender in BD Form No 2908 is hereby invited from the DPHE enlisted contractors of category "C" renewed for the year 1992-93 & bonafide Manufacturers/Suppliers for the undermentioned work which will be received by the Executive Engineer, PHE Stores Division, Khulna /Dhaka /Chittagong & Natore on 29.11.92 up to 12.00 Noon. The tender will be opened in the office of the Superintending Engineer PHE Store Circle, 190 Arambag, Inner Circular Road, Dhaka on 3.12.92 at 11.00 AM in presence of the tenderer or their representative (if present at that moment). The expenditure of this supply will be met out of grant made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for installation of tubewells to strengthen water supply system at costal belt area.

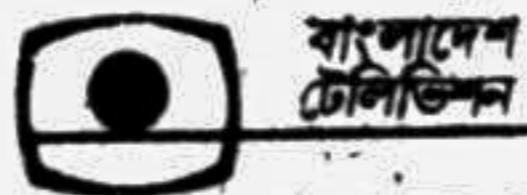
Sl No	Description of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest money	Lab. Testing fee	Time for Completion Supply
1.	Supply of ordinary grey Portland cement conforming to specification for foreign made Portland cement with 6(six) ply paper bags net weight 50 kgs. including carrying cost to PHE Store Divn Khulna according to the Departmental specification and instruction of the Engineer-in-charge.	Tk.5,62,000/-	11,240/-	3,000/-	20 (twenty) days

#### Departmental terms & conditions:

1. Contract documents consisting of detailed specification bill of quantities BD Form No 2908 can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer PHE Stores Division Khulna /Dhaka/Chittagong/Natore during of office hours in all working days on payment of Tk 500/- (Which is non-refundable). No tender paper will be sold on the date of tender.

DFF(G)1990-16/11  
G-1484

AKM Motior Rahman  
Executive Engineer, PHE  
Stores Division, Khulna.



### BTV Saturday

- 5:00 Opening announcement: Al-Quran
- 5:10 Programme summary
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:20 Recitation from the Triptak
- 5:30 Cartoon: Care Bear Family
- 6:00 Amra Natun
- 6:30 Open University
- 7:05 Banshari
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Matti O Manush
- 9:00 Special programme on Armed Forces Day
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Dallas
- 11:30 Khabar /The News
- 11:40 Sunday's programme summary
- 11:45 Closing

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