

Dhaka Day by Day

Women's Search for Inner Truth

by Fayza Haq

An interesting and meaningful exhibition of photographs by women, "Orno Chokhe Dekha", was recently held at the British Council. The entries presented a collection of images and impressions, which contradicted the conventional media depiction of women in Bangladesh, and also challenged the preconceived notion that perhaps only men can make good photographers. Through the dramatic and vibrant photos, one felt the sensitive and intelligent search for the inner truth of life. The theme concentrated on women and the exhibit nonetheless qualifies to be of reasonably high standard.

Nargis Jahan Banu, who had 14 entries in black and white, showed a woman working with a slide projector; one with a computer; one riding a motorcycle; one at an office desk; and one operating an audio-visual instrument. Nargis also showed two aged women, reading Bangla newspapers and comparing notes. There was yet another emancipated angle of photography, in which a young man was depicted as lighting the cigarette for an adult female.

"I believe," Nargis commented, "that I have presented direct and indirect contributions to my development as a woman. They have an aesthetic dimension and a schematic plan. In the scheme, I have journeyed from the inner world to the outside. As human survivors, through the medium of factual and the emotive, my photos present my world."

Naveeda Khan had three pictures juxtaposed as in a collage, with different focus of the same profile at two sides, and a central larger one balanced in the middle, with the woman's tongue stuck out in fun and retort.

Firoza Begum showed a woman in distress, with the mouth open, and her hands on her cheeks. This was once again a collage of five photos, carefully balanced with grey rectangular gaps in between. Firoza laid stress on the natural source of strength of women. In this, beauty was presented along with the element of struggle of women. "It is only after a long quest that mankind has found beauty within himself," was the photographer's comment.

"Wanted: A Fair Skinned Wife" was the title of Naveeda Khan's outright social criticism of Bangladesh. This technicoloured piece depicted a traditional Bangladeshi style bride with a vermilion "sari", with a thick silver border, with a floral motif. Her other piece was "A Tobacco Family" which presented a bespectacled man, smoking and resting on a sofa. There was a yellow-ochre swirl of paint around the portrayal, with large dots to depict tobacco. The subject of smoking was continued onto five more pictures, contained in another frame, and depicted the family members of the subject — some being tolerant, while others being amused or indifferent.

"Training for Self Protection" was the theme of Salma Siddiqui's many entries, showing people learning the basic of judo. The one in combat action was the most laudable one, as

the others could easily have been taken for poses in aerobics. Salma commented, "These are the images from my world: A world divided between home and workplace. This is an attempt to capture my life, by focusing the camera on myself."

She had other pictures, one depicting a pair of slippers on a doormat; a self-portrait of a woman in her middle years with basic jewellery and a cotton "sari"; a bed with a pillow, bolster, with bars on the window and light pouring in; a woman working on the bed with a book and bolster; a young woman choosing and arranging three photo albums and numerous photos. There was a good contrast of light and shade. There was also a table with a box of contraceptive tablets and sweet powdered beverages, with a woman's hand holding on to a glass mug on a checked table-cloth; an office with telephone, computer, filing cabinet, maps, charts, photos and other paraphernalia; a kitchen with "boti", "tawa", "dekchi", a range of gas cookers etc.

Five pictures depicting sewing, cooking, painting of female fingernails, ironing of clothes, a silhouette of a mother, and child were all put in Sanjeeda Rahman's single frame.

"An Inner Longing" by Nasreen Rahim depicted outstretched hands, held out in prayer. Meanwhile her "Sign" showed the feet of a woman with a striped skirt, sitting on a bed. Her "Everlasting" depicted the beauty of a young woman with tresses and a dark "sari", framing her young gleaming face. Her "Inexpressible" delineated a woman staring into the ceiling above, with her large lotus eyes, with obvious folds of skin on her neck — all enveloped in pitch dark. Her "Engulfed" showed a set of teeth and lips in the background, in grey and white, with the light burning from the black bottom to the black candle on the top of the photo.

Disadvantaged girls, acquiring skill for the competitive job market, with photographs taken at the UCEP technical school, were the main themes of Nurjehan Chakladar. She showed children doing fine embroidery, teenaged girls learning technical work, and half a dozen girls eagerly raising their hands to answer questions.

Probbati Rozario dealt with childhood and its careless ways in four pictures, which showed young girls hanging from the branches of trees, in three of which the panties were on display, along with the mischievous smiles and long stresses. These items were in grey and black.

Mursheda Arzu Ajpana had 27 self portraits fixed on canvas, divided by fine black lines of strings. "I worked as a photographer to explore my range of feelings, emotions and experience," Ajpana commented.

The exhibit was an eye-opener indeed as to what our women can achieve through the 2-D film media.



Women focus on themselves

Different bodies welcome SAARC leaders

Various political and socio-cultural organisations yesterday welcomed the SAARC leaders to Bangladesh capital with the hope that the seven-nation body would evolve a method to resolve all common and bilateral problems for the cause of peace in the region, reports BSS.

In separate statements, they also hoped that the seventh SAARC summit beginning here from today would contribute enormously towards the development of regional cooperation, mutual relations and consolidating good neighbourliness among nations of the region.

They also urged the SAARC leaders to work towards making the seven-nation forum more powerful and dynamic so that any problem could be resolved through discussions among them.

The statements were issued by Bangladesh Muslim League, Zia Forum, Deshpremik Muktijoddha, International Pen-Pals Club and Bangladesh National Buddhist Youth Federation.

JU English dept alumni held

By Staff Correspondent

The fourth get-together of the Jahangirnagar University English Department Alumni Association was held yesterday at the university's central cafeteria.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed attended the function as chief guest.

It was presided over by Chairman of the department and Association President Prof Shaheen M Mahmood.

Dr Nurul Islam, Prof Mohammad Rafiq, Dr Afzal Hossain of the JU English Department and lecturers Ahmed Reza and Md Kawsar Hussain were present on the occasion.

Speakers noted with grave concern the rising trend of communalism and erosion of values in the country, while addressing the inaugural ceremony.

Later, a 19-member executive committee of the Alumni Association of the department was formed.

CHEC seminar April 13

The inaugural ceremony of the seminar on "Problems of Urban Settlement in Bangladesh" organised by Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC)-Bangladesh will be held on April 13 at 9.30 am in the auditorium of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Farmgate, Dhaka, says a press release.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Minister for Works will grace the occasion as chief guest. Zena Daysh, executive vice-chairman, CHEC-London will attend as special guest.

Dr Anwar Hossain, chairman, CHEC-Bangladesh will preside over the function.

Nazrul Mela concludes

A three-day Nazrul Mela organised by Nazrul Niketon Hastabayan Parishad ended at Daulatpur, Comilla on Thursday, a press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

The Parishad also arranged an exhibition of rare photographs of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam depicting the various eventful, colourful and struggling and heroic life of the poet.

Books on the poet published by the Nazrul Institute including research journals, periodicals and posters were also displayed in the exhibition.

The three-day exhibition drew a large number of visitors.

Unity can lead nation to progress: CU VC

CHITTAGONG, Apr 9 Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury said here yesterday that national unity and revival of the spirit of War of Liberation could lead the country to our cherished goal of progress and prosperity, a university press release said today, reports BSS.

Speaking as chief guest at a discussion on Independence Day at the campus club of the university he said chaos and confusion among the people would not be helpful for projecting a happy and prosperous nation.

The discussion presided over by Prof Kazi Ahmed Nahi was also participated by pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Badrul Alam and a number of other teachers of the university.

Prof Chowdhury said we should identify our fundamental problems and then put in concerted efforts to solve them.



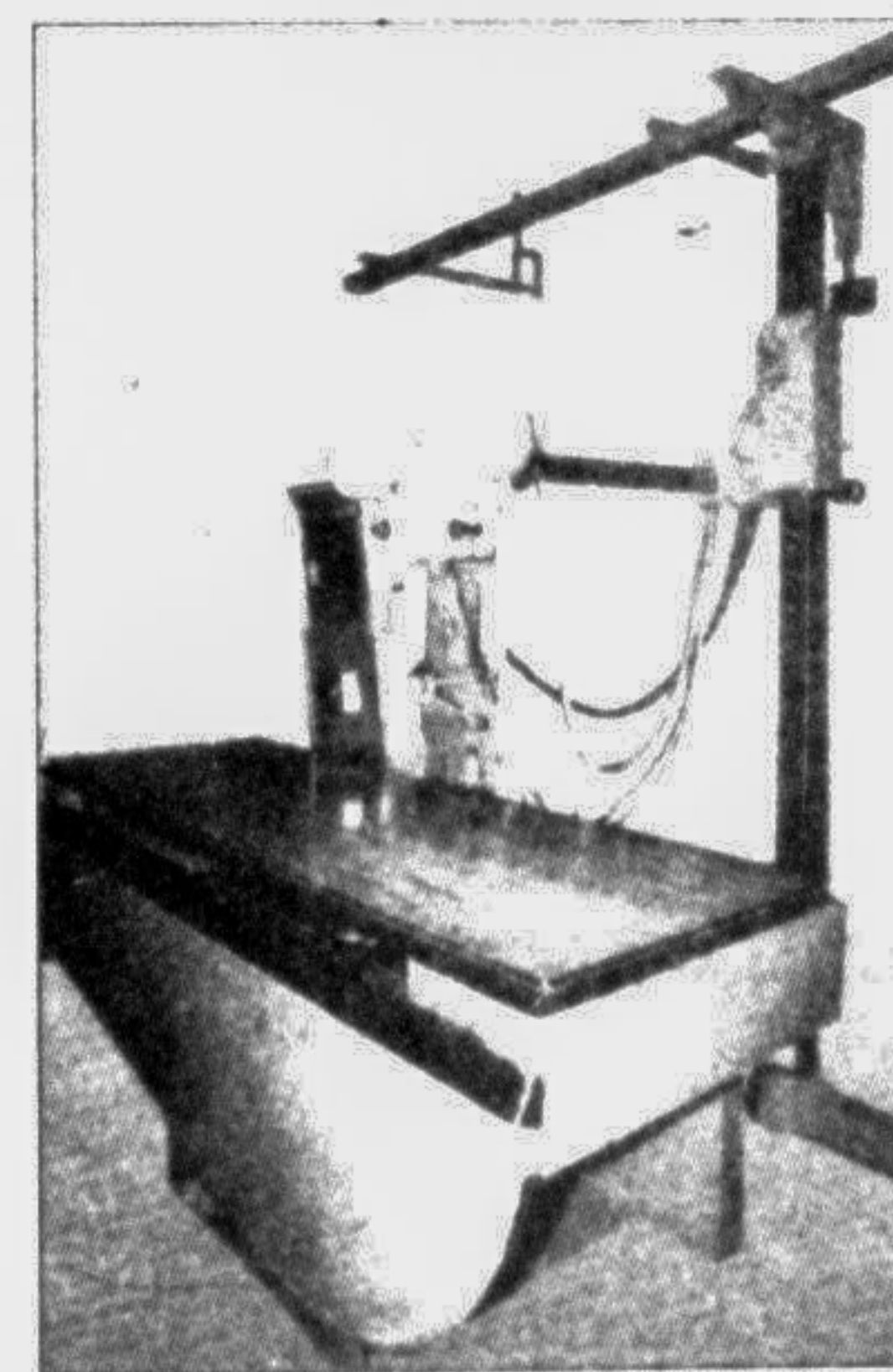
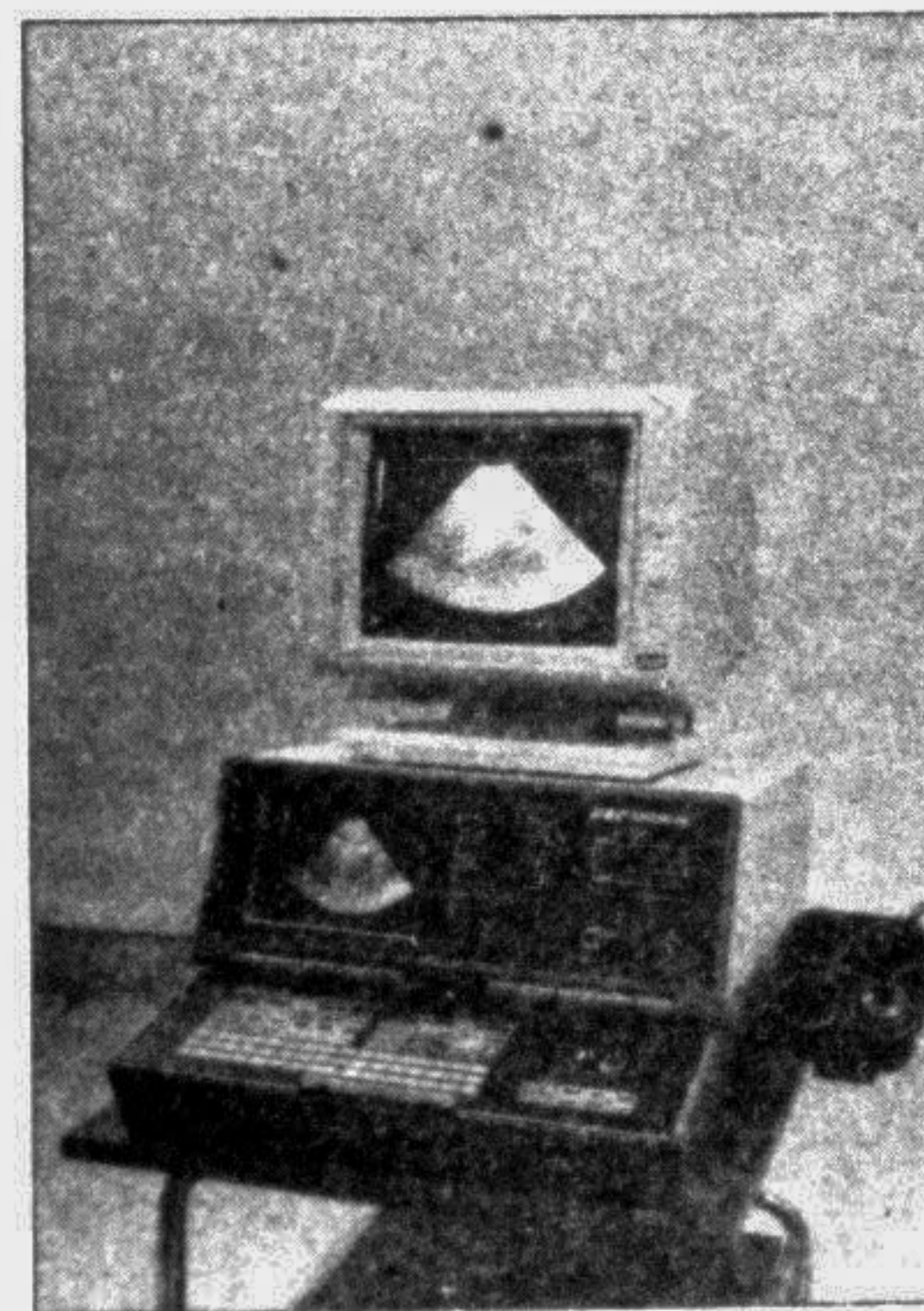
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Titas Gas fetches Tk 617.25 cr during last fiscal year

Titas Gas, country's largest gas field, supplied about 1074.29 Million Cubic Metre (MMCM) gas per year in four fertilizer factories, reports UNB.

Titas earned Tk 131.97 crore by selling gas in the fertilizer factories. From the earnings, it gives Tk 96.78 crore in national exchequer per year.

Natural gas is the main raw material for urea manufacture and basic components for production of urea, ammonia and carbon-dioxide. Titas supplied over 63 per cent gas for total fertilizer production in the country.

Titas also supplied about 2219.82 MMCM gas in country's seven power stations and earned Tk 311.74 crore per year. From the earnings, it contributed Tk 222.70 crore every year in national exchequer.

Titas supplied 82 per cent gas for total power production in the country. Besides, using in domestic purpose, 45 per cent of the commercial fuel is being met by Titas Gas.

It earned a total of Tk 617.25 crore and contributed Tk 496 crore in national exchequer in the fiscal 1991-92. Titas has also expanded its

supply in western part of the country through implementation of Brahmaputra Basin Project. Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Netrokona and Sherpur districts will come under its supply when the project will be completed by June 1994.

A total of 95 industrial lines, 69 seasonal, 582 commercial and 56,612 residential connections will be given within five years after completion of the project.

Government is also planning to set up an 100 mega watt power station by Titas Gas in greater Mymensingh district.

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