

Dhaka Day by Day

For Short Films a Shot in the Arm

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Documentary films or videos always had limited viewers and patrons, no matter how successful the story of the film was, or how much artistic value it was credited for. To popularise and to make local viewers aware of its subtle impact 'Dhaka Documentary Week '94' — October 30th to November 3rd — was organised by Pramannokar, an independent audio-visual workshop, at Goethe Institut or the German Cultural Centre.

The week's efforts focus on promoting documentaries. The scope was always limited in this area. Films were not always made. Within the last couple of years, three to four independent film makers, video makers have initiated this move. Their efforts may not be much, but it's a step. To appreciate their works, we arranged this week-long screening programme.

These films or videos deal with different subjects but initially a scanning was undertaken. The organisers issued letters, the interested ones submitted their works, a screening was done from where 17 best documentaries were selected for the show.

To encourage these new ones we have even arranged for a formal appreciation prize — a cash, a certificate and a trophy. Murad pointed out.

A formal jury board of six has been formed for the purpose. Moreover, screening of five selected international political documentaries of 90 minutes in length was also shown. This international panorama section was arranged so that people know the recent trends of documentaries abroad.

No one can deny the fact any more now, that documentary films are the only medium where crucial and acute problems of the society can be portrayed. But still this area of film making is holds no real chance. Film makers in this area cite many issues but hold the undemocratic principles of the society responsible mainly.

Yet, in spite of the adverse situation, people with love for this media and who are aware of the existing social crisis, are coming forward to try their talents in documentaries. With low

budget and unsophisticated equipment they seem to have promised to open new frontiers in this type of film and video making.

"The Tale of a Lane", a story about the Shankharis (makers of ornaments from sea shell) is an exceptional work. Black and white, "Twilight", a 36-minute documentary is on the last days of once-famous cameraman of commercial movies Sadhan Ray. The film screens the alienation and humiliation he had to go through at the fag end of his life.

The 40-minute "Eclipse" tries to make an in-depth study of fatwa — a decree issued by village moulanas for so-called offences committed by violating shariah.

Starring Rosy, an 11-minute experimental film is about the life and struggle of extra actresses of commercial movies.

"Remembrance '71" produced by Bangladesh Shortfilm Forum follows sculptor Hamiduzzaman Khan's series of works under the title.

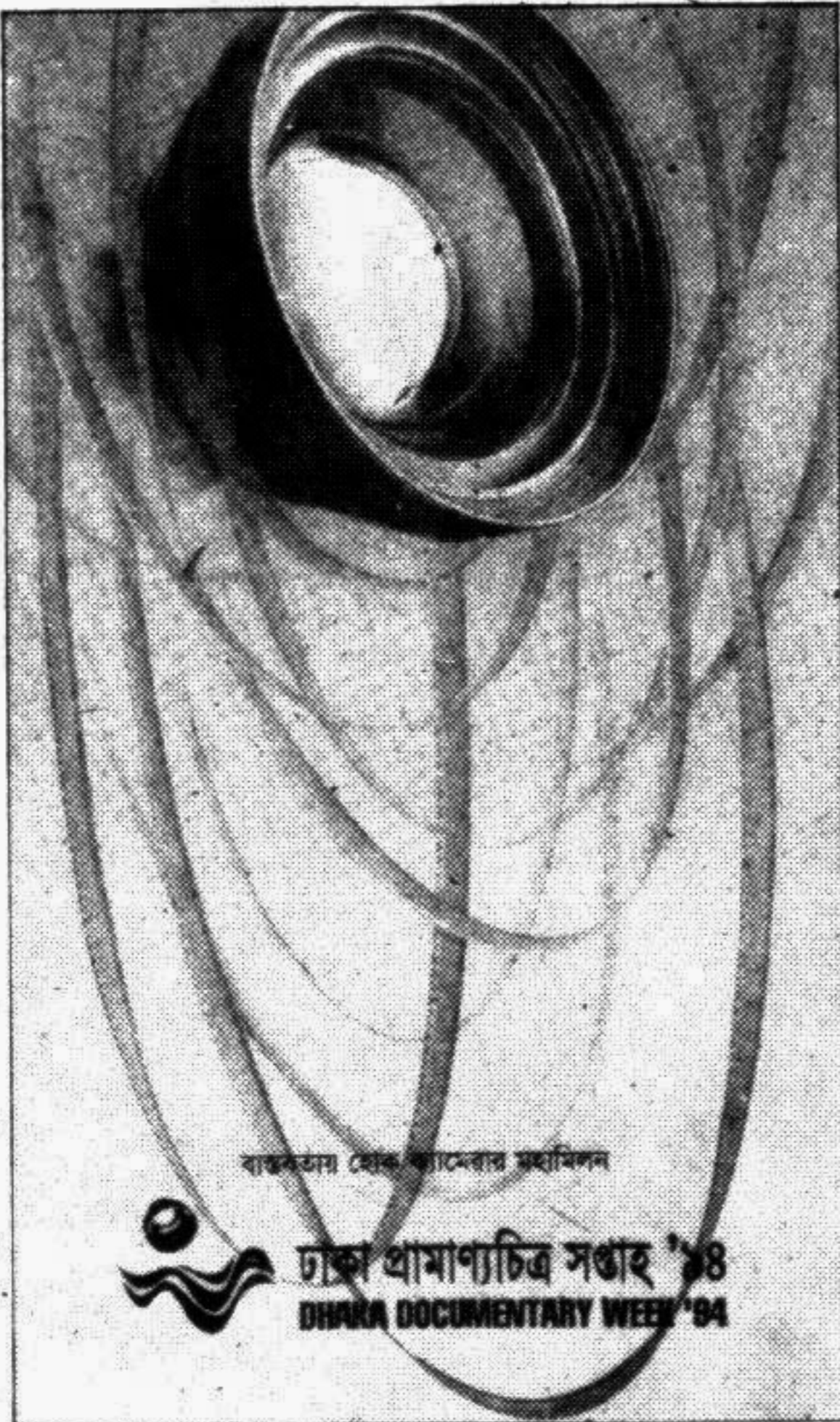
"Counter Image" is a film on an extraordinary man, Alamgir Kabir. This 56-minute work shows a man who tried relentlessly to develop progressive film culture in Bangladesh.

Besides these, the 50 minute "Life and death shows a sad story of Brazil. The international panorama section also screened the personal life of Anna Akhmatova, a most important poet of modern the Soviet Union.

Zahir Raihan's "Stop Genocide", the appeal of which goes beyond national boundaries, "In the Name of God", an investigative Indian documentary on the rise of fundamentalist politics, "Africa", an essay film on neo-imperialism were also screened.

This excellent initiative by Pramannokar will be organised every alternate year. "This will no doubt bring in the sense of competition among film makers and also the inspiration they lack so much," says a jury. Documentaries are always the basic of good film-making and what we see here proves the above fact.

We have no market, no viewers for these documentaries. So no good work is either being done in this area," he points out unpleasant fact adding, "these opportunities are no doubt steps towards a better future for documentaries."



Govt to set up community technical schools at each thana

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar has called upon the polytechnic teachers to put in their all-out efforts for improving the standard of technical education of the country, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing a 60-member delegation of the Bangladesh Polytechnic Teachers' Parishad at the Conference room of the Ministry of Education in the city yesterday. Education Secretary Irshadul Haq also spoke on the occasion.

The Education Minister said the government plans to establish two community technical schools in each thana of the country for imparting technical education to the students. He said, "The country will need for

about forty thousand diploma engineers within next five years if the current process of development continues."

He said the government has decided to introduce double shifts in all polytechnic institutes and diploma engineering courses in all vocational institutes for the expansion of technical education in the country.

The meeting discussed matters relating to 11-point demand of the Parishad including improvement of service structure, training of the teachers, promotion and higher education of the polytechnic teachers at all levels. The minister gave patient hearing to the demand of the Parishad and assured them to solve these problems within shortest possible time.



The Jamaat-e-Islami brought out a procession in the city yesterday to drum up support for today's PM's Secretariat gherao programme. — Star photo

Post-graduate scholarships of BISS

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) has established a programme of post-graduate research scholarships on International Relations in collaboration with the Dhaka University, says a press release.

Funded in association with the Ford Foundation, the programme is designed to promote research on international affairs and strategic studies, and will be targeted particularly to young and promising scholars.

The scholarships, tenable for 2-3 years, will be offered for the studies and research of M Phil and PhD degree.

An agreement to this effect was signed yesterday by Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University and Maj Gen Ghulam Quader, Director General of the BISS.

The scholarship will be open to young Bangladeshi graduates (holders of Master's degree) with high academic background in International Relations, Political Science, History, Economics, Law and other relevant subjects. Announcement regarding application and other necessary information will be made in due course.

Norwegian envoy meets Speaker

The outgoing Ambassador of Norway Jon A Gaarder called on Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali at his office chamber of the Sangsad Bhaban on Monday, reports BSS.

They exchanged views on bilateral and parliamentary issues.

Weather

Light rain likely

Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi division and the regions of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tangail, Comilla and Sylhet during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country during the period, the Met office forecasts.

Slight rise in temperature in Rajshahi division and the regions of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Comilla and Sylhet while nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, it added.

Country's highest temperature yesterday was recorded 32.5 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 17.9 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 5:18 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:10 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity of some major cities and towns recorded yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperatures		Humidity	
	in degrees Celsius	in percentage	6 am	6 pm
Dhaka	30.5	21.0	79	80
Chittagong	31.0	20.0	83	83
Rajshahi	28.0	20.0	78	85
Khulna	27.6	22.0	87	87
Barisal	28.7	21.5	92	91
Sylhet	30.8	21.5	70	77

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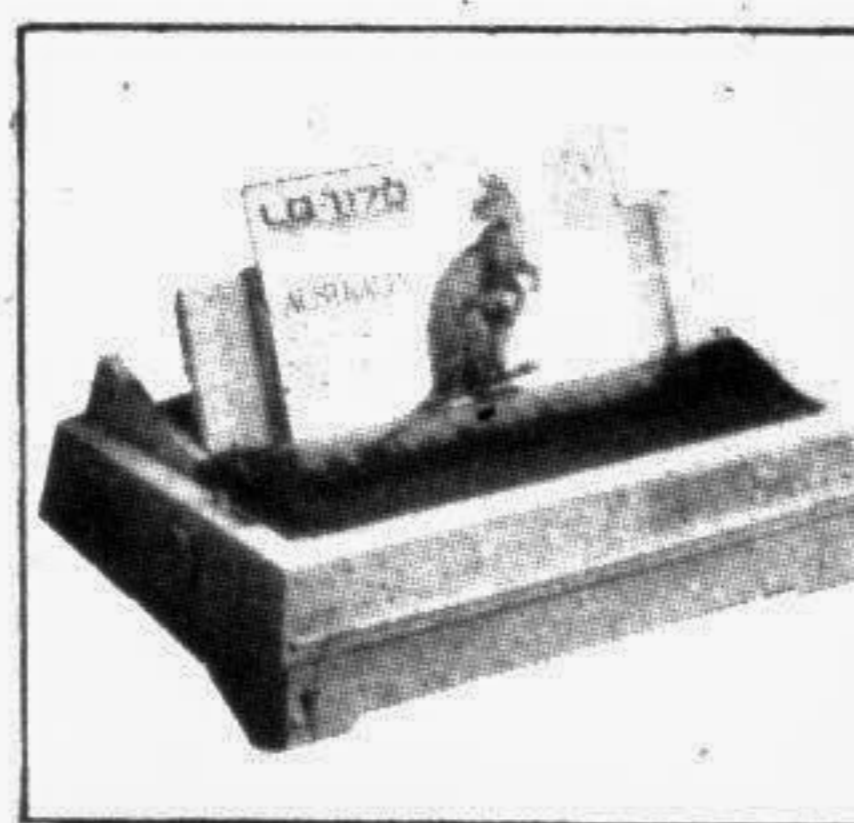
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