

A Group with a Successful Sales Know-how

by Fayza Haq



Jamal Ahmed: 'Artist and Model'



Sunil Rajan Howlader: 'Music'

talented, imaginative and knowledgeable group of seven young painters had an exhibit of 35 of their recent works at the residence of Jean Michel Lacombe, the French Ambassador. This included the works of Jamal Ahmed, Ifukharuddin Ahmed, Kanakchampa Chakma, Khalid Mahmud Mithu and Sunil R. Howlader.

All these displays brought in an astronomical sale profit for the painters as they all had a style that was easily recognisable by the average visual art connoisseur — although symbols were often used, and took one's flights of fancy to a peaceful world of well-blended compositions and buoyant colours, juxtaposed against soft and soothing ones. The texture works were dynamic, even though experimental. Going by their relative youth, they were successful, endeavouring and thought provoking. This one gathered, although one was caught up in the milieu of the oncoming deluge of art — enthusiasts, coming mainly from the *creme de la creme* of the Dhaka society.

Jamal Ahmed, in his 'Artist and Model-I' brings the artist himself in with quick and confident impressionistic strokes, while the paints on the palette are highlighted with a conglomeration of deep smudges, thus bringing in the most important element in the life of a painter. The nude female model with her statuesque figure, another vital factor in the life of an artist is seen standing poised, against a vermilion drapery, which is brought in as an oblong smudge and which contrasts and balances the rest of the

paraphernalia in the studio. The colours and strokes used are minimal yet the theme of the fate of a constantly struggling painter is well conveyed. Jamal's 'Artist and Painter-II' is more interesting than the earlier one. This is firstly, because the main subject is a woman, whose mental capabilities have often been belittled or ignored. Again, the presentation of the theme leaves more to one's imagination due to the choice of colours and the experimentation with the texture work. Dark shades of grey and blue pervade the combination, cleverly balanced with the enveloping white and four rectangles of vermilion, carefully distributed throughout the composition.

Ifukhar's 'Madonna', seen at an earlier exhibit of his solo venture at the Alliance Francaise, brings in the theme of motherhood, which has been attempted in the West since the days of cave-painting, and which reached its peak during the Renaissance. Ifukhar, back home after his 'conquests' in Paris, has combined the best visual elements of the East and West, as he has been always known to do. A cow and its calf are brought in like some dramatic geometrical forms, with the essential symbol superimposed in vermilion. Jet-pastel shades, strokes and lines, but despite this an optimistic vision prevails. I personally found Ifukhar's works more striking than those of his amicable colleagues.

Tribal life of the Chakma's which has often been in jeopardy, going by news reports, and photographs seen at

cluded to bring in the integral grace and selective taste of folk origin. Sketches and washes lent a poetic and ethereal effect to the piece.

'Folk Singers' by Khalid Mahmud Mithu, once again hark back to the richness of our folk cultural heritage, a theme that many of our young artists are attempting to glorify, at the various art galleries in Bangladesh. Mithu has brought in the musicians, with their *dhols* and *do-tara*. Headbands, heavy beaded garlands, amulets, *lungis* and *sari* of the folk singers with an impressionistic effect — with masses of gliding hues, offset by paler ones in the background and forefront. The effect is just not an ivory tower idyll but an honest clarion call to preserve our often forgotten wealth of the past. The theme of preservation of our natural environment is also suggested.

Sunil R Howlader, who has recently won a second prize at Montana, USA, youngest of all the painters mentioned in this piece, and most humorous in nature, had 'Music' as his prized entry. This contained two *dhols*, one leaning against the other, with a *teen-tara* in



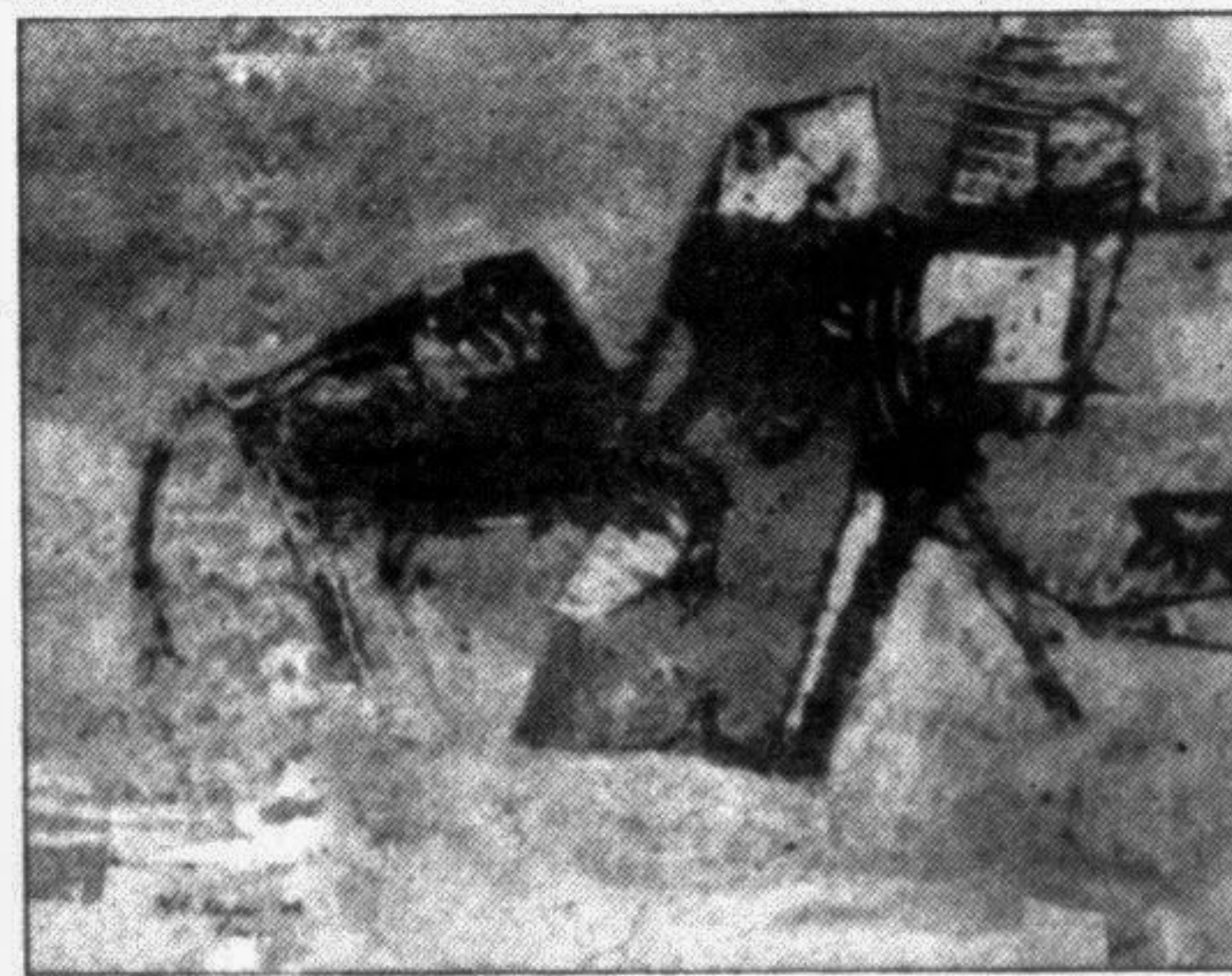
Kanak Champa Chakma: 'Tribal Life'

'Jojo', taken by Dr Shahidul Alam (one of the most recognised authority on photography in Bangladesh, as I understand), has more often than not been the subject of most of Kanakchampa Chakma's works. In her 'Tribal Life' the artist, with her light, fantastic and fairy-like strokes, brings in the successful and fairly cheap hand-loom work with its hand made threads and colours, which are later sold at much higher prices at Dhaka to patrons of both local and overseas origin.

The theme is brought in by intelligent and imaginative use of rectangles, lines and swirls of grey, chrome-yellow, sap-green and cobalt-blue, with impressions of details worked upon with contrasting colours. The fine points of the contours, garments and accessories of the women are

the background. These and a walking-stick, insinuating the essential theme of the devastation of our ethnic culture, are presented in a style similar to the other painters of the group, except for that of Ifukharuddin. The musical instruments are done in flamboyant hues and deft strokes to bring in details. The rest of the piece is a combination of Realism and Impressionism.

The artists, all associated with the 'Gallery Tone', definitely know how to capture the interest of most viewers, in Bangladesh, who prefer more of the conventional element of Realism combined with Impressionism, rather than the departure into Expressionism and the abstract (which currently glorify the galleries, both in the East and West). Ifukharuddin is an exception to this analysis of the group.



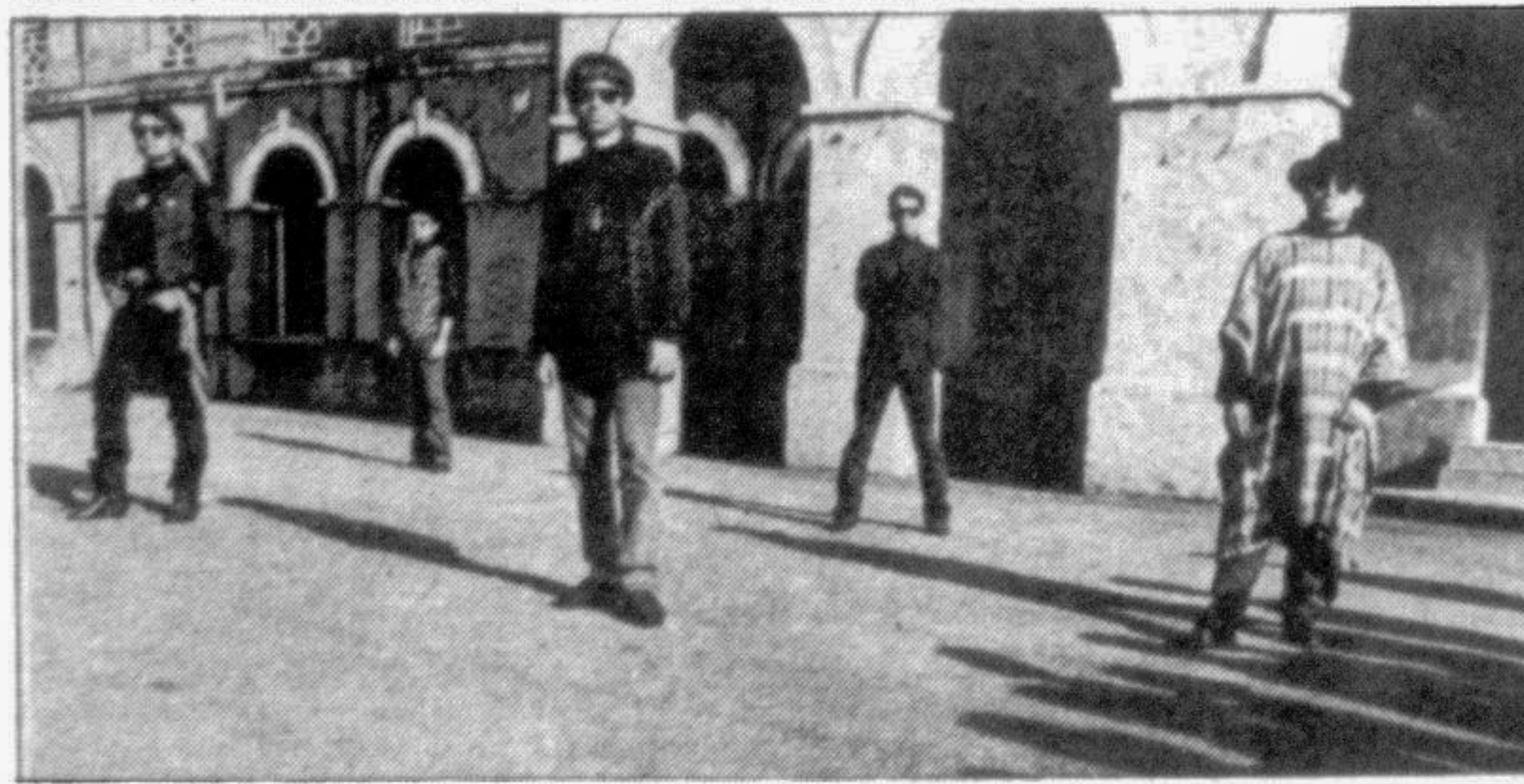
Ifukhar Uddin Ahmed: 'Madona'

Khalid Mahmud Mithu: 'Folk Singer'

"Sudden" — Releasing their Third Album

'SUDDEN' is one of the top most bands of the country. Sudden was formed in 1989. In the same year the band became a member of BAMB (Bangladesh Musical Bands Association). From the beginning of the band, it was a popular one among the music lovers of the country. They released their first album 'Agha' in 1991. It was a very successful album. Many of the songs of this album like — 'Nesha, Godhuli, Ghamse Para, Nishiratee, Byshakhee Mela, made an instant hit. Sudden released their 2nd album 'Annesha' in 1992. It didn't get as much acceptance as their previous one. But few of the songs from this album like — 'Shesh Byshakhee Mela, Brishti Jhorey Jai, Obelae, etc. was appreciated by the music lovers.

Current line up of the band is Dip — drums, Sazzad — bass, Nibir — voice, Upal — guitar, Lenin — key boards and band



leader. With this line up the band is going to release their third album during this month. Under BC production, their

This album consists of hard rock, rock n' roll, soft rock, blues, romantic composition with exceptional lyrics and tune. The songs of this cassette are written by Latiful

third album titled 'KAY?' will be in the market soon. Members of the band are very hopeful about this album. They hold an optimistic view that the music listeners of the country will like the songs of this album. Recently, they have completed their recording in 16 track recording system at the Audio Art Studio. The members of the band think that regardless of age, sex and class, people will like their songs because of their different tune, lyrics and composi-

Islam Shibli, Bappi Khan, Amit Masud Nayeem, Upal and Lenin.

Sudden will celebrate the release of their third album through a big ceremony. Band leader union says sudden will try to give an exceptional cassette each year for the music lovers of the country. They also hope to make a contract for their next cassette very soon after releasing their third cassette. They will bring out a video-ad for this album like their first one.

Delving Deep into the Political History of a Nation

BOOK REVIEW

BANGLADESH: Realities of Democracy and Crises

Author: Nadeem Qadir

Published by: Newweed's Work/Academic Publishers

PP: 120 Price: Taka 130



If journalism is a quick literature, journalists are also the current historians. Nadeem Qadir's maiden journey in authoring a significant book on Bangladesh's quest for democracy and reminiscence of the glorious war of independence, in which his father had embraced martyrdom, proves both the observations correct. 'Bangladesh: Realities of Democracy and Crises' is a 120-page book which has been authored by Nadeem recently. It seems to me as a brilliant production that deals with several important topics of contemporary Bangladesh, including a description of writer's personal experience of the country's liberation war.

The book, with an attractive multi-coloured cover designed with a picture of 1990's mass upsurge against Lt Gen. Ershad, first dwelt on writer's reminiscence of the liberation war. In this chapter, Nadeem has not only portrayed his personal memories which he still remembers, the chapter perhaps is an untold story of his motherland which had to go through a river of blood for achieving national independence from the barbarous Pakistani occupation. Nadeem's touching descriptions reminds us of those black days when thousands of our patriots were picked up and butchered by the brutal Pakistani army, who were probably entrusted with the responsibility to save Pakistan by killing innocent millions.

On April 17, 1971, the sound of boots banging on the door and uninterrupted door bell ringing told us that the hungry dogs had finally found my father, (who was an army officer). An army captain who came along with a large number of troops in a navy jeep. — He charged my father as 'traitor' and took him away at gunpoint. — Ironically, it was on April 17 that the Bangladesh government in exile was formed at the bordering Meherpur area, later named Mujibnagar. Young Nadeem remembers: 'We too were lined up to face a firing squad when we failed to produce my father's weapons. When that threat did not work, the officer in charge threatened to take me also with them. My mother cried with me and said "don't do that, kill us all if you want".'

Nadeem, his elder sister and till then an unborn brother have not seen his father from that day. Just before the arrest of his father and the day of his final disappearance, they also witnessed the mass killing on a hill near their locality in Chittagong. After that, the struggle for their survival began. He wrote afterwards, 'As guns roared and the blood of freedom fighters further reddened the soil of Chittagong, my brother Naveed was born on April 28. When I saw him for the first time after two days I could not believe my eyes — a miniature of my lost father. Before I could hug him to my delight, I was quickly whisked away to safety by Mrs Amin as the army had again arrived for a round of inspection.'

The writer was only a boy in 1971, but when he had grown up as a responsible citizen of his sovereign country he remembers the sacrifices of the valiant freedom fighters, including that of his proud father's. 'Sometimes we feel the war of liberation has failed and the sacrifices of the martyr have gone in vain. Because we could not achieve the objectives of the war and its ideals. — a corruption-free nation with wealth equally distributed to all its people along with full democratic rights'. The writer, as apparent from this chapter, is also for 'formal apology' by Pakistan for its crimes committed in this soil in 1971. But Nadeem Qadir's expectation remained a far cry, because we, the Bengalees, have been failing to demand this as forcefully as it deserved, to make us a self-respecting nation. Barring some 'appeals' to Islamabad from some political quarters, no governments of independent Bangladesh placed the formal demand for such an apology from Pakistan. But I share with the sentiment of the writer, that today or tomorrow, this has to be done, at least to honour the millions who had lost their lives.

Among the eight chapters, the book has an important chapter on the campaign against 1971's war criminals. The writer has explained how the anti-liberation and communal forces were rehabilitated in politics, especially

after the brutal assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and through the dropping of 'secularism' from the Constitution. He gave data in this chapter, showing how the 'Collaborators Ordinance' proclaimed on November 30, 1973, provided for the release of 2,076 prisoners held for alleged war crimes from various jails. Under this ordinance, of the 30,471 people arrested, 2,848 were brought to trail, one was sentenced to death and 752 were sentenced to different terms. These statistics were included in this chapter from an authentic publication, and I believe, they are mostly correct.

Nadeem Qadir then gave a detail of the backgrounds of the national campaign to try Golam Azam as a war criminal under the banner of a national committee headed by Mrs. Jahanara Imam, the late writer and mother of a martyred freedom fighter. He also projected, as a faithful reporter, the real happenings on the day, March 26, 1992, when a 'People's Court' tried the fundamentalist leader, Golam Azam, and convicted him with death sentence for war crimes. This portion of the book is just the narration or a chronology of events including the adverse reactions from the government of prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia about the whole exercise. In this chapter, he included various comments and statements of different political leaders, which can be used as reference.

Nadeem, in this chapter, also called for soul-searching, asking himself, 'Do we lack patriotism?' Analysing the unfortunate reactions from the government and some political parties, including the Jamaat-e-Islami, the party which opposed the liberation, Nadeem asks: 'And this is a shame for us, because we have let this man (Azam) stay here for so long and when his appointment came (as Deputy Ameer of

his party), we failed to act quickly to ensure that such a man, allegedly a war criminal, is taken to task. Nazi war criminals are being punished even today after 46 years, then why cannot Azam and his gang be tried?' By raising this pertinent question, Nadeem must have echoed the sentiments of his generation.

Several other chapters have been devoted in this book to narrate Nadeem's personal experience as a reporter to explain the events of downfall of Gen. Ershad, who ruled Bangladesh for nine years, and also his personal acquaintances with some national leaders. As a reporter of BSS news agency he has come to touch with many important political personalities, and his experience as a journalist, which he narrated in his book, might be of use for the students of politics. Nadeem later joined the Dhaka bureau of AFP as a Special Correspondent, and this new assignment favoured him more to watch closely the fall of Gen. Ershad through a mass movement in 1990. 'It was possibly my luck that the campaign for democracy or more popularly the 'Oust Ershad Campaign' took a serious turn when I joined AFP', he wrote. As a faithful correspondent he wrote a chronology of events of the downfall of Ershad from his own experience and examined the situation. In fact, the book Nadeem Qadir wrote devoted mostly to the campaign for democracy of the early nineties, during which period Gen. Ershad tried in vain to hold on to power.

Examining army's role during the 'Oust Ershad Campaign', the journalist wrote, 'As the opposition campaign gathered heat, the

military probably, worried about public wrath or a bloodshed in opposing the campaign against Ershad, in a surprise move on November 18 appealed to the angry political parties to call off their 48-hour strike as it coincided with the armed forces day'. The mainstream opposition obliged and announced quickly that they would instead go for a 24-hour stoppage.

In the chronology, Nadeem also wrote, this was the 'first contact between the Army and the opposition parties, prompting questions on the actual motive behind the appeal, some attributing it to a step to tackle the growing unrest by indicating their softening stand towards the political groups and others observed that it was an attempt to woo the public to avoid any unforeseen situation'. Suggesting that the 'army had a definite role in the final phase of the movement, he wrote quoting General Nooruddin Khan, the then Chief of Staff, that 'The army had expedited and cooperated in the pro-democracy campaign'. According to Nadeem, some officers accused Ershad of planning to make the army unpopular. 'General Ershad shrewdly undertook a plan showing high spending for defence specially for luxury items, to ensure that army was made unpopular as well as cornered and that they continued to support him despite public hatred and resignation'.

Among the eight chapters, the 'Role of the Press and its aftermath' is an important one, in which Nadeem analysed the role of the press in the aftermath of Ershad's fall. He truly remarked that the media never accepted President Ershad, citing an example that the journalists did not allow the military ruler to visit even the national press club. The book has also contained a chapter on the Burmese refugees pouring into Bangladesh soon after Begum Khaleda Zia took over as an elected Prime Minister.

Despite the publication being an important one, the book possibly lacks cohesion, and it appeared to me that some of the chapters should have been dropped to give the book a more cohesive colour. But such limitations, possibly in editing and planning apart, Nadeem's first venture in authoring the book in English is praiseworthy. The language of the book is lucid.

Reviewed by
Haroon Habib

Viewing Video

by Lenin Gani

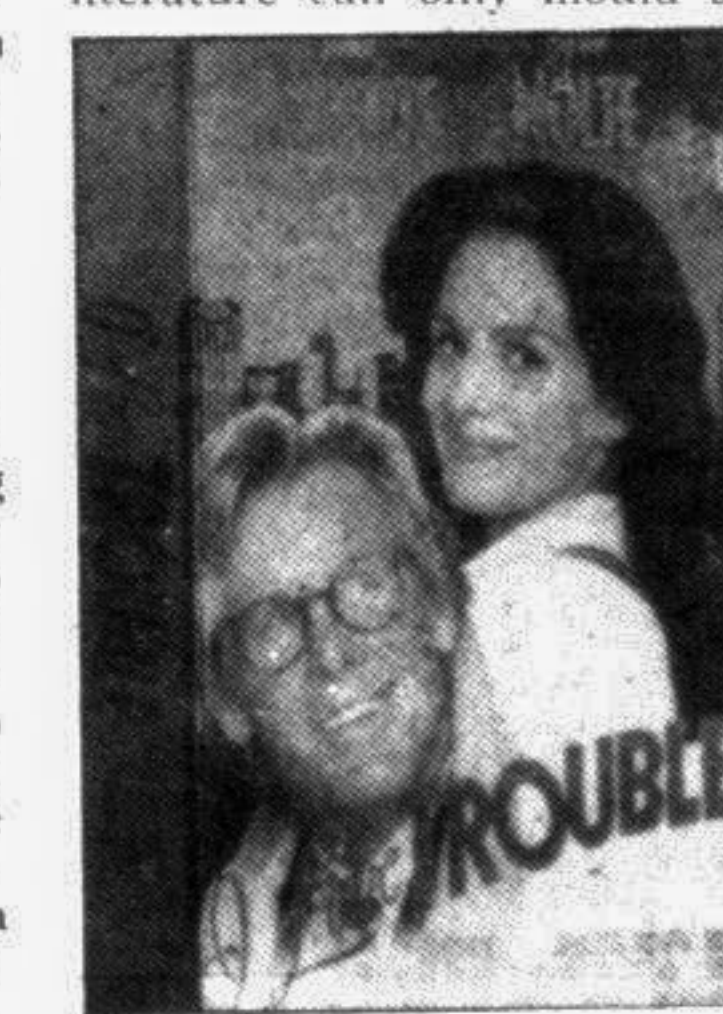
If one wants to understand the mind of a newspaper reporter on the trail of a sensational story then watch the dynamic duo of Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte in the comedy/thriller 'I Love Trouble'.

Peter Bracket (Nick Nolte) is a veteran journalist turned columnist for 'The Chicago Chronicle' who is too busy writing novels and appearing in TV chat-shows but one day quite by accident he has to cover a train mishap. At the scene, he meets Sabrina Peterson (Julia Roberts) who works for the rival 'Chicago Globe'. Bracket is a real male chauvinist. Peterson is determined to show she is not just a pretty face. Her first report catches Bracket totally by surprise. This fires him up and he responds with a hard-hitting story. In this way the two are consumed in a tit for tat match with each person trying to outscop the other. Their rivalry continues for the first half of the film. During their investigation they discover one of the passengers was carrying microfilm on a secret formula that some persons would kill to get their hands on. Bracket decides to extend Peterson the olive branch because to get to the bottom of the story they must pull their resources. After they join forces the tempo of the film picks up with Bracket and Peterson getting involved in plenty of thrills and spills right up to the very end.

The film owes a lot to an excellent script by Nancy Meyers and Charles Shyer. Let's just hope they can produce more in the future.

Bill Rago (Danny DeVito) has a precarious task indeed when he has to teach a group of US army recruits in Penny Marshall's 'Renaissance Man'. Rago is supposed to be a successful and campaigner but after losing an important client he loses his job and is forced to look for work at an employment agency. Reluctantly, he accepts a position to teach English at an army training centre. It takes time for him to settle in, but after ironing out the initial problems he hits it off with his students. Rago decides to teach William Shakespeare's Hamlet. However, the students' drill sergeant (Gregory Hines) doesn't show

much enthusiasm arguing that discipline and not only literature can only mould a



ENGLISH

NAME	TYPE	CAST
1. I Love Trouble	(Com/Thriller)	Julia Roberts/ Nick Nolte
2. Pulp Fiction	(Action/Com)	John Travolta/ Bruce Willis
3. Renaissance Man	(Comedy)	Danny DeVito
4. Terminal Velocity	(Act/Thriller)	Charlie Sheen
5. Cactus Jack	(Com/Western)	Kirk Douglas/ Arnold Schwarzenegger
6. Eyes Of An Angel	(Drama)	John Travolta
7. Little Giants	(Comedy)	Rick Moranis
8. Wes Craven's New Nightmare	(Horror)	
9. Trial By Jury	(Drama)	William Hurt
10. Never Cry Wolf (Walt Disney)	(Adv)	
11. Blank Man	(Comedy)	Robin Givens
12. Gone Are The Days (Walt Disney)	(Comedy)	
13. Automatic	(Sc. Fiction)	Oliver Gruner/ Daphne Ashbrook
14. Oblivion	(Comedy)	
15. Ernest Goes To School	(Comedy)	
16. Getting In	(Murder/Thriller)	
17. Striking Point	(Spy/Thriller)	
18. Dead Badge	(Police/Thriller)	
19. They Who Dare	(Action)	Dirk Bogarde

HINDI

NAME	TYPE	CAST
1. Andas Apna Apna	(Rom/Comedy)	Amir Khan/ Salman Khan/ Raveena/ Karishma/Shakti Kapoor
2. Beta Ho To Aisa	(Social)	Govinda/Versha/ Gulshan Grover
3. Subhaag	(Rom/Action)	Ajay/Nagma/ Akshay Kumar/ Karishma
4. Yaar Gaddar	(Action)	Mithun/Saif Ali/ Prem Chopra/ Gulshan Grover

Source: Film Fair Video and other clubs.

The Cry

by Faruquddin Ahmed

At dead of night everyday I hear
A voice, a subdued shriek with fear
I know not what causes the awful cry
Maybe it's the sound of a soul in distress
A human tragedy with no bounds or redress
When the morning papers print painful stories
Of young housewives committing suicides
My heart shudders, mutters inside me is it that?
The cry that floats in the night sky so often
That which is made as something else to go!