

# Dhaka Day by Day

## A Feast of Films on Offer

by Rashida Ahmad



The 3rd Dhaka Film Festival is dedicated to the founding fathers of film, the Lumiere brothers, on the eve of the centenary (1995) of world cinema.

However, 'world cinema' these days is increasingly being usurped by big-budget American films, especially when we consider the 'foreign' films on offer in Dhaka. Whether we subscribe to Star movies or our local video store, the choice is invariably limited to Hollywood productions.

Which is why a film festival of this kind is such an important undertaking. Not only because it presents film-goers with foreign alternatives to Hollywood, but it also provides a forum for our own young and talented film-makers, who are challenging the onslaught of the commercial Bollywood-type productions which are becoming more and more stereotyped in their portrayal of violence and lewd eroticism.

The inauguration of the festival earlier this week began with a request to the audience to join in the slogan for this year's festival: "Better Films, Better Audience, Better Society."

There can be little doubt that film, as an art form and as a purveyor and reflector of cultural values, can have an impact on society.

The Rainbow Film Society, as organisers of the festival, aim to stimulate the film-culture in Bangladesh, and create an environment in which the demand for better films can be made. To this end, the films on offer, from 12 different countries, are not all commercial successes. But many have become classics of their time, or are winners of awards from international film festivals.

However, there is no avoiding the fact that a festival of this kind can have but little direct bearing on the common movie-goer in Dhaka. When the majority of the population in a city such as ours is poor and illiterate, subtitled foreign films are of little interest to them.

The average cinema audience in Dhaka is predominantly "working class," consisting of rickshaw wallas, factory workers, labourers, etc. whose main reason for going to see a film is to escape the drudgery of daily life, rather than to acquire "meaningful social insight."

Even so, many of us welcome an international festival of this sort for the opportunity to view films that are otherwise inaccessible. And we can only hope that more efforts of this kind will be made with the objective of creating some positive impact even in the world of commercial cinema aimed at the "masses."

### Pakistani envoy pays farewell call on Biswas

President Abdur Rahman hoped that earnest effort would be made to resolve the outstanding issues between Pakistan and Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The President also expressed the hope that the existing excellent bilateral relations in different fields of co-operation would be further strengthened in the day ahead, when the outgoing Pakistan High Commissioner Anwar Kemal made a farewell call on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

In this context, he also hoped that Bangladesh, Pakistan, and other SAARC countries would work together to make the association an effective institution for promoting the socio-economic conditions of people in the region.

Wishing the success of the people of Bangladesh, the outgoing envoy said "They are democratic-minded and hold high nationalistic spirit."

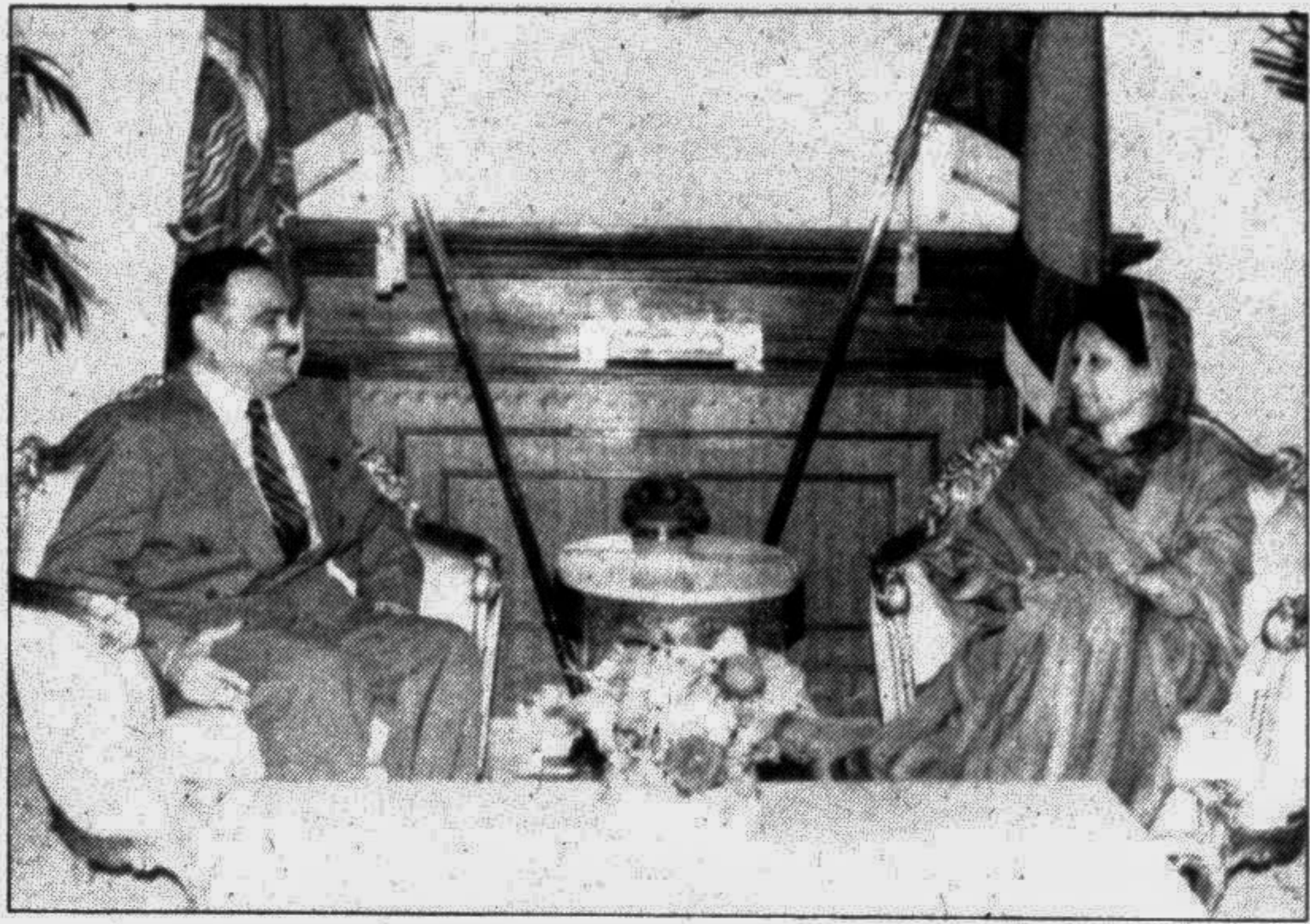
### JS body told 66 public libraries in country

The 34th meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Cultural Affairs was held yesterday at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, reports BSS.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum was in the chair.

The meeting discussed elaborately the activities of National Public Library. The meeting was informed that a total of 66 public libraries have been operating under the public library directorate including a central library in Dhaka and 58 district level libraries.

Around 16 thousand readers work in these libraries every day and around 7 lakh books have been collected so far for these libraries.



The outgoing Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Kemal made a farewell call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

### Taka 45 crore BDRCS budget okayed

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has passed a Taka forty-five crore balanced budget for the year 1995 making allocations of Taka two crore for development and Taka fifteen crore for project implementation, reports BSS.

The budget passed at the annual general meeting of the society yesterday showed a grant of Taka seventeen crore and an assistance of Taka one crore and nineteen lakh from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS) on account of relief.

In the revenue income, another grant of Taka three crore and forty-eight lakh was shown for the Myanmar refugees head, according to a press release.

While piloting the budget,

the Treasurer of the Society M A Jinnah MP said under the present context it was the appropriate document of income and expenditure. He said that all the on-going projects and programmes of the society had been given uniform treatment on the basis of importance.

The acting secretary-general of the Society M A Matin while placing the annual report, have an elaborate picture of the activities of the society.

The Chairman of the Society Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal MP, in his speech, said that the humanitarian activities of the society had been expanded during the past years.

The routine humanitarian relief operations for natural calamities and fire incidents were run smoothly, he said.

### Discussion on Jagadish Bose

Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday eulogised Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose as great personality and said his contributions to mankind, transcended all geographic boundaries, reports BSS.

"We are proud that he was the son of our land and we need to recall him for our own benefit," he said.

Prof Badruddoza said this while speaking at a discussion on the "life and works of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose" arranged by Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose Foundation at WAPDA auditorium in the city.

Dibakar Sen, superintendent of J C Bose unit and Museum of Bose Institute in Calcutta and Prof Anisuzzaman of Bengali Department of Dhaka University took part in the discussion.

### Nat'l Science Exhibition begins tomorrow

The National Association of UNESCO Clubs in Bangladesh in co-operation with UNESCO Regional Office of Science and Technology for South and Central Asia, New Delhi and Bangladesh, National Commission for UNESCO will hold the three day "National Science & Technology Exhibition '94" beginning tomorrow at Motijheel Govt Boys High School, says a press release.

Education Minister Jamruddin Sircar will inaugurate the exhibition at 3:30 pm. Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology will be the special guest while Prof M Shamsul Haq, Chairman University Grants Commission will preside over the inaugural function of the exhibition. The exhibition will remain open to all.

### Workshop on environment management

KHULNA, Dec 27: A day-long workshop on "regional environment management" was held today at BMCDC auditorium under the auspices of divisional office of Environment Department here reports BSS.

The objective of the workshop was to identify the regional problems of environment as well as create awareness among the people for its solution.

About forty concerned officials of government and non-government offices of Khulna division took part in the workshop.

### MEMORIUM



RANJIT SELIM

Wherever you are please pray for her departed soul 28/12/90

Selim Family

### 59 held in city

Police rounded up 59 people, including seven wanted criminals, from different parts of the city yesterday. UNB reports quoting a DMP press release.

The arrested, who also include two charged under the Arms Act and two with abduction, two accused of robbery and nine of stealing, were produced before court.

### Tafseer-e-Quran mahfil in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 27: A five-day Tafseer-e-Quran mahfil began at the Parade Ground at Chawkbazar here yesterday, reports BSS.

The mahfil has been organised by the Islami Samaj Kallyan Parishad. Noted Islamic thinkers and theologians are taking part in the mahfil.

### Zail Singh's death condoled

Bangladesh Bharat Maitree Samity yesterday expressed its deep shock and grief at the death of the former Indian President Giani Jai Singh, reports BSS.

The samity has expressed its sympathy to the government and people of India and the members of the bereaved family.



RMH Hirji, chairman of the Aga Khan Foundation, Bangladesh, handing over a cheque of Tk 40.15 million to F H Abed, executive director of the BRAC in the city recently.

### Weather

#### Dry spell to continue

Dry weather is likely to prevail with partly cloudy sky over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met Office forecasts no appreciable change in night temperature is expected over the country.

The sun sets today at 5:20 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded yesterday in different part of the country are given below:

| City        | Temperatures in degrees Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |      |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
|             | Max                             | Min  | 6 am                   | 6 pm |
| Dhaka       | 25.7                            | 11.5 | 69                     | 72   |
| Chittagong  | 27.1                            | 15.0 | 80                     | 59   |
| Cox's Bazar | 27.5                            | 15.3 | 70                     | 65   |
| Sylhet      | 26.8                            | 14.0 | 82                     | 70   |



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