

## RECOMMENDATIONS



## Cinema

Meghla Aakash, a full length feature film on awareness against HIV/AIDS has been released in different cinema halls of the city. With casts of two renowned Bollywood superstars Shabana Azmi and Ayub Khan, the film also features local stars like Moushumi, Purnima, Shakil Khan, Amit Hasan, Ferdousi Majumdar, Shahidul Alam Sachchu and many other well known faces. It is an experimental production done by the organisation of FemCom, a N.G.O. The film is recommended for adults only.

## Sculpture exhibition

A weeklong sculpture and art exhibition by artist Nisar Hossain which began on March 25, is going on at the city's Gallery 21.

## Solo art show

A solo exhibition of Ronni Ahmed started at the Alliance Francaise de dhaka art gallery in the city. The exhibition remains open for all till April 5.

## Painting

An exhibition of recent paintings by Murtaza Baseer starts from today evening at Gallery Shilparag at Dhanmondi in the city. The opening ceremony starts at 6:00 p.m. to be attended by the Minister for Commerce, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury. The exhibition is open for the general public from April 1 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

## Theatre

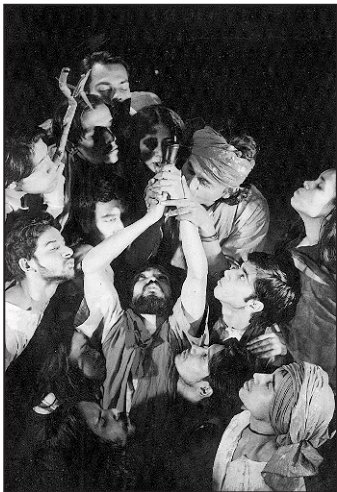
## Mystic maze and marijuana worship

*Koinna, a theatrical production by Prachyanat retraces the mossy paths of village religiosity*

SAIFUL ISLAM

THE priceless acting of the theatre group Prachyanat questions the authenticity of the village religious gurus. Koinna, a Murad Khan piece directed by actor-director Azad Abul Kalam caught the plaudits of the viewers for its sincere presentation of the lies underneath the so-called mystic power of village saints. The drama was one among the many events of the four-day long festival organized by the famous theatre group Prachyanat. The festival ended on 29th March.

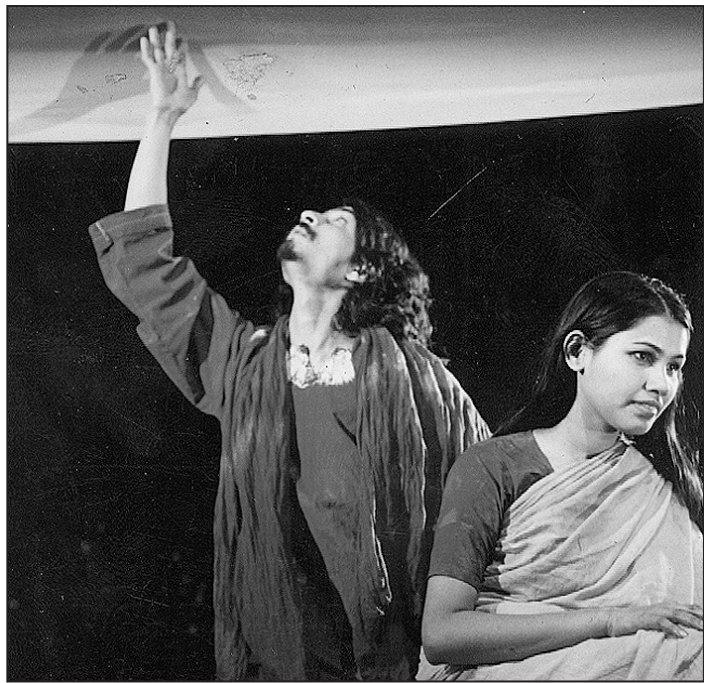
Though the physical drama of the group were quite touching, the quintessential Sylhet verbosity was quite difficult to approach. The appropriate use of slang and slapstick helped the presence of realism in the piece to a great extent. The stage and light by Saiful Islam were praiseworthy. The clever use of background music and music played on stage helped to uphold



A scene, taken from Koinna, features Azad Abul Kalam and others

the cacophonous clutter haunting the atmosphere of the set.

The inhabitants of the village Kalaruka believe that "Koinnapir" looks after them in their distress.



Shahana and Rahul appear in a dramatic sequence of the play

The central figure of many legends, "Koinnapir" came to the village years ago but his memory is still green. Many believe that his disciple Bahurupi lives underneath the mossy water of the age-old pond as a fish. The pond belongs to Nairor, the descent of the then owner of the house.

Everyone believes that "Koinnapir" possesses Nairor and his words are carried out as if uttered by a half-god addicted to Ganja. At the end of the play the position of this powerful figure is challenged by the arrival of Sahebzada in the scene. This man wants to spread his own doctrine and influence.

From the beginning to the end of the play it maintained a vague stance. No message is given. We do see the presence of repressed sexual agony, from the fey and delicate koimna to the father figure Nairor, all are prey to their libido. The open way with which this conflict is revealed deserves a lot of accolades. We do not have one character that is not prey to his or her shortcomings, no Goodman on stage. All of them suffer from their sin, and the sin is predominantly mental.

The cruel aspect of village politics and the fragility of the religious believe of the village people are focused with much clarity. The impotency of Dilbar and his relationship with his gay friend makes the life of Koinna, the newly wedded girl, vulnerable. She gives way to her sensitivity and is spelled by the charismatic presence of Bahurupi, who remains a legend. She becomes pregnant and then wants to save her baby at the price of Nairor's life. Nairor's presence enchanted her now and then, but as the plot thickens and both of them are trapped Nairor considers it wise to sacrifice and sticks to the changing order without opposing it.

The presence of Shahnaz Zerin as Mastura and Towfiqul Islam as Mehab added life to many scenes of the theatre revealing some hidden recesses of human life.

## Cinema

## Panic Room released

AS a critic I indulge myself by scoffing at loopholes in thrillers that could not exist without them. I guess I'm seeking the ideal of a thriller existing entirely in a world of physical and psychological plausibility. "Panic Room" is about as close as I'm likely to get. Yes, there are moments when I want to shout advice at the screen, but just as often the characters are ahead of me. They also ask the same questions I'm asking, of which the most heartfelt, in a thriller, is "why didn't we do that?"

The movie, directed by David Fincher and written by David Koepp, embraces realism almost as a challenge. The movie resembles a chess game; the board and all of the pieces are in full view, both sides know the rules, and the winner will simply be the better strategist. Once we sense "Panic Room" isn't going to cheat, it gathers in tension, because the characters are operating out of their own resources, and that makes them the players, not the pawns.

Jodie Foster and Forest Whitaker star as the chessmasters. She's Meg, a rich woman, recently divorced, who is spending her first night in a big Manhattan brownstone with her teenage daughter, Sarah (Kristen Stewart). He's Burnham, a home invader lured by tales of millions hidden in the house by its former owner. The house includes a "panic room" on the third of four stories—a reinforced retreat with independent supplies of air, electricity and water, which can be locked indefinitely to keep the occupants safe. Burnham's day job: "I spent the last 12 years of my life building rooms like this specifically to keep out people like us."

He's talking to his partners Junior



Jodie Foster in Columbia's Panic Room - 2002

(Jared Leto) and Raoul (Dwight Yoakam). Junior brought Burnham and Raoul onto the job, and Burnham hates it that Raoul brought along a gun. Their plan is to get in, find the money, and get out. According to Junior's information, the house is empty. It is not, and soon Meg and Sarah are locked in the safe room, the three men are outside, and it looks like a stalemate except that neither side can afford to concede.

We already know the layout of the house. We got the tour when the real-estate agent showed the women through the rooms, and again in a vertiginous shot that begins in the upstairs bedroom, swoops down two floors, zooms into the keyhole, pulls back, and careens upstairs again. The shot combines physical and virtual camera moves, a reminder that Fincher ("Seven," "The Game," "Fight Club") is a visual virtuoso. He's also a master of psychological gamesmanship, and most of the movie will bypass fancy camerawork for classical intercutting between the cats and

the mice (who sometimes trade sides of the board).

I have deliberately not described much of the strategy itself. That would be cheating. Once you know what everyone wants and how the safe room works, the plot should be allowed to simply unfold. There is a neat twist in the fund of knowledge about the room; Burnham, who builds them, knows a lot more about how they work, their strengths and limitations, than Meg and Sarah, who start out basically knowing only how to run inside and lock the door.

The role of Meg was originally filled by Nicole Kidman. I learn from Variety that she had to drop out after a knee injury and was replaced by Foster. I have no idea if Foster is better or worse than Kidman would have been. I only know she is spell-binding. She has the gutsy, brainy resilience of a stubborn scrapper, and when all other resources fail her she can still think fast—and obliquely, like a chessmaster hiding one line of attack inside another.

The intruders are ill-matched, which is the idea. Burnham has the knowledge, Junior has the plan, and Raoul has the gun. Once they are all

**Release Date:** March 29, 2002  
**Starring:** Meg Altman: Jodie Foster  
Sarah Altman: Kristen Stewart  
Burnham: Forest Whitaker  
Junior: Jared Leto  
Raoul: Dwight Yoakam  
Stephen: Patrick Bauchau  
Evan: Ian Buchanan  
Lydia Lynch: Ann Magnuson  
Columbia Pictures presents directed by David Fincher. Written by David Koepp. Running time: 112 minutes. Rated R (for violence and language).

inside the house and know the plan, therefore, Junior is not entirely necessary, unless the others are positively determined to split the loot three ways. On the other hand, Burnham hates violence, and Raoul is such a wild card he may shoot himself in the foot.

The end game in chess, for the student of the sport, is its most intriguing aspect. The loss of pieces has destroyed the initial symmetry and created a skewed board—unfamiliar terrain in which specialized pieces are required to do jobs for which they were not designed. There is less clutter; strategy must run deeper because there are fewer alternative lines. Sacrifices may be brilliant, or they may be blunders, or only apparent blunders. Every additional move limits the options, and the prospect of defeat, swift and unforeseen, hangs over the board. That is exactly the way "Panic Room" unfolds, right down to the detail that even at the end the same rules apply, and all the choices that were made earlier limit the choices that can be made now.

Review by Roger Ebert.  
Source: Internet



Kristen Stewart and Jodie Foster in Columbia's Panic Room - 2002

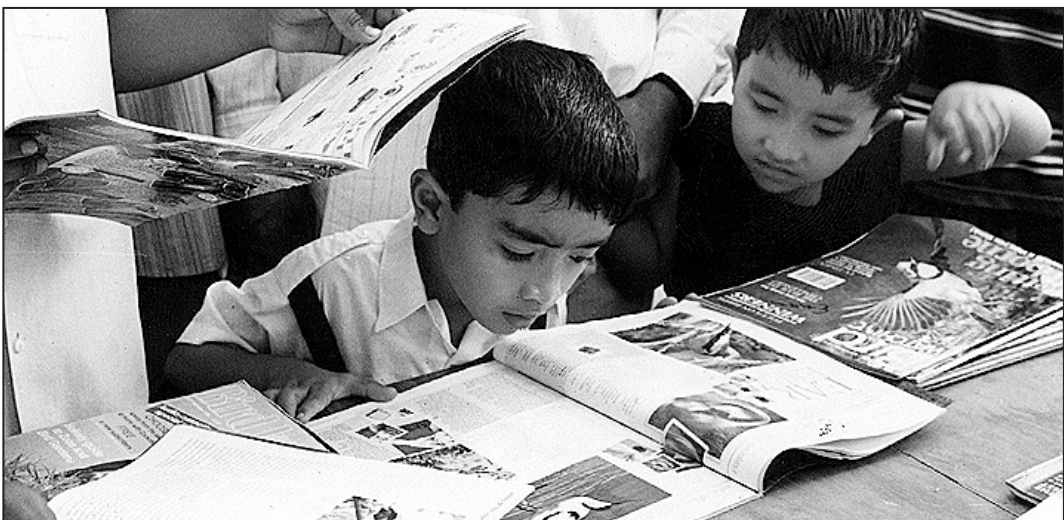


Jared Leto in Columbia's Panic Room - 2002

## Event

## Birds and stars amaze enthusiasts

*Bangladesh Bird Club and Bangladesh Astronomical Association jointly organise a bird fair and star-gazing event at Amtali in Borguna on March 26*



Curious children flap over the pages of colourful bird books at the fair

## CULTURE DESK

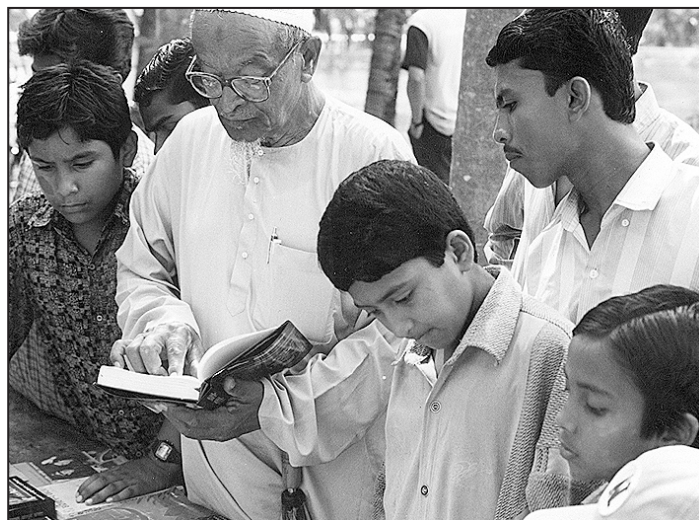
A Bird Fair and Sky Observation Camp that spanned for a day and two evenings, was organized at Amtali Deegan College in Borguna to celebrate the Independence Day. Bangladesh Bird Club and Bangladesh Astronomical Association jointly organized the event at the behest of the college authority. The fair started at 10:30 a.m. on March 26 with exhibition of bird photographs and slides by renowned photographer and bird specialist Enam Ul Haque. Large

prints of 36 species of birds of Bangladesh were exhibited which was specially inspiring to the young children. The slide show was organized in a large room of the college. Slides of 75 species of birds of Bangladesh were shown by Enam Ul Haque with accompanying descriptions and special notes on people's role in conserving the birds. About 150 students of different schools and colleges besides the teachers saw the slide show. The students took a quiz test after the show. Top three performers were later on awarded with prizes and

certificates by the club members.

The corridor of the college was decorated with numerous posters on the galaxies, stars, the sun and the planets. In another room, about a 100 students listened to Mashhoorul Amin speaking on the universe at large and the solar system in particular. At the end of the lecture, the students took a quiz test on astronomy. The top three performers would receive rewards later.

The biggest hall room of the college was humming with little children bent over their drawing sheets to paint birds they love. The



Enthusiastic nature lovers of all ages visit the fair at Amtali

children's art camp was conducted by M. A. Muhi of Bangladesh Bird Club assisted by Ferdousi Akhtar and other teachers of Bokulnesa Women's College. Every participant of the art camp would receive a certificate of participation and the five top performers would be awarded prizes later.

A colorful tent and a spotting-scope were placed by the water near the college. The children had the first hand experience of bird-watching in the field. Amtali has several *Heronries* (nesting sites of herons, egrets & cormorants) and roosting

places of rare birds like Storkbilled Kingfishers. The main purpose of the fair is to conserve these places through increased awareness of the local people. Enam Ul Haque first saw these places in June 2001 and had proposed it as a fair venue. To make it more interesting and eventful for the people he included the events related to astronomy to the Bird Fair.

After dusk the sky observation camp started at the college premises. Two telescopes were placed in the field, each at different height: one for the children, one for the



Children at the fair rehearse bird watching

adults. Because of the bright moon the sky did not have many object to watch besides it. The mountains and the seas of the moon were, however, objects worth watching. At the end of the sky observation the slide show for the people started. One hundred slides of the birds of Bangladesh and Enam Ul Haque's journey to Antarctica were shown. Mr. Enamul Haq Talukder, a pilot who hails from Amtali, presented the slides with his commentary. Nearly 700 people including the local Member of the Parliament, Thana Nirbahi Officer, principal and teachers of the Col-

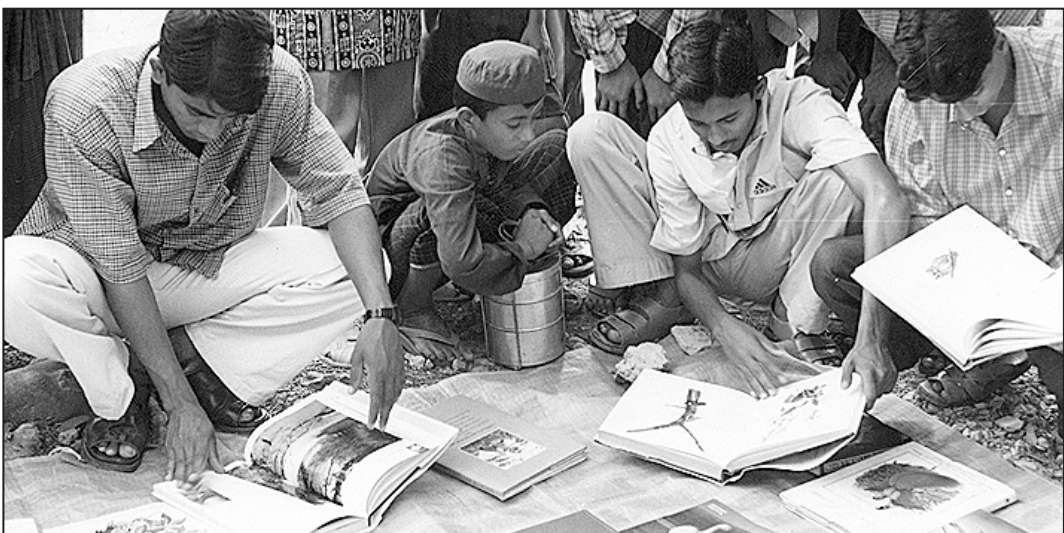
leges and schools turned up to enjoy the event.

The next evening, after dusk, an hour long movie titled *Man on the Moon* was screened. A large number of people, specially children, enjoyed the movie with Bangla commentary.

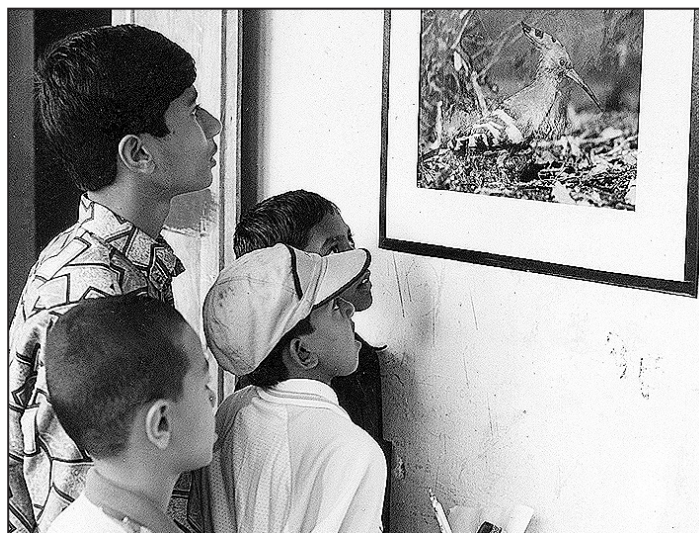
In the certificate & prize awarding ceremony, the winners of the art camp and quiz competitions received prizes and certificates. Mr. Matiar Rahman Talukder MP was the chief guest and Mr. Shaikh Mizanur Rahman, a TNO was the special guest to the ceremony. In his

speech Mr. Matiar Rahman thanked Bangladesh Bird Club & Bangladesh Astronomical Association for selecting Amtali as the site for the Bird Fair & Sky Observation Camp. He said that the people of Amtali would do everything to conserve the wildlife and bio-diversity of the area.

Enam Ul Haque thanked the principal and the teachers of the college for hosting the Fair. He said, 'Young children naturally love bird and other creatures; all we adults has to do is nurture their love to promote conservation'.



Young people pour over bird books at the fair



Children marvel at bird photos



Children draw colourful pictures of birds