

Cinema

Fate of Janani hangs in balance

Production of a government-financed film based upon a novel of Shaukat Osman, remains suspended since last four years after stoppage of fund

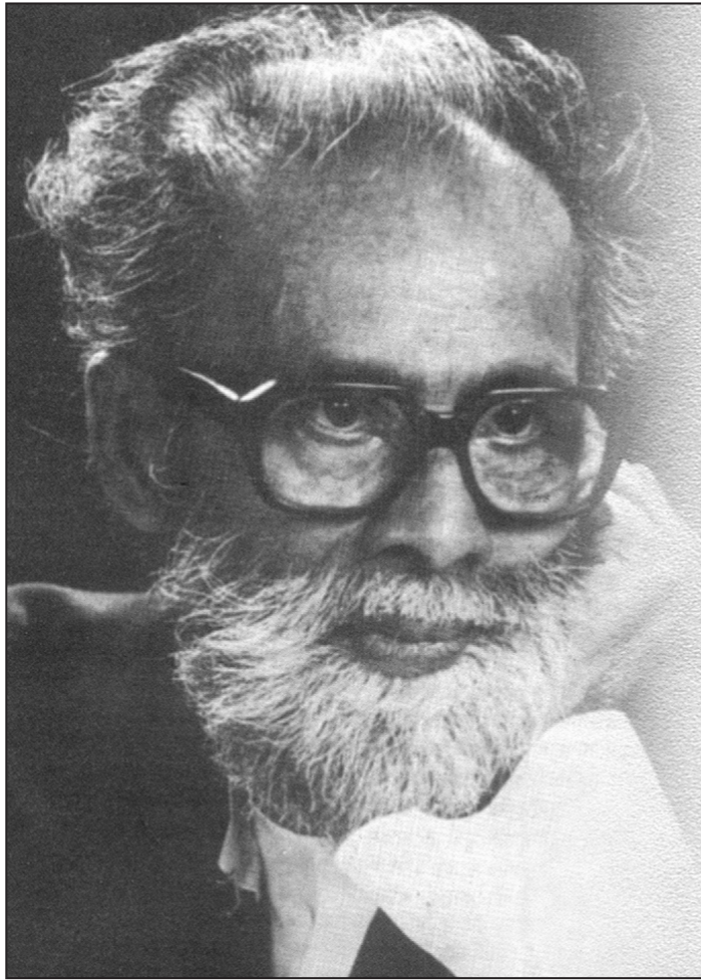
CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangla feature film, titled 'Janani', based upon a novel of eminent author, Shaukat Osman, was being produced with a complete sponsorship from the ruling government of the country during the year 1996-97. But unfortunately, with the sudden death of Shaukat Osman, the government-owned institution of Film Development Corporation (FDC), which was entitled to pay the amount in phases, stopped releasing any further sum to Shaukat's son and producer of the film, Jean-Nesar Osman. Jean-Nesar is a diploma holder of Poona Film Institute of India.

According to reliable sources and upon evaluation of legal documents, it could be gathered that an official agreement was signed between Jean-Nesar Osman (first party) and the then-ruling Government of Bangladesh (second party) on July 21 in 1997 for the film 'Janani' that was termed in the document as a Government-sponsored film of the year 1996-97.

Bangladesh Film Development Corporation also agreed to provide technical assistance to the producer of 'Janani' and in this regard, a new accord was fixed upon mutual acceptance between the two parties on August 26 of the same year. A file was opened at the FDC office in this regard and the file number read, FDC/PRO-2295/97/391(18).

A cheque of taka fifteen lacs was issued in favour of the producer, Jean-Nesar Osman, on September 11 in 1997. An additional cheque of taka fifty



Shaukat Osman

thousand was issued in favour of Shaukat Osman, as remuneration of the writer of the original plot.

It may be mentioned, as per an article of the agreement, the entire amounts of the two sanctions were handed over to the Information Ministry who have been dealing the matter with the producer of the film. It has been agreed upon by the two sides that the amounts would be

collected later on, by the producer's side, through installments.

As sources further inform, a mere thirty percent of the film's works have been done through private fund and the preliminary screening of the Rush-Print was handed to the Department of Film and Publication on November 18 in 1997 for purpose of viewing by the preview committee that was headed by Akmal

Hussain, the past secretary of the Ministry of Information.

It was the month of May in 1998, specifically to say, the 15th day of the month, when a bolt struck Janani almost from the blue. After a brief illness, Shaukat Osman, the original creator of the film's plot, a guide and mentor of the production unit, breathed his last. The government in awe and disappointment of all stopped the funding of 'Janani', with lame excuses of various kinds.

The fourth death anniversary of Shaukat Osman was observed at the auditorium of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra on May 14, this year by the management of 'Shaukat Osman Parishad', a forum that has been active since the laureate's expiry on upholding aspirations of the late intellectual. The memorial meeting was attended among others by eminent journalist Obaidul Haq, Santosh Gupta, Professor Wakil Ahmed, Professor Abul Kalam Monjur Morshed, Professor A.K. Azad Khan, artist Hashem Khan, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, artist Rafiqunnabi, Professor Afsar Ahmed and Professor Bulbon Osman. The meet that was presided over by eminent litterateur Mustafa Nurul Islam and directed by Dr. Abul Azad, demanded the resumption of the film 'Janani's regular shooting and early completion of works. The Shaukat Osman Parishad agreed with the opinions of the distinguished guests and decided to start the film's remaining works from August this year. The production unit of 'Janani' will try to complete the works within the shortest possible period.



The producer spends some light moments with performers in between shooting

'Shaukat Osman Parishad' would collect all expenses through private sources and from different sponsors at home and abroad', said a top member of the Parishad. Moreover, Rezaul Karim Talukdar who is

the current president of Canada-Bangladesh Trade Promotion Center Inc. has expressed his willingness to arrange financier and source of sponsorship from abroad. 'Janani', a film that would



Scene from 'Janani'

have had duration of around two hours would have told the harsh life stories of the female community of Bangladesh. Daria, the central character, would ultimately have killed herself through immolation in order to expiate her sin after she had given birth to an illegitimate child as a result of an unfortunate rape. Daria confronted the patriarchal imperative of self-sacrifice in face of 'moral duty'. The sign of motherhood in Osman have been invested with symbolic meanings, and had been idealized through self-immolation of the girl's body.

Shaukat Osman, considered as one of the leading writers of Bangladesh, was awarded Adamjee Literary Award, Bangla Academy Award, Ekushey Award, Nasiruddin Award, Philips Literary Award, besides several other recognitions. His works number more than eighty and his writings have been translated into English, French, German, Norwegian, and in regional languages of India. He had received 'Bangla Academy Award', the most prestigious award in the country, for his contribution in the field of short story. These works explored problems and prospects of the common mass of our society.

Shaukat treated the pros and cons of the post-colonial Bengali society through graphical and realistic evaluation. Thus, lack of education and medical facilities, religious prejudice and intolerance, class discrimination, system of 'purdah', belief in the supernatural and 'pirism' had come in most in his writings.

TV GUIDE

Table with TV channels and programs: BTV, ATN BANGLA, EKUSHEY, BBC WORLD, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD.

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