

CULTURAL FEAST

Exhibition



JOR-BANGLA GOPINATH TEMPLE, PABNA
Bangladesh Shoto Mandir (One Hundred Temple)

Photographer: Babu Ahmed
Venue: Bengal Shilpalya, 275/F,
Road 27, Dhannomandi

Time: August 01-10, 12pm-8pm

Arts and Crafts from Switzerland

Organiser: Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum, Shahbagh

Time: July 30-August 10, from 10am-5pm

Abhijit 6th Solo Exhibition

Venue: Alliance Francaise, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhannomandi

Time: July 30-August 15, from 9am-4pm, 5pm-8pm

Books and Albums Exhibition

Title: Day of National Flag of the Russian Federation
Venue: Library of the Russian Cultural Centre
Time: August 01-22

Solo Exhibition

Artist: Babul Ahmed
Venue: Exhibition Hall of the Russian Cultural Centre
Time: August 02-08

Commemorating Lectures on Hiralal Sen

Participants: Mustafa Monwar
Organiser: Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies
Venue: Biswa Sahitya Kendra auditorium, 14, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Time: July 31, at 6:00 pm

Russian Film Session

Organisers: Zahir Rahim Film Society & Russian Cultural Centre
Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Road 7, Dhannomandi
Time: August 01-03
Schedule:
August 01
04:00 pm Russian Riot
06:00 pm Tchaikovsky
August 02
04:00 pm Gate of Pakov
06:00 pm Urgahe Territory of Love
August 03
04:00 pm Russian Ark
06:00 pm The House of Fools

Album Release & Musical Programme

Album: Mon Amar Debo Ghor
Artist: Afif Rahman
Organiser: Kranli
Venue: National Museum Auditorium
Time: August 02 at 06pm
Renowned folk singer Rathindranath Roy will launch the album. Proceedings from the programme will be donated for the flood victims

Prothom Alo roundtable on condition of film industry

'The FDC is not newcomer friendly'

HARUN UR RASHID

NASTY posters of obscene films on roadside walls might give one a hint regarding the present degraded condition of the country's film industry. But one has reason to believe that this is only a 'hint'—far removed from the real picture. The makers and actors of these films have taken vulgarity to its limits.

Participants at the *Dainik Prothom Alo* Roundtable held at the Top of the Park of Hotel Sheraton on July 29, however, experienced the existing shocking condition of our film industry, as a few clippings from vulgar films were screened before the discussion session. The feeling was especially aggravated by the screening of clippings from good films just prior to the obscene ones. Moderated by the editor of the *Dainik Prothom Alo*, Matir Rahman, the roundtable was attended by Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, eminent and popular film personalities, theatre activists, journalists and government officials whose offices are associated with the film industry of the country.

Entitled 'What to do to revive the glory of our film industry', the roundtable generated a number of suggestions. Renowned filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel asked for the initiation of grading for films in the country, which, he said, will help a person decide regarding watching a film. Tanvir gave another thought-provoking suggestion: to remove the film industry from under the Information Ministry to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. He also voiced the need for a 'film centre'.

Eminent actor-director Amzad Hossain accused the Censor Board and the condition of cinema halls in the country where 'gentlemen' cannot go to see movies. He blamed the concerned government offices for this degradation of the film industry. He also put emphasis on the fact that 'Since the independence, prize-winning films by internationally acclaimed filmmakers have seldom come to Bangladesh. This has worsened the situation over the passage of time.'

Chashi Nazrul Islam, another eminent filmmaker and President of Film Directors' Association, made a different point. He ascribed the uncontrolled aggression of the satellite TV channels, especially those of the subcontinent, as one of the reasons for the decline in the film quality of our country. 'There is a law that no films from other countries of the subcontinent can be released in the country,' Chashi said. 'So why exempt films



From Left: Actress Kabori Sarwar, actor Razzaque, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam and filmmaker Chashi Nazrul Islam at the roundtable

shown on these TV channels?' he questioned. He also expressed the view that most of the FDC people do not have sound technical knowledge of film equipment.

Many participants asked the government to consider the waiver of amusement taxes, especially from good films. President of Film Producers Association, KMR Manjur, also demanded an end to the import of Hong Kong-based English films. He claimed that these films are the main inspiration of these vulgar movies.'

Sadek Khan, one of the pioneers of the film world in the country, actor-director Mamunur Rashid and a few others, however, emphasised on the need for film education and more film society activities. Rashid also suggested that the government introduce our filmmakers to the international audience.

There are some allegations of illegal activities against the Film Censor Board. A few posters of some obscene films, namely *Gazab*, *Gurudeb* and *Dhar Shaitan*, were shown at the roundtable and Abu Taher of the FCB was asked how such posters could pass the censorship. Taher, however, could not give any satisfactory answers; he claimed that these posters were not produced before the board

and that his signature was forged on the posters.

Mainstream film directors Shahidul Islam Khokon and Kazi Hayat demanded cancellation of these filmmakers' and producers' trade license. Khokon also suggested authorising the FCB members with the power to ban such films.

Young filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki talked about his experience with the FDC during the release of his film *Bachelor*. 'The FDC is not newcomer friendly,' he said. 'I had to go through unnecessary interview sessions several times where I was asked irrelevant questions by people who have little knowledge of film.' Award winning film *Adhikar*'s director, Saidul Anam Tutul also focused on the inhospitable attitude of FDC. 'One cannot have access to FDC and make films unless one is the member of the Film Producers and Directors' Association,' he informed. Tutul suggested that the Censor Board should comprise old, experienced and intellectual persons who can truly judge the art of the films.

Among others who participated in the roundtable were film actors Razzaque, Kabori, Ujjal, Rozi Afzali, Ilias Kanchan, Riaz, Ferdous, Mousumi, Purnima, Subarna Mustafa, writer Hasnat Abdul Hye and others.

An authentic documentation

Discussion on Hena Das' book Smritimoy Dingulo

NOVRA DEEPIA

In early times, the hopes and dreams of Bangalee Muslim women were overshadowed by religious obstacles, familial discrimination and social superstitions. The realisation that women could utilise their talents and creativity for human welfare emerged later in the twentieth century.

During the uprising against the British rule, women also involved themselves in the movement and stepped ahead to liberate their compatriots. Hena Das is the representative of those extremely courageous and committed Bangalee women who fought for their rights. She was an active and dedicated member of the communist movement in the country. Her recent book *Smritimoy Dingulo* (Memorable Days) is an autobiography. In this work, facets from her life—her entry in politics, activities, thoughts and experiences of that period—have been portrayed in a language, which is very easy and intelligible.



Hena Das with her book

Recently the cultural wing of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Shomen-Tajul Library, organised a discussion programme on the book at the party office. The main speakers of the programme were the youths of the party. The participants praised, analysed and placed questions before the writer.

Script, an Indian publisher from Kolkata, has published the book. The CPB made some photocopies of the book and distributed among the young generation who need to know the history, the memoirs of Communists and the traditions they are fighting to keep alive. The idea of photocopying of a book, however, did not seem ethical. The CPB authority could have purchased a few copies of the book.

Shafur Rahman Litu, a young CPB member, commented, 'This book can be a hand book for the party activists to learn how to become a good Communist or even a good human being.'

Ainur Nahar Siddique regretted that the women of today are not fitting successors to the eminent Hena Das.

Behler Bhashan

The play presents the indigenous performing art form

ERSHAD KAMOL

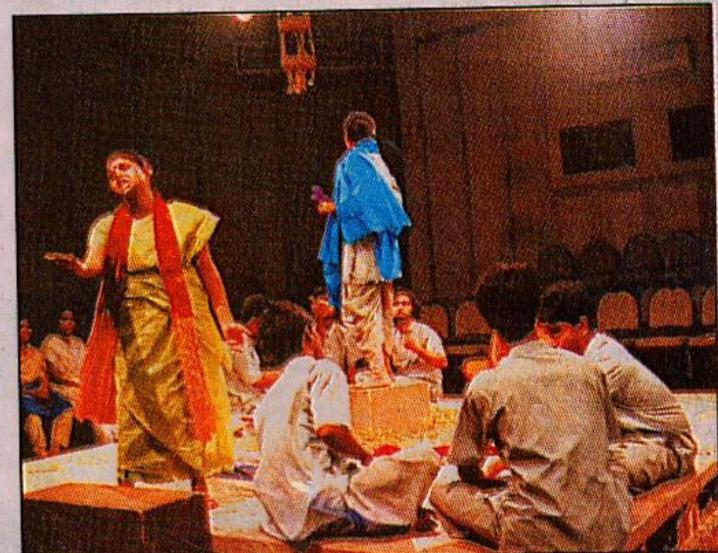
MA students of the Department of Theatre and Music of Dhaka University, staged *Behler Bhashan* based on the six commandments of *Padmapurana* or *Manoshanangal*. The play was held at Natmandal Auditorium at Dhaka University on July 29. The show was a fundraiser for the flood victims.

Biplab Bala has adapted the traditional 600-year old rural myth of *Manoshanangal* with a modern connotation. Biplab's *Akkhanbhushya* (excerpt from the story of the myth) depicts more than a mere ritual of goddess Manosa, which the rural bards present in their *pala-gaan* to show the conflict between religion and power. Although like *pala-gaan*, Biplab's narrative script is written in verses, he rather portrays the bitter experiences of a loyal wife, Behula, at the hands of society.

Behula's journey with the dead body of her husband Lakhindar on a vessel in *Behler Bhashan* has an inner meaning. During the journey, Behula faces seven evil men- characters who symbolically represent the wicked instincts of masculinity including lust, cruelty, hypocrisy, extravagance and pretension.

And Lakhindar's resurrection represents his giving up of these evil instincts. Biplab's aim in the play is to show the union of two innocent human beings.

As the director of the play, Jamil Ahmed's approach is totally different from the traditional directors who basically follow either European Drama Form or Mixed Art Form. In Jamil's experienced hand, the decaying rural art form—*Monosh Pala*—has achieved more polished and aesthetic shape. He has unfolded the play through a



The Narrator introducing a new sequence during the play

However, a symbolic light effect could have enriched the quality of choreography.

Collected songs from *Padmapurana Gaan* and *Padmar Nagan* trend have been used in the play.

As the story teller in the play, Lina's voice modulation was excellent. However, her physical movements during the songs need to be improved. Tania as Behula fulfilled the demands of her character. However, in the second part of her journey when she faces a lecherous old man she smiled during her performance. She was responding in this manner at the sight of Swati as the old fellow—which decreased her bold appearance as Behula. Swati's representation of seven evil men who symbolically represent the dark side of the masculinity—was enjoyable.

BFFS's Hiralal Sen Memorial Lecture Series

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) has regularly been organising a monthly lecture series in memory of Hiralal Sen, pioneer film exhibitor and filmmaker of the South Asian subcontinent. Each month, a film expert of the country will deliver a lecture focusing on different aspects of cinema and filmmaking. Hiralal Sen was born in 1866 at the village Baguri at Manikganj in Dhaka. He founded the 'Royal Bioscope Company' in 1898. He procured the cinematograph machine from England in 1900 with which he shot many films. From 1900 to 1912, he made 12 fiction films, 10 documentary films and 3 advertisement films. Hiralal Sen was not only a pioneer of the Bengali cinema, but also of the Indian cinema. He was the first native filmmaker from the then British India. He died in October 1917. Unfortunately, none of his films has survived.

The second lecture in the series will be delivered by Mustafa Monwar, eminent painter, TV producer and director, puppeteer and media personality.

He will speak on 'Artistic Direction in Cinema'. Artistic direction is an



Hiralal Sen (1866-1917)

important component in filmmaking process and the greatness of a film depends a lot on good artistic direction. It will be held at the auditorium of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra (World Literature Centre) at Mymensingh Road, Bangla Motor in the city on Saturday, July 31, 2004, at 6:00 pm.

The lecture will be preceded by the screening of *Fahrenheit 9/11* at 4:00 pm, made by renowned American

documentary filmmaker Michael Moore. Incidentally, the film won the coveted 'Golden Palm' for the Best Film at this year's Cannes Film Festival. The first lecture in the series was delivered by filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel. He gave his lecture on 'The Aesthetics of Satyajit Ray's Films'. This special two-day lecture session was held at the auditorium of the Alliance Francaise, Dhaka on 6th and 7th June. The lecture was followed by the screening of two films *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished) and *Apur Sangar* (The World of Apu) by Satyajit Ray. Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) is the federative and co-ordinating body of the active film societies of the country. It organises various programmes concerning creative, aesthetic, thematic and technical aspects of film and filmmaking. The executive committee of BFFS has been reconstituted recently to accommodate the really active film societies of the country. Now, BFFS is working very actively. The future programmes of the Federation includes the 'First National Conference on Film 2004' in October and the '2nd International Film Festival Bangladesh 2004'.

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Chhotoner Golpo theke
On Channel I at 6:45 pm

Drama Serial
Shirin Bakul, Eka, Nader Chowdhury

Notting Hill
On HBO at 7:00 pm

Genre: Comedy /Romance / Drama
Julia Roberts, Hugh Grant

CHANNEL-i	ntv	08:00 Ajker Shakal	08:30 Monohar	09:00 Sheptaker Khebor	09:30 Museum Around the World	10:05 Tiffner Phake	10:30 Dhakar Cinema:	11:00 Shuru Mia	11:30 Hit	12:00 Earth Report	12:30 Earth Pulse	1:30 Secrets Of The Sands	2:00 Classic Boxing Jack Johnson: The Best Years (R)	
CHANNEL-i	ntv	08:30 Diney Jay	09:00 Chithi Pelam	09:30 Aj Dupurey (Live)	10:00 Ebong Cinemar Gaan	10:30 Bangbadh O public reaction	11:00 Ajor Manush	11:30 Ronger Manush	12:00 Rozi Afzali, Ilias Kanchan, Riaz, Ferdous, Mousumi, Purnima, Subarna Mustafa, writer Hasnat Abdul Hye and others.	12:30 Marco Polo	1:30 Assignment	2:00 Wildlife Detectives	2:30 Indian Oil Asia Cup 2004 (Hindi) 12th Od 1st Session(R)	
ATN BANGLA	ntv	09:00	09:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30
ATN BANGLA	ntv	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00
ATN BANGLA	ntv	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00
ATN BANGLA	ntv	12:00	12:3											