

Face to Face

Ajmal Husain: A blend of journalism and art

FAYZA HAQ

AJMAL Husain, an artist based in Paris, was here in Dhaka to see the exhibitions on Zainul Abedin. He is the son of Altaf Hussain, the founder editor of *Dawn*, of Pakistan. He was a journalist from 1946 to 1972, beginning his career as a political cartoonist in *Dawn*. 'I had graduated from the Scottish Church College in Calcutta and learnt journalism on the job. I worked there since 1947 as columnist and cartoonist, going to USA in 1949 to do Masters in journalism at the Columbia University. I also attended art classes in the evening,' reminisces Hussain. Art was his passion since his school days and he painted along with his career as a journalist.

In 1953, Ajmal was the editor of

the *Illustrated Weekly of Pakistan*, having spent three months with *Time/Life* magazine in New York. He was also the editor of the Sunday magazine of *Dawn*. At the same time, he formed the Fine Arts Society and was a member of the Arts Council of Pakistan. Thus he had two parallel streams flowing in his life: one being his profession and the other his passion. 'I don't know how I managed to combine the two,' said Ajmal.

His father, Altaf Hussain, was an amateur watercolour painter and he used his father's paints and brushes. The latter encouraged him in his painting. In 1951 he had classes for a year in New York but apart from that he learnt on his own. He had been exposed to Paris galleries in his visit in 1950 and was fascinated by the French Impressionists like Cezanne, Renoir and

Degas. While in New York he was a regular gallery visitor too. He took up art in a big way in 1952, doing three political cartoons a week for *Dawn* and painting.

'I met Zainul Abedin in 1942 in Calcutta when he was a teacher at the Art School. I came across him with Jasimuddin and Abbasuddin. I was the youngest of the group. Zainul Abedin was in Karachi when I came there in 1947. Apart from Zainul, I also came across SM Sultan in those early days. Sultan had a big beard and wore saffron coloured clothes. The early contemporary artists included Zubaidda Agha and Parvez Ahmed. We had a small art movement which led to the Arts Council of Pakistan,' reminisces Ajmal.

Today he is a full time artist, living in Paris since the early 70s when he fell out with Zulfikar Ali



Sylphie with lillies by Ajmal Husain

Bhutto, while working with *Dawn*. His work often depends on his moods. Sometimes the desire to paint hits him like a wave and he works non-stop for days in crayon or oil or acrylic. If he is working in pastel he carries on the series with that. He might work on a particular medium for a whole year. After a barren period he could be inspired again. He listens to western classical music, sometimes, while working and sometimes not. Sometimes he works till 4am. 'I do not use the watercolour as Zainul Abedin and the Bengal School has done,' Ajmal says. He always carries his sketch-pad with him and he travels frequently, leaving his 30-year home in Paris and going to places in Europe and USA.

His first solo exhibition was in

1952 in Germany and it contained Impressionist paintings. The same year he had one in Geneva, Paris and Madrid. He got good reviews for his work. His next exhibition was in New York the same year. This same exhibition went to Washington which was well-covered by the press. 'My objective was not to be identified as an ethnic artist. I wanted to present art from our part of the world on a universal level. I had to struggle hard so that my images were not a curiosity,' maintains Ajmal.

Today, Ajmal is the winner of three coveted European prizes and has settled in Paris with his wife and two children, visiting Bangladesh and Pakistan from time to time.

Nagorik Natyangan Ensemble celebrates 10th founding anniversary

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The Nagorik Natyangan Ensemble arranged a two-day function to mark the founding anniversary of the group at two theatre venues. The first day's programme was organised at the Experimental Theatre Stage on December 30 and the programmes of the following day took place at Mahila Samity Stage.

Many theatre personalities of the country such as Momotajuddin Ahmed, Ramendu Majumdar, Abdullah Al Mamun, Ataur Rahman, Kabir Chowdhury, Nasiruddin Yousoff and others enthusiastically took part in the 10th founding anniversary of the troupe.

Each day the programme started with lighting the candle and a group dance with the theme song *Alor Patha Jatri*.

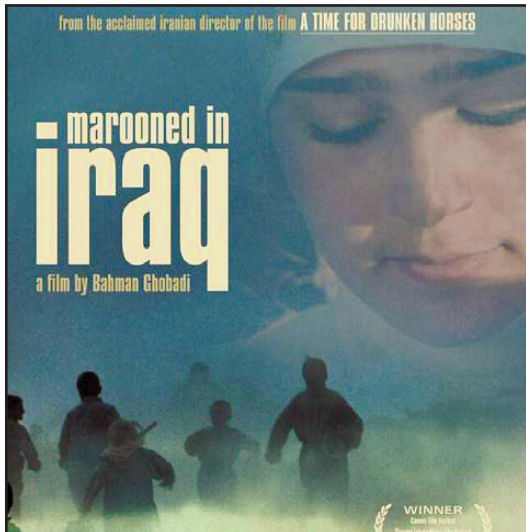
The main attraction of the first day event was the Nagorik Natyangan Ensemble's display of play posters so far staged. The venue was the Experimental Theatre Stage lobby.

Aami Noi and *Chandboniker Pala* are the plays staged on December 30 and December 31 evening respectively.



Jamaluddin Hossain and Rowshan Ara Hossain in *Chand Boniker Pala*

Children star in first film from post-war Iraq



One of Bahman Ghobadi's acclaimed films

follows a group of Iraqi Kurd orphans in the days before the fall of Saddam Hussein, has scooped festival awards in the United States, Spain and Japan and is Iran's entry for the Oscars. As with his highly acclaimed debut feature *A Time for Drunken Horses* it is Ghobadi's ability to draw remarkable performances from young untrained actors that has impressed festival jurors and touched audiences.

During a trip to Iraq shortly after Saddam's fall to show his second feature *Marooned in Iraq*, Ghobadi was mesmerised by the young Kurds he saw, many maimed by land mines and scarred by the brutality of Saddam's regime.

Turtles Can Fly is 'an anti-war film... and shows real pictures of the lives of the Iraqis today,' he says.

Filmed on location in Iraqi Kurdistan using non-professional actors, *Turtles Can Fly* paints a different picture of Iraq than the one most Western audiences have seen through satellite news channels.

He spent months combing northern Iraq to find children to play the parts of a 13-year-old Satellite, named for his ability to rig up reception for TV channels bringing news of the war; an armless boy who disarms land mines with his teeth; and his mysterious and haunted sister.

Enthused by making *Turtles Can Fly*, which opens in London on January 7, Ghobadi plans another film in Iraq and says the long-dormant Iraqi film industry has begun to stir.

Ghobadi, an Iranian Kurd, is lending his backing and experience, helping to set up a filmmaking institute in northern Iraq and equipping cinemas there.

Ghobadi's compelling film *Turtles Can Fly*, which

Singers of Rabiroshti rendering Tagore songs in a special programme titled *Tomar Premey Dhonyo* on the occasion of its sixth anniversary at the National Museum auditorium Friday last. On the occasion eminent singer Anup Bhattacharya was given a reception in recognition of his contribution to music.



CULTURAL FEAST

National Zainul Festival 2004

Schedule

December 12-January 07

Special Exhibition of Zainul Abedin

Time: 11am to 7pm on weekdays and

3:00pm to 8:00pm on Fridays

Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, 275/F, Road 27, Dhanmondi, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh National Museum.

Exhibition



Title: Bandhan

Venue: Shilpangan, House 25, Road 5, Dhanmondi

Time: December 30-January 8, from 10am to 1pm and 5pm to 8pm

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

In a scenario where there is a dearth of good stories, the ever-enterprising filmdom hit last year upon a 'novel' idea of attracting viewers.

The stories of at least four to five films were based on novels. These include Chashi Nazrul Islam's forthcoming *Shasti*, based on Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel, Humayun Ahmed's *Shyamal Chhaya* and Morshedul Islam's *Duratta*, based on a story of Humayun Ahmed. Actor-turned director Touqir Ahmed won an award at the 2nd International Film Festival for his debut film *Joyjatra*, based on a novel of Amjad Hossain. Both Humayun and Touqir's films project perilous boat journeys of groups of refugees during the Liberation War.

Another milestone in the year was the most hyped Bangla film *Chokher Bali*, a celebrated literary work of Rabindranath Tagore. Starring Aishwarya Rai, acclaimed filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh from West Bengal, India, brought the story on celluloid. Shot at Ramnagar, near the holy town of



Aishwarya Rai and Raima Sen in *Chokher Bali*

Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Kolkata, *Chokher Bali* deals with the social ills of the then Bangla society, besides widow remarriage and inhuman practice of *satidaha* ritual. The former Miss World plays the character of Binodini, a widow who refused to

lead a life of deprivation.

Novels provide a readymade platform on the screen for film-makers who use 'cinematic liberty' to suit the audience. The box office earnings of such ventures has not been very encouraging in the past, with the majority of such

films failing to achieve commercial success. However, film analysts generally appreciate the trend of filmmakers drawing inspiration from literary works, even though there could be distortions in the screen version.

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



The Temple of the Tigers
On Animal Planet at 7:30pm
Documentary Programme
Best of Animal Planet



The New Shobuj Opera
On ATN Bangla at 8:30pm
Drama Serial
Cast: Jayanto Chatyapadhyay, Fazlur Rahman Babu

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTV

News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.
News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i

News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00 am, 7:15 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30, 12:15 am.
Telecast of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA

News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm.
Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ntv

Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.
Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

TARA BANGLA

News/Headlines (Bangla) at 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm.
Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm.
Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC WORLD

Every hour on the hour

CHANNEL-i

09:45 *Trityo Matra*
10:30 Tele Prescription
11:30 *Hridoye Mati O Manush*
12:00 *Chithi Pelam*
12:30 *Aj Dupurey O Citycell Tarokathor*

01:00 *Ebong Cinemar Gaan*
01:30 Public Reaction
01:35 Bangla Feature Film: *Dour* (Alexander Bo, Eka)

03:45 *Banglar Gaan*
04:15 Special Programme
04:45 *Sa Re Ga Ma*
05:30 FTC Business Talk
06:00 Music Plus
06:30 *Flop Show*
07:50 *Shanchita*
08:25 *Rupkatha*

09:35 Drama Serial: 69
10:00 Drama Serial: *Banchhey Je Ki Shukh*

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08:00 *Ajker Shakal*
08:30 Drama Serial: *Jhut*
09:20 *Jhamela*
09:20 *Shanskriti Ei Shoptaho*
10:02 *Alankar*
10:30 Reality Bites
11:00 *Mon Amar Shandhan Kori*

11:30 *Ki Kotha Tahar Shathay*
12:02 American Cinema
12:00 *Potrikar Khabor*
01:30 TVC

02:35 Drama Serial: *Jhut*
03:15 *Jhamela*
03:15 Tele Film: *Manbio*
05:20 *Apar Jigyasha*
06:20 *Shubho Shondhya*
06:50 SAARC Programme
08:15 Drama serial: *Jhut*

08:50

Jhamela
Bochhor Periy
Shanskriti
Drama Serial: *E*
Akashy Anek Raat
Dindara

11:25

ATN BANGLA

10:30 *Annodrishti*
11:05 Drama Serial: *Ek Janomey*
Cine Aha
11:35 Bangla Feature Film: *Jogajog*
12:30 Drama Serial: *Ghun Poka*

03:15 Musical Programme
04:30 *Pachforon*
05:00 *Gram Ganjer Khabor*
05:45 *Jibon Jigyasha*
06:25 *Three Stooges*
08:00 *Danish Pathe Pathe*
08:30 Drama Serial: *The New Shabuj Opera*

09:00 The Adventure of Sinbad
09:30 Drama Serial: *Mohona*
10:35 Business This Week

STAR MOVIES

9:15 Chamber, The
11:15 Daredevil
1:00 The 25th Hour
3:15 Reality Bites
4:55 Hart's War
7:00 Far From Heaven
8:50 Hannibal
11:00 Poolhall Junkies
12:30 Callas Forever

STAR WORLD

7:00 The Simpsons
7:30 U: Undercover
8:30 Billboard Us
Countdown
10:30 The Bold & The Beautiful
12:30 Philly

1:30

The Chronicle: News From The E
2:30 Movie Lovers Road Trip
3:30 The Apprentice
4:30 Ed
5:30 Journeys In Asian Cuisine

6:00

Travel Asia
6:30 Baywatch Hawaii
7:30 The Simpsons
8:00 Fashion Tv
8:30 The Kumars At No. 42

Rendezvous With Simi Garewal
9:30 Britannia Icg
10:30 Cover Story
11:00 Top Drive Getaway
11:30 Koffee With Karan

STAR PLUS

8:30 Dharam Aur Hum
9:30 Sankshipt Ramayan
10:30 Yatra
11:00 Meri Mrs Chanchala
11:30 Chalti Ka Naam Antakshri

12:25 Film Toppers
12:30 Chupa Rustam
1:00 Musafir Hoon Yaaron
1:30 Mirch Masala
2:05 Hit Film: Hit
Sangeet- 20 M

2:30 Dil Hi Dil Mein
6:00 Hit Film: Hit
Sangeet- 20 M
6:30 Fox Kids Sunday
7:25 Film Topper
7:30 Ssshhhh...Koi Hai...

8:30

10th Annual Star Screen Awards 2004
12:05 Hit Film: Hit Sangeet- 20 M

STAR GOLD

9:00 Maya
9:30 Raju Chacha
1:00 Ishq Vishk
4:30 Maya
5:00 Himalayaputra
8:30 Home Alone 2 - Lost In Newyork

11:00 Nisochay
DISCOVERY
9:30 Super Sunday Journey to the Center of The Earth : Part One Year

7:30

Four Billion Year War
Wild Discovery Basic
Instincts Need to Feed
Discovery's Biggest Shows Rebuilding A Race Car Legend

9:30 Discovery's Biggest Shows Unnatural History of The Car
Night Safari Hyena Lady
11:30 Coloured Lives Altered Statesmen Kennedy

ANIMAL PLANET

8:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience, The Wild Man in Borneo
9:30 Nick's Quest Anaconda
10:00 Extreme Contact
Dancing With the Hammerhead
10:30 The Protectors Cell Dogs
11:30 In The Wild Meg Ryan : White Elephants
12:30 Crocodile Hunter Diaries, The Working with Legends

1:00 Crocodile Hunter Diaries, The Sore Like An Eagle
1:30 Jeff Corwin Experience, The India
2:30 Lynda's Lifeline Koala Crisis
3:30 Miami Animal Police
Serial Killer Python
4:30 Life of Birds, The To Fly or Not to Fly
5:30 Wildlife Specials Ploar Bear Arctic Warrior
6:30 Nature Bizarre Breeding
7:30 Temple of the Tigers, Pet Star \$25,000
8:30 Championship
10:30 Animal Planet Showcase City Slickers

11:30

TV With Teeth Sharks The Truth
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
8:30 \$100 Taxi Ride
9:00 Game For It
9:30 National Geographic Special
On Assignment
10:30 Planet Wild
11:00 On Assignment
11:30 Planet Wild
12:00 Six Experiments That Changed
12:30 Gene Hunters
1:00 National Geographic Special
1:30 Cameramen Who Dared
2:30 On Assignment
3:30 Cameramen Who Dared
4:00 Six Experiments That Changed
4:30 Gene Hunters
5:00 Hidden Scrolls Of Herouleanum
6:30 People Out There
7:00 People Out There
7:30 On Assignment
8:00 Cameramen Who Dared
8:30 Challenge Yr
9:30 Challenge Yr
10:00 Six Experiments That Changed
10:30 Gene Hunters
11:00 On Assignment
11:30 Cameramen Who Dared

1:00

South Africa Vs England 2nd Test, Day 5, Highlights(R)
2:27 South Africa Vs England 3rd Test, Day 1, 1st Session(L)
4:30 Dakar Rally 2005
Telefonica Dakar Rally Day 2 Highlights(R)
5:00 South Africa Vs England 3rd Test, Day 1, 2nd & 3rd Session(L)
9:30 Australia Vs Pakistan 3rd Test, Day 1, Highlights(S)
11:00 Hitz (T)
11:30 English Premier Football League Aston Villa Vs Blackburn Rovers (S)

ESP

8:30 Harsha Closeup Dream Job - Harsha Ki Khoj Bloopers(R)
9:00 No live telecast of Sri Lanka Tour Of New Zealand, as the tour has been cancelled
1:00 India's Fastest Bowler Highlights(R)
1:30 Harsha Closeup Dream Job
2:00 Final Score (R)
2:30 English Premier Football League Manchester City Vs Southampton (S)
4:30 Football Extra (T)
5:30 English Premier Football Fulham Vs Crystal Palace (S)
7:30 English Premier Football Portsmouth Vs Norwich City (S)
11:00 Hopman Cup Hyundai
Hopman Cup XVII Perth, Australia Russia Vs Italy (S)

STAR SPORTS

7:30 The Golf Club The Golf Club 2004 (T)
8:00 Australia Vs Pakistan 3rd Test, Day 1, (L)
12:30 Dakar Rally 2005
Telefonica Dakar Rally Day 2 Highlights(S)