

# Encouraging big picture

Behind the lens with Andrew Biraj

KAVITA CHARANJI

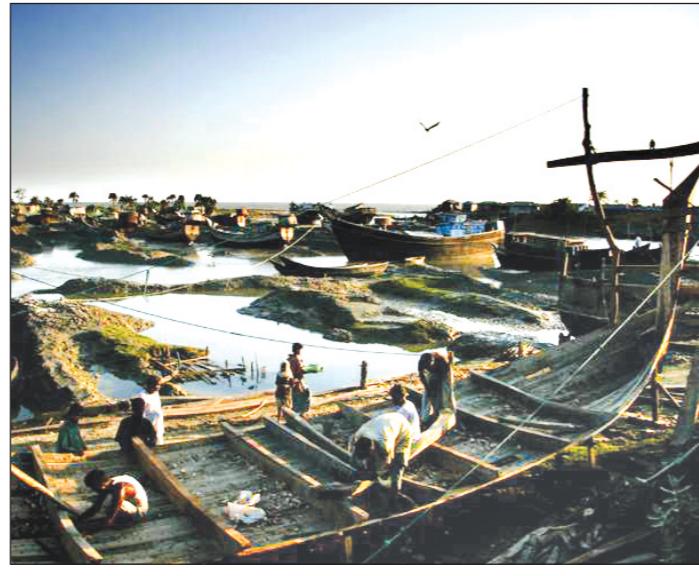
STRANDED Bihar refugees in Dhaka, boats at Sandwip, children afflicted with cancer, scenes from floods in Dhaka, Kampuchean land mine victims and glimpses of Venice. All these are grist for the mill to Andrew Biraj. The upcoming photojournalist is never short of inspiration as his camera has taken him all over the world - Kampuchea and European countries such as Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and UK.

Though Biraj is staff photojournalist for a daily, he has several independent projects on hand such as his work with cancer-afflicted children and stranded Biharis. Explains Biraj, "There is a proximity and distance between Biharis and non-Biharis. I seek to show the cultural similarities and differences between the two groups."

Among his memorable works is the coverage of a gamut of subjects the Laloni Mela, the spiritual folk festival in Kushtia which he shot in 2003 and 2005, among others. "I am inspired by documentary photojournalism. It could be a hard core



Clockwise (from top): Photographs of a Kampuchean landmine victim, Sandwip and Venice by Andrew Biraj



issue but I pick the theme and work independently," asserts Biraj.

A lot of work goes into his photography. As he points out, his forte is to spend time with the subject. In this category is his child cancer project over which he has laboured for the last two years and still has a long way to go.

Biraj never tires of shooting in Bangladesh. "We are a nation of survivors. Despite numerous problems such as natural disasters every year, political and personal upheavals, the people can still smile and be happy," he maintains.

Biraj's work is eclectic. A graduate in photography from the University of Bolton, Manchester, UK he was fortunate to get a full scholarship for the third year as a student of Pathshala, the educational wing of Drik Gallery. He has participated in a photography festival in Siem Reap (a tourist spot in Kampuchea) and the Angkor photography festival. In the latter, a workshop was organised for 20 photojournalists under 30 years of age from all over Asia. As the Bangladeshi representative, he participated in the workshop, called Master Class because photography masters from all over the world gathered to conduct the workshop and give a momentum to upcoming photographers. As his theme, Biraj chose to work on landmines in Kampuchea.

As for the long term, Biraj plans for three years at a stretch. His agenda is to continue and complete his personal project of children with cancer and stranded Biharis. Another goal is to explore his career as a photojournalist in international publications, as for instance with the *Guardian* of UK for whom he took photographs of garment workers to accompany a report.

Meanwhile, he is gung ho about the prospects for photojournalists in Bangladesh. "The newspapers are giving more opportunities to young people, especially over the last seven years. The big picture is very encouraging," concludes Biraj.

## Postal stamp in Bimal Roy's honour

One of the greatest auteurs of Bengali cinema, late Bimal Roy has finally received due recognition from the Indian Government. A postal stamp has been issued in his honour.

The credit for this should go to Roy's eldest daughter, Rinku Bhattacharya. She made constant efforts to provide for a postal stamp in the name of Bimal Roy. After 41 long years, the director finally received the tribute on January 8, on his death anniversary. Rinku said that it was Sunil Dutt who first encouraged her to demand a postal stamp for her father's memory. She said that it needed a lot of convincing and effort on her end to gain this acclaim for her father.

Bimal Roy was one of the directors who took Indian cinema at an international platform at a very early stage. Inspired by neo-realistic Italian film *The Bicycle Thief*, he made *Do Bigha Zameen* in 1953, a film about the agricultural labourers in India. The film won awards and accolades in international festivals like the Cannes and the Karlovy Vary Film Festival.

Later, he went on to make memorable films based on Sarat Chandra's literary works like *Parineeta* and *Devdas*. His films inspire aspiring filmmakers till date.

One of the most technically complex productions ever attempted, it will make original equipment in the camera department by modifying existing digital cameras, use cutting edge 3-D, computer animation, and motion capture fx/technology.

## James Cameron's long awaited 'Avatar' gets a green light

James Cameron is squarely back in the film making business.

Twentieth Century Fox announced on January 8 that it has finalised a long simmering deal to produce Cameron's next project, once titled *Project 880*, the much awaited sci-fi epic *Avatar*.

One of the most technically complex productions ever attempted, it will make original equipment in the camera department by modifying existing digital cameras, use cutting edge 3-D, computer animation, and motion capture fx/technology.

Vince Pace is signed on as 2nd Unit cinematographer and will utilise modified Sony cameras along with other high tech gear. Peter Jackson's Oscar-winning visual effects house Weta Digital will handle special effects.

Principal photography will take place in the Los Angeles area and in New Zealand. Live action will be shot using the proprietary FUSION digital 3D camera system developed by Cameron and Pace.

The movie might be one of the



most expensive movies ever made; Variety and the Hollywood Reporter report that Fox is said to have approved the film at US \$200 million.

*Avatar* is an original screenplay written by Cameron that follows a battle-scarred war vet who travels to another planet inhabited by an alien race with a distinctly different language and culture from earth. Conflicts ensue.

Cameron begins shooting *Avatar* in April, 2007. It is slated for a summer 2009 release.

Source: Internet

## CULTURAL FEAST

### Art Work and Calligraphy Exhibition

Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy and Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Venue: National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy, Dhaka

Date: January 8-17

Time: 11:00pm-7:00pm

### Book Launch

Authors: Australian Poet Manfred Chobot and Bangladeshi Poet

Aminur Rahman

Venue: BRAC Centre INN, Mohakhali, Dhaka

Date: January 13

Time: 6:30pm

### Film Screening

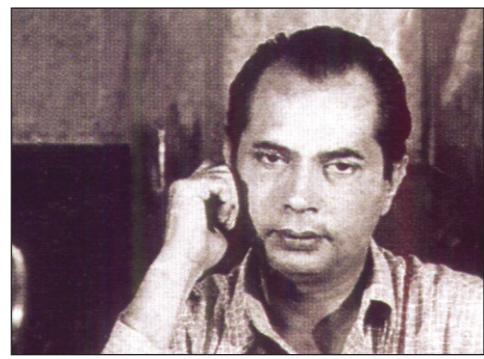
Organiser: Rainbow Film Society

January 10

4:00pm Shei Rater Kotha Bolte Eshechhi

4:45pm Arunudoyer Agnisakhi

Venue: Sufia Kamal Auditorium, Bangladesh National Museum



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## TV GUIDE

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; 12:00pm; 2:30pm; 6:30pm.

News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 1:00pm; 5:00pm; 8:00pm.

News (English) at 3:00pm; 10:00pm.

Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).

#### CHANNEL-i

News (Bangla) at 7:15 am; 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15am.

News (Bangla) at 7:00 am; 10:00am, 2:00pm; 2:30pm; 6:30pm; 11pm.

News (English) 8:00am, 7:00pm.

Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00am; 10:00am, 11:00 am; 1:00pm; 3:00pm; 4:00pm; 6:00pm and 8:00pm.

#### ntv

News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am.

12:00am; 6:15pm; 9:30pm.

News (Bangla) 7:30am; 2:00pm; 5:00pm; 7:30pm; 10:30pm.

News (English) at 9:05pm.

#### CHANNEL 1

News (Bangla) at 8:00am.

12:00pm; 2:30pm; 6:30pm.

7:30pm; 10:00pm; 12:30am.

#### BANGLAVISION

News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 2:00pm.

6:00pm; 7:15pm; 10:30pm.

News Headlines (Bangla) at 9:00pm.

News Headlines (English) at 9:05pm.

#### RTV

News (Bangla) at 7:00am; 3:00pm.

7:15pm; 10:00pm.

News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:30am.

### ATN BANGLA

10:30 Anyodishti

11:05 Talk Show: Meet the

Press

12:15 Cinema Cinema

01:30 Gaane Surey Tarunne

02:30 Musical Programme

03:10 Drama Serial: Bhalo

Bashar Rang

04:20 Islamic Programme

05:10 Nijey Jano Shafolyo

Ano

05:45 Islamic Programme

06:20 Aklet Protidin

08:00 Drama Serial: Jollad

Bohemian

09:20 Drama Serial: Tushar

Rohoshyo

09:10 El Mon

10:00 Char Deyal

10:40 Tagore Song

12:00 Amar Desh

01:00 Aj Potrikay

01:35 Shotro Proshno

03:45 Shapnochon

06:00 Ajker Bangladesh

06:35 Drishwa Kalpo

08:00 Ghulro Sholey

08:30 Drama Serial: Kagojer Manush

09:45 Public Reaction

10:00 Trityomatra

11:05 Sports Time (Live)

12:30 Citycell Tarokakothon

01:05 Aloko Bangladesh

06:00 Music Club

06:20 Drama Serial: Chokh Mele Dekhi

07:00 Upodasho

07:50 Hello Minister

09:35 Talk Show: Aloye

10:00 Bhutan Bhoru

12:00 Mega Serial: Jobi Biog

12:00 Grameenphone Ajker

12:00 Shangbadpotro

12:00 Aajker Shokal

08:30 Aajker Shokal

09:30 Frankly Speaking

07:00 Itihaser Path Dhyore