

CULTURAL EAST

International Festival of Docufilms

Title: 2nd International Festival of Docufilms on Liberation and Human Rights
Organiser: Liberation War Museum
Venue: Liberation War Museum
Date: December 6
3:00pm onwards Drawn Out, Anek Kothar Ekti Kotha
5:30 pm Mandala

Film Screening

in aid of Sidi victims
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society
Venue: TSC auditorium, Dhaka University
December 6
9:00am Shaolin Soccer
11:00am The Namesake

Dhaka Book Fair 2007

Organised by: National Book Centre
Venue: National Parade Square, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Date: December 1-6

Art Exhibition

Title: Nitin Kundu: The Creative Mind
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Bengal Shilpalya, H 275F, Road 27 (old), Dhanmondi

Date: December 3-17
Time: 12pm-8pm

Title: Guernica: History of a Painting
Organiser: Department of Spanish, Institute of Modern Language, University of Dhaka

Venue: Zainul Gallery 2, Institute of Fine Art, University of Dhaka
Date: December 3-9
Time: 12am-7pm

Title: Tokal
Artist: Rafiqulam
Venue: Gallery Chitrak, Road 4, House 21, Dhanmondi
Date: December 1-7
Time: 10am-6pm

"Talking Books": A reader's paradise

In conversation with Yasmeen Murshed

NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

TAKING a leaf out of a recently published book *How to Talk about Books that you haven't Read*, founder of Scholastic School, Yasmeen Murshed, came up with a slick volume of her own. Entitled *Talking Books -- the Thirsty Shore*, the book, a compilation of columns written for *The Daily Star* over the last three and a half years, was launched on November 21, 2007.

"The project took four months to com-

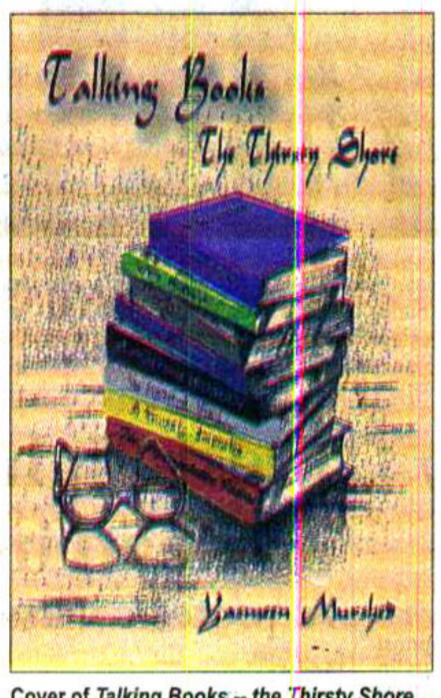
plete and I set limits to achieve this end. I have not tampered with the columns, so they have been reproduced as originally published."

Delving into the history behind the *Talking Books* columns, Murshed said, "I was cajoled into writing. I've always been passionate about books and used my column to convey this passion." She preferred not to write book reviews; rather, the columns were the outpourings of her personal musings, also quoting secondary sources to provide a healthy balance of opinions. For Murshed, writing always tended to "be on the heavy side", so she took up the gauntlet in 2003 to write a fortnightly column in a lighter vein.

"Writing always seemed like such a chore, with so much effort and research involved; take something like a deep discourse on religion. *Talking Books* gave me the fabulous opportunity to write off the top of my head," Murshed says.

Having grown up reading books by "Dead White Men and Austen", it is quite clear that Indian author and poet, Vikram Seth is her favourite among the contemporary writers. The former continue to haunt her and she revisits their books when she fancies entertaining herself. Murshed considers the explosion of writing in English by South Asian authors over the last quarter of a century "like the Renaissance all over again".

She remembers that the most stringent punishment her mother meted out when she was a little girl was not being allowed to read. "Reading has been my lifelong habit and companion. Although reading is a solitary pastime, I have never felt single or lonely, as my home and psyche have been peopled with books. Reading is



Cover of Talking Books - the Thirsty Shore



Yasmeen Murshed

life and life is reading," she says. "I internalise many things and so live a rich life from within." She is proud of her library, which is a "personal food memoir", containing recipes and stories about vibrant Dhaka life. Expected to be out in a year's time, it is intended to be a tribute to her large extended family, scattered all over the world.

course, the numerous television channels only a fingertip away from viewers' surfing fingers. She thinks audio books are a great idea and regularly listens to poetry. "I am transported to delight when I hear the dulcet tones of Richard Burton reciting Shakespeare's sonnets," she says.

The first book experience whetted her appetite for reading up about language and writing styles, especially punctuation. She is a self-confessed irregular punctuation user. "I used to be careless with words," -- she has become much more conscious of the way in which words may be used. The exercise taught her the ins and outs of editing and publishing, and her respect for those professions has shot up dramatically. "A writer just provides the manuscript. The end product is the result of the amazingly hard work done by the editorial team."

In her role as an educationist, Murshed wishes to be non-controversial. She does not want to be thought of as tarred by any particular political brush and so prefers not to dabble in political writing. Commitments prevent Murshed from continuing the *Talking Books* column, but the sheer pleasure of being involved in her first book venture, has already led to another, with formatting to be completed in the not too distant future; the illustrations are already underway. The book will be a "personal food memoir", containing recipes and stories about vibrant Dhaka life. Expected to be out in a year's time, it is intended to be a tribute to her large extended family, scattered all over the world.

The writer is a freelance contributor

Japanese cultural events held in the city

The Embassy of

Japan, Dhaka

recently organised the 'Japanese Cultural Events along-

side the Japan Trade

Fair 2007 from

November 29 at the

Shilpkala Academy

and Bangladesh-

China Friendship

Conference Centre

in the city, says a

press release.

The cultural

programmes

included photo

exhibition, karate

demonstration,

Japanese dance and

drama performance,

kendo and ikebana

demonstrations,

Haiku-evening and

counselling on

'Study in Japan'.

On the concluding

day (December

1), several progra-

mmes were held at

the Bangladesh-China

Friendship Conference Centre at Sher-e-Bangla

Nagar.

As part of the programmes, a drama titled *One Hundred Sacks of Rice*

was staged on November 29 at the National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh

Shilpkala Academy.

The counselling on 'Study in Japan' took place everyday from 1 to 5 pm

at the embassy booth in the conference centre. Information on the study

opportunities in over 700 Japanese universities and educational institutes

were provided during the seminar.

The programmes were organised by the Embassy of Japan in associa-

tion with Japan Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI),

Meghdut and Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy.



Ikebana demonstration at the programme

Photography for the visually impaired

In conversation with Partho Bhowmick

KAVITA CHARANJI, New Delhi

A much needed and exciting vista has opened up for the visually impaired -- photography. Thanks to Partho Bhowmick and his *Blind with Camera*, the public in Delhi recently got to see the 28 commendable works of nine such photographers -- Rahul Shirsat, R Dharmarajan, Sujit Chaurasia, Praveen Bhosale, Mahesh Umrania, Raju Singh, Kanchan Pannani, Sunil Bhavsar and Nikhil Mundhe -- at Delhi's popular cultural haunt, the India Habitat Centre.

Many of the works caught the eye of the viewer. In the ranks was a photograph by Raju of the Victoria Terminus in Mumbai. Explaining his motivation in creating this effective work, the photographer says, "I wanted to create a different picture of the Victoria Terminus and learned the skill of multiple exposure... It may be interesting to imagine a dreamy image with closed eyes" but

what makes such a work unparalleled is Raju's remarkable courage that he has displayed amply in his life. Born with normal sight, he developed low vision at an early age. Currently he has low vision with limited depth of field and works as a computer instructor in a blind school. Amplifying on his philosophy, a brochure quotes him as saying, "I get very close to objects to see it somewhat clearly. My low vision makes the normal sighted people see the abstraction they wouldn't see otherwise."

The photography exhibition, titled *Beyond Sight*, is the brainchild of Mumbai-based corporate Bhowmick. "Exhibitions such as this can promote considerable awareness about the visually impaired," he explains, adding "In the urban scenario we say let such people get

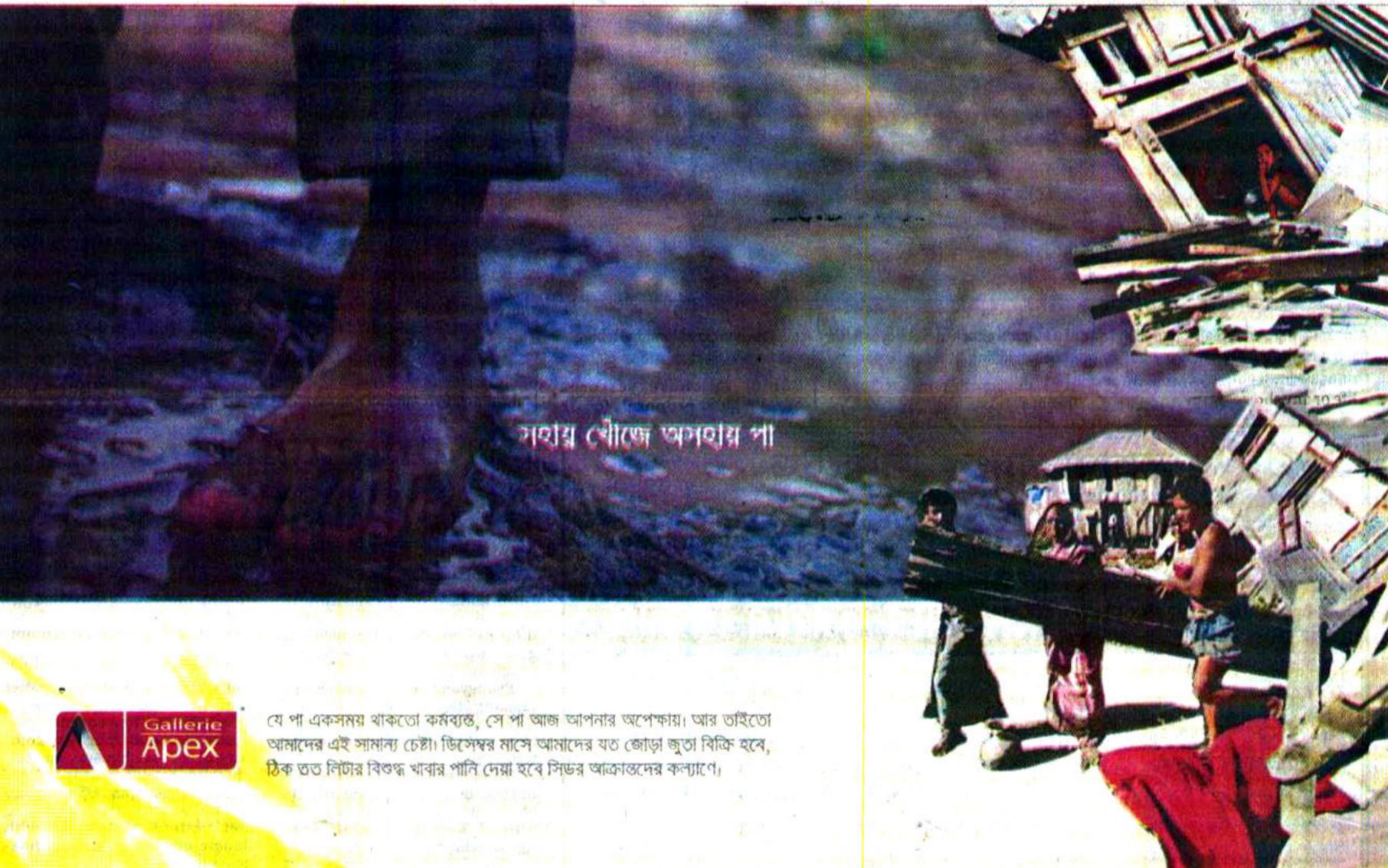
educated and make some living out of their art so that they can live independently. However in rural areas the scene is totally different, as they are either over protected or under protected."

Bhowmick and *Blind with Camera*'s mentor is the French visually impaired photographer Evgan Bavar. "He has been a major inspiration because he was the first point of contact for me," says Bhowmick. Though he has not met Bavar, Bhowmick keeps in touch with him on the Internet.

Prior to showing in Delhi, *Beyond Sight* has been held in Mumbai and Bangalore. The exhibition will travel to other Indian cities in 2007 and 2008 to raise awareness and sensitise people to the needs of the visually impaired. The "inclusive" exhibition provides touchable images, Braille footnotes, visual aids and audio description for the visually impaired visitors.

To promote his calling, Bhowmick also organises self-funded workshops on photography with the visually impaired. These are free of cost (barring the fees for his stay and travel). In addition to *Beyond Sight*, his aim is to boost Disability Arts culture at various academic, social and cultural forums in India.

It is tightrope walking for him to balance his job with his passion for photography. However, as he says he has to squeeze out time to combine both. It is a measure of his commitment to his art that he spares every available moment on it. Here's to many more shows such as this -- not just in India but all over the world.



A photograph at the exhibition

BTY

08:45

Bishwa Bichitra

National Cricket

09:05

League

05:05

Srimpur

05:30

Entertainment Show

07:40

Dhormo O Jibon

07:00

Computer

07:20

Drama Serial: Heera

07:45

Bijoy Amar Bijoy

08:40

Drama: Ohosar

10:30

Phela Asa Din

11:00

Talk Show: Date Line

Dhaka

CHANNEL i

09:30

Shangbadpotre

Bangladesh

09:45

Public Reaction

09:50

Grameenphone

Tribhikatra

07:00

Citycell Tarakakhan

07:45

Ek Dui Teen

08:40

Shonkhabash

09:45

Shonkhabash

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