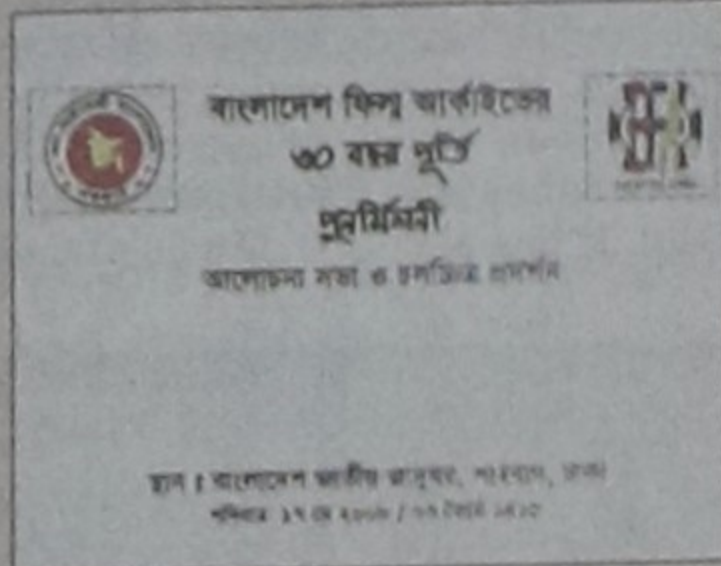


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Discussion and Film Screening

On 30th anniversary of Bangladesh Film Archive
Venue: National Museum, Shahbag
Date: May 17
Time: 10:30am onwards



Film Screening

Film: Tajuddin Ahmed: An Unsung Hero
Director: Tanvir Mokammel
Venue: Bangladesh Film Centre, 160 (4th floor), Lake Circus, Kalabagan
Date: May 16, 17
Time: 3pm, 5pm, 7pm



Art Exhibition

Title: Symphony In Drawing
Artist: Ranjit Das
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H 26, R 3, Dhanmondi
Date: May 14-28
Time: 10am-1pm and 5pm-8pm



Photo and Cartoon Exhibition

On the 60th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine
Title: Sixty Years of Illegitimate Occupation, Sixty Years of Sacred Resistance
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, R 15A (new), Dhanmondi, Dhaka
Date: May 14-18, Time: 3pm-8pm



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy honours Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed

JAMIL MAHMUD

The Department of Theatre and Film, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) has taken an initiative to honour renowned theatre personalities since 2006. As part of the initiative, this year BSA honoured Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed for his immense contribution to Bangladeshi Theatre. BSA awarded theatre personalities Askar Ibne Shaikh in 2006 and Sayeed Ahmed in 2007.

The programme was held at the National Theatre Stage, BSA on May 15. Eminent personalities and organisations from different sectors of culture greeted Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed with flowers.

Abul Kamal Shafi Ahmed, director of the Department of Theatre and Film, BSA gave the welcome speech.

Noted TV actor Abul Hayat and media personality Nawazish Ali Khan spoke at the programme. Noted educationist Professor Mustafa Nurul Islam was the chief

discussant. Director General of BSA, Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam presided over the programme.

Renowned theatre personalities including Keramat Moulai, M. Hamid, chairman of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation; Nasiruddin Yousuff, president of Sammito Sangskritik Jote; Mamunur Rashid, chief of Aranyak Natya Dol and Milon Kanti Dey of Jatra Shilpo Unnayan Parishad felicitated Momtazuddin and gave speeches.

"I am honoured and overwhelmed. Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has been a great support to my theatrical endeavours," said Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed in his speech. Professor Ahmed is a former director of the Department of Research and Publication, BSA.

Professor Mustafa Nurul Islam conferred the gold medal, while Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam handed over a cheque to Professor Ahmed.

After the award giving programme and discussion, Theatre (Natak Shoroni) staged scenes from Momtazuddin



Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed speaks at the programme

Ahmed's plays. In his illustrious career, Momtazuddin Ahmed has

directed and written several popular plays. Scenes from *Shaht Ghatir Kana Kori*; *Ohey Tanchak* (an adaptation of a Moliere satire); *Khamakha Khamakha* (an adaptation of a Shakespeare comedy); *Jamidar Darpan* (a re-writing of Mir Mosharraf Hossain's play) and *Barnochora* were staged at the programme.

Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed is one of the most successful theatre activists in the field of satire in Bangladesh. He was born on January 18, 1935 in Maldaha, West Bengal. He completed masters in Bengali Literature.

Professor Ahmed has been teaching Bangla, Sanskrit and European Drama in several non-government and government colleges for over 32 years. He was a Professor, Department of Bangla, at Jagannath University. At

present, he is a part-time teacher at the Department of Theatre and Music, Dhaka University.

Rabindra Bharati University has included his writings *Bibaha* and *Ki Chaho Shankhachil* in its curriculum. Several of his plays are also included in primary, secondary and higher secondary curriculum in Bangladesh.

His vibrant career as a teacher, writer as well as an actor earned him wide recognition but theatre is the most prolific part of his career. He has written 25 plays and directed several of them. Most of his directions and writings were for his theatre troupe -- Theatre (Natak Shoroni).

Apart from plays, he has written several novels, research papers and essays. Professor Momtazuddin Ahmed received Bangla Academy Award in 1976 and Ekushey Padak in 1997.

"Symphony in Drawing": Ranjit's economic and dramatic strokes

FAYZA HAQ

Ranjit Das' latest venture *Symphony in drawing*, which is on at Shilpangan, includes more than just drawings. It has acrylic and washes in watercolour, apart from Chinese colour and ink, and charcoal. Collage and mixed media have been used as well.

"Just drawing would make it monotonous," Ranjit comments. This is his first solo exhibition in Bangladesh in four years, as he was busy working on his exhibitions in India -- at the National Art Gallery in New Delhi; Jahangir Art Gallery in Mumbai and ICCR Gallery in Hyderabad. Ranjit feels that it is important for an artist to get exposure abroad, so that art enthusiasts worldwide are aware of the quality of Bangladeshi art.

Ranjit's subject, over the years, has been lyrical depictions of man and his environment. This time, along with careful portraits with quick strokes, he has brought in domestic animals -- like bulls, horses, dogs, goats and sheep, which he comes across during his frequent visits to his village. The beauty of the drawings is the economy of strokes and the powerful lines. *Bauls* with *dhol* and *dotara*, seemingly in trance, have been depicted. Other subjects include women, casually fixing their hair or tending to their young ones clinging to their breasts.

"Starting from 2002, all subjects in my paintings have their origin in the rural areas," says Ranjit. Men smoking *hukkah*, women plaiting their neighbour's hair, individuals in *burqa* and others sporting goggles, some crossing the ferry are typical of his subjects.

Inspired by the defiant bull done by Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, Ranjit has sketched his bull though this is from a totally different angle. The fleeing horse is full of vigour and is presented repeatedly with impact. The dog and the goat are also remarkable.



Drawings by Ranjit

One of the works has a vibrant golden background with flecked, silver dots for texture. The mother and child figures have been done with watercolour and they too have minimal strokes. The impact is dramatic and daring. A blind *baul* singer, who sometimes comes to Dhaka, has been immortalised in Ranjit's lines and colours. The lonely figure of a dismal woman, wrapped in thoughts of her own, has been presented effectively too.

The landscapes depict boats, launches, the riverbanks, along with bold sweeps bringing in the horizon and the river. These are done in deft charcoal lines.

Before going to school, as a child, Ranjit used to draw on walls and the floor with charcoal. Having done his BFA from Dhaka, he finished his masters from Baroda, studying under K.G. Subramanian. Ranjit says that Sunil Das and Monirul Islam have inspired him too. At the Institute of Fine Arts, he had Anwarul Haq, Abdul Baset and Rafiqun Nabi as his guides. M. Kibria and Safiuddin Ahmed have also been his mentors.

Ranjit has had 19 solo exhibitions in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai, New Delhi, Montreal and Karachi. He has taken part in 75 joint exhibitions in India, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, USA, Bulgaria, France, Kuwait and Qatar. He has ten awards to his credit, including the Grand Award in the 7th Asian Biennale (1995).

Symphony in drawing is on till May 28.

Scenes from *Shaht Ghatir Kana Kori* (left) and *Khamakha Khamakha*

Retrospective Mrinal Sen turns 85

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Mrinal Sen has stopped directing films since long and when he turned 85 last Tuesday (May 13) last, he made it clear that he did not have any plan to make movies now.

However, accolade has not stopped coming Sen's way. On his birthday, leading auction house Osian, which organises film festival in Delhi every year, announced that the director would be conferred a Lifetime Achievement award in July this year.

Sen, who was born in Faridpur, says birthdays are nothing special for him and he laughs it off by saying, "I keep telling my friends that I am a younger than what I would be next year."

One really does not know

whether life has become full circle for Mrinal Sen who has made 27 feature films, 14 short and four documentaries.

It is a huge achievement for a man who, by his own admission, came to filmmaking by accident after starting life as a seller of medicines.

What might have been a loss to the profession of medical representative, turned out to be a colossal gain for the world of cinema. Though Sen began with a rather forgettable *Raat Bhor* in 1958, he made his mark with the next two films -- *Neel Akasher Nichey* and *Baishey Srabon*.

But it was *Bhuvan Shome* starring Utpal Dutt and Suhashini Mule, which earned Sen the first Indian National Award in the 1970s.

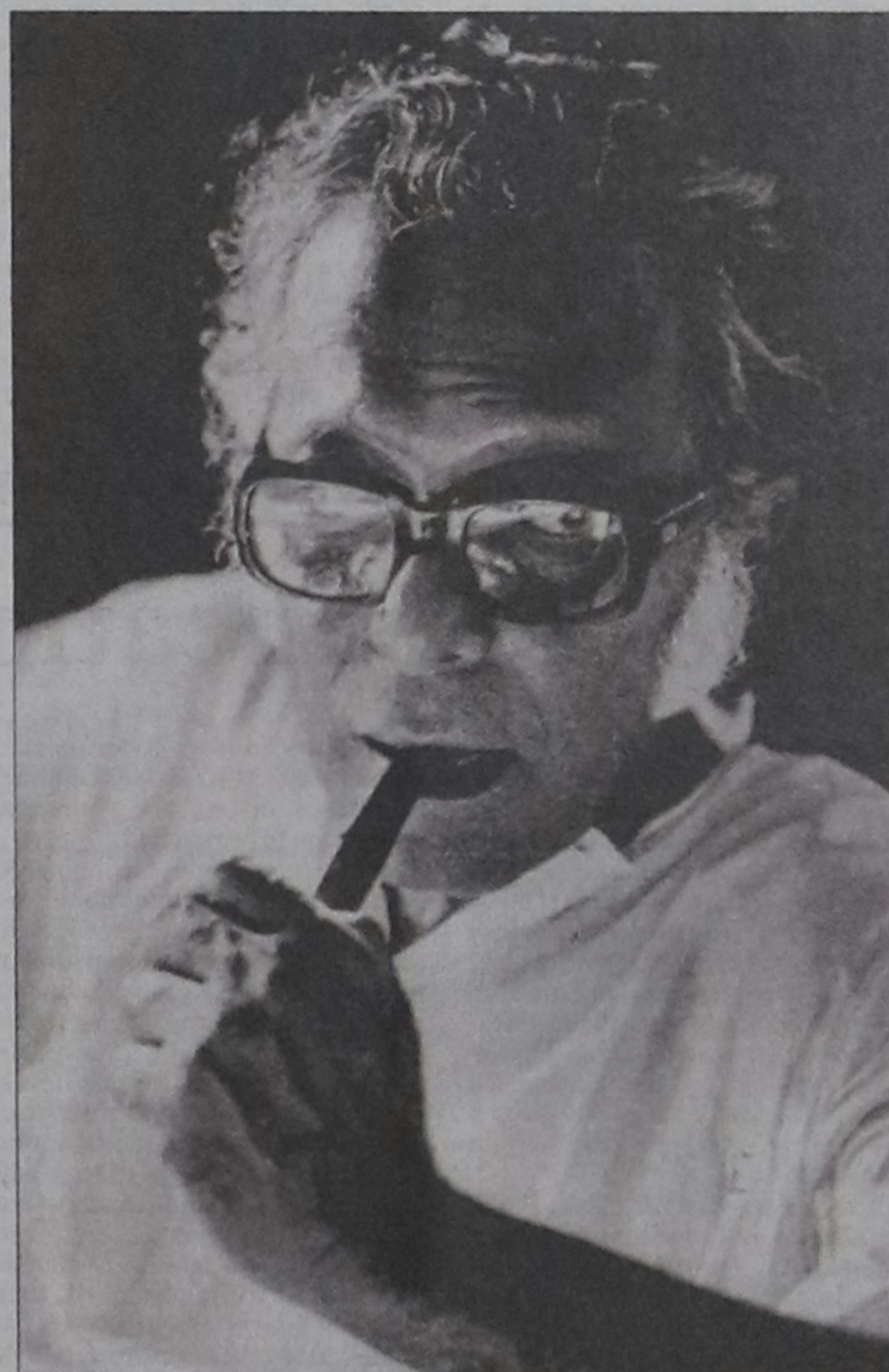
Sen has always responded to

the current major political events of the day and this was evident in his films *Padatik*, *Interview* and *Kolkata Ekattor*. He earned the tag of being a Marxist who makes politically loud movies on the verge of being didactic.

Sen is at his artistic best when he moves away from political films and focuses on his favourite subject -- the middle class with its contradictions, virtues and hypocrisy.

This is amply evident in his films like *Ek Din Pratidin*. Many consider *Akaler Shandhaney*, *Khandahar* and *Chalchitra* his best works. Sen uses genial satire to expose the middle class contradictions but also treats it with enough sympathy so as not to make him a cynic.

His anatomy of the urban



Mrinal Sen

middle class and rural middle class is profound in *Ek Din Pratidin* and *Akaler Shandhaney* in the sense that it gives one a balanced picture.

After a hiatus, Sen returned to filmmaking with *Mahapritihvi* starring Victor Banerjee, Soumitra Chatterjee and Aparna Sen in the wake of the fall of communism in the erstwhile Soviet Union and East Europe as reflected on a middle

class family in Kolkata.

It is not that Mrinal Sen is not stirred by developments across the world. "The country and the world at large is passing through bad times. So much of bloodshed and killings. Who likes this to see again and again?" the director said on his birthday. Yet, he has no plan to make a movie and reflect his response to the goings on.

Sri Lanka Women's Association to hold its first cultural programme in Dhaka

The Sri Lanka Women's Association ('Seva Vanitha'), together with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Dhaka is organising a cultural programme in Bangladesh for the first time, says a press release.

The highlight is dance performances by the renowned Sri Lanka Army Cultural Dance Troupe. The programme will include traditional dances and drum performances depicting Sri Lanka's rich culture and heritage.

The event will mark the 60th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence and will be held at The Radisson Water Garden Hotel on May 22 at 7pm.

Passes will be available at all expat clubs and the Sri Lankan High Commission in Dhaka. Funds raised from the event will be donated to the Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital.



The Sri Lanka Army Cultural Dance Troupe

Theme park Fantasy Kingdom is now offering free entry to school students on Saturdays, says a press release. This special offer is applicable for students up to Class 10, who can enjoy the offer by presenting their school ID cards at the entrance. Tickets for rides (Tk 90) have to be purchased. Fantasy Kingdom is also offering special discounts for families on Tuesdays, which has been declared as "Family Day". The offer will be valid till September 15, 2008.

Smita Patil in *Akaler Shandhaney*