

Archives of neglect

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About 2,500 films are "prised" at the BFA, established in 1978, and the authorities officially do not have any idea of how many of the films are rare and how many have been damaged.

The condition of the 1934 *Devdas* came to light when BFA officials tried to put the film on a projector during an investigation by The Daily Star.

It took quite a while to get the old projector operational and when the black-and-white film began on the silver screen of a rented congested-auditorium of BFA it was a shock to The Daily Star correspondent.

The print was in deplorable condition and even while giving full attention from only a few yards the dialogues between *Parvati* and her husband were very difficult to follow. The sound has become inaudible and the film has become obscure.

The BFA projectionists struggled to raise the volume to almost no effect, still the dialogues could not be clearly heard.

On the corridor leading to the BFA's so-called vault lies a row of piled-in films collected in mid-July. Films like *Seder Meye, Moner Moto Bou, Shih-e Porjito*, all made in 1959, and *Onk Diner Chena*, made in 1966, were found in the pile.

The rusty tin-made film cans had been on the damp floor since at least mid-July in temperatures over 30 deg Celsius.

The BFA only scotch-taped the lids of cans to the base so that the cans are not opened or stolen by drug addicts who often wander around the place. The taping is the only preservation effort made so far for the films.

The preservers claimed that the films were given to them incomplete and some even had 3-reels missing.

The corridor bears the testimony of BFA mismanagement and irresponsibility. These are just two instances of how around 2,500 films including a number of rare classics are being preserved on the ground floor of the rented house using years-old technology of film preservation.

The entire process of preservation is done manually using two winding machines and two people checking the films.

Mismanagement, preservers' apathy to carrying out duties, the absence of training, shortage of manpower, inadequate budget, and the absence of a permanent building have contributed over the years to bring the BFA to this sorry state.

Old machines are used at the BFA like the film measuring machine and the two projectors it has.

Other obstacles include producers' and directors' reluctance to hand over their films to the BFA. They even use Carbon Tetra Chloride (CTC) solution, an outdated method of preserving films, which even the BFA stopped using since 1985, BFA officials said.

"The government neglects the institution and the BFA officials are just passing days as if spending leisure time. They do not have any knowledge about films," said Mahiuddin Faruque, former director (design) of BTV and a film expert.

"The BFA preservers do not have any technical knowledge about film preservation. They must know how to preserve film scientifically and fund crisis is another problem of our government," said eminent artist Prof Mustafa Monwar, adding, "We must ensure a certain environment for film preservation."

"We have lost many of our documentaries and short films on the Liberation War but I found a number of them well preserved in the archives of CBS in UK 10 years ago. The films preserved there is very well arranged and scientifically maintained. When I went there they asked me to have a cup of tea and produced a list of Bangladeshi documentaries and short films they have preserved before I had finished my tea," Monwar added.

"Preservers must be well trained and training must be arranged for them. The BFA has become a neglected organisation of the country and you will not find an archive like ours anywhere on earth," prominent filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel said with a hint of sarcasm.

"The people working in film preservation are not film technicians. The unskilled persons must be trained immediately. And we also need budget for the BFA and it needs to be dignified like other film archives of the world," he added.

"An accurate temperature and humidity is required to ensure quality of films in preservation. It cannot be ensured in a rented house. The people working at the film archive are sincere but they need training and budget to carry out their duties," said filmmaker Morshedul Islam.

BFA PRESERVATIONS AND COLLECTIONS

The films at BFA are kept in 52 racks inside silver and tin-made cans. Over 400 tin-made cans are still in use and many of them have become rusty. The cataloguing and classification of the preserved films are not organised and scientific.

The movies collected so far by BFA are kept in three rooms, which it calls vaults, and a balcony of the house which has been into made a room and is also called a vault. The BFA uses 12 window-type domestic air conditioners (AC) to keep the temperature down. The ACs, however, cannot keep temperature below 18 deg Celsius.

The dehumidifiers used there are also meant for domestic use. With the two film-winding machines and two people checking films, 60-70 films can be "checked and cleaned" in a

year.

The Daily Star correspondent saw the temperature of 30 deg Celsius in Vault-1 and -2 and 26 deg Celsius in Vault-3 and -4. The walls close to the racks were damp and films were being cleaned and measured with bare hands.

"You must wear gloves before you touch a film. We never allow touching films without wearing gloves but it is being done at BFA," said Tanvir Mokammel.

"Who will take the risk of giving films only to be destroyed at the BFA? Moreover, it costs Tk 60,000-70,000 to make a print of a film and we have financial constraint. It is difficult to give a print of a film for preservation immediately after its release. A print of the film can be given six months after the film is released," he added.

The filmmakers suggested that the BFA officials can at least be sent to India for training or a trainer can be brought in.

The projectors being used at the archive were repaired only once after they were installed in 1980. One of the projectors remains out of order often and it has become very difficult to keep them operational since they are outdated and spare parts have become difficult to get.

"Due to the way the films are being so-called preserved, a number of them will be destroyed within 10 years while some will be OK for a little while more. But the films will not be recoverable if the preservation procedures are not modernised immediately," said a BFA preserver seeking anonymity.

"If immediate steps are not taken to convert the films into digital format, a few years later it would not be possible to convert those films," the preserver added.

The BFA so far "preserved" feature films, short-films, documentaries, films on poets Kazi Nazim Iqbal and Rabindranath Tagore and film related to the Liberation War.

Notable films so far preserved and collected by the BFA include *Mukh O Mukhosh, Asia, Harano Din, Kokhono Aseni, Suryasani, Kacher Deyal, Dharapat, Sutarang, Nodi O Nari, Rupban, Behula, Anuara, Neel Akasher Nichey, Palonko, Jibon Theke Neya, Jago Hua Saveri, Surjo Dighal Bari, Padma Nadir Majhi, Nobab Sirajuddola, Ora Egaro Jon, Titas Ekti Nodir Naam, Lahial, Suprabhat, Bashundhara, Sareng Bou, Surjogahan, Chhinmooli, Arun Barun Kironmala and Rupali Saikaty*.

There are foreign films like *Roshomon* by Akira Kurosawa, films by Lumiere Brothers, a collection of films of Charlie Chaplin, *Battleship Potemkin, Mother, Bicycle Thief*, and *October*.

Films of Zahir Raihan, Satyajit Ray, Abdul Zabar Khan, Salauddin, Mostafiz, Ehtesham, Alamgir Kabir, Amzad Hossain, Svastha Datta, Kamal Ahmed, Narayan Ghosh Mita, AJ Karder, Rajen Tarafder, Hritwik Ghatak, and Goutam Ghosh, among others, have been preserved in the archive.

Even though the BFA collected and preserved negatives and prints of 8mm, 70mm, 35mm and 16mm celluloid films earlier, it began collecting and preserving films in CD, DVD and DV-Cam formats since 2007.

Besides films, the BFA has 3,053 film-related books, 14,575 photographs, 6,677 film posters, 1,986 screenplay, 287 books on music, shortened script of 1,365 films, documents of 11,895 film festivals, 11,895 news clips related to films, 9,950 magazines and 3,832 other archival materials in its library.

BUILDING NEEDED

After the BFA was established in Shankar, the film preservation unit of BFA was moved three times-to Ganabhaban Complex in 1987 from Shankar, to College Gate from Ganabhaban in 1997 and it is now being moved to Bangladesh Betar Bhaban in Shahbagh.

The preservation and collection unit has been moved more than five times from one floor to another in the five-story building it is currently using, BFA sources said. The building also houses a bank and an insurance company.

The building the BFA is being moved to is also old and do not have enough space to accommodate a film archive, which needs space for a library, study and film projection facilities.

The BFA has so far collected and preserved only 2,538 local and foreign films as of December 31, 2007.

The government allocated the BFA 1.86 acres of land at Agargaon in 1993. Following the allotment, the BFA paid Tk 2 crore to the ministry in 1997 as price of the land. It also paid Tk 1.86 crore to the ministry for constructing buildings on the land.

Even though the Chief Adviser's Office ordered the Ministry of Housing and Public Works to hand over the land to BFA on June 3, 2007, nothing has been done so far, sources said.

Delwar

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CASE AGAINST KHOKON

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque passed the order after

ACC Assistant Director SM Sahidur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, appealed to the court for issuing arrest warrants against the couple.

The commission filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on December 10 last year against the couple for amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information from the ACC.

BSMMU

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land ministry holding registrar and sub-registrar posts, said sources at the ACC.

With the latest applicants, the total number of people wishing to confess before the Tac now stands at 32. The anti-graft body, however, did not disclose their identity.

Earlier on August 14, the ACC forwarded a list of 17 public servants to the newly founded statutory body.

The ACC yesterday said it has approved six charge sheets against 16 individuals for amassing wealth through illegal means, concealing information from the ACC and causing loss to the state.

They include former finance adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu, former AL state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir's wife Sitara Alamgir, and former ambassador to Abu Dhabi Nazim Ullah Chowdhury and his family members.

Hanif Iqbal said the ACC will look into various allegations against in the land ministry including corruptions in purchase, transportation, appointments and postings of settlement officers, acquisitions, khas land allocations, the land survey department and the Adarsha Gram project.

The ACC has requested the secretary of the land ministry to provide with a room, necessary documents and logistics support to the ACC probe body.

GRAFT AT BSMMU

The ACC during its primary investigation at the BSMMU found that the state has incurred a loss of Tk 82.84 lakh as Tk 1.27 crore was spent for purchasing a Heart Lung Machine that could have been purchased for Tk 44.16 lakh.

Sidestepping the central purchase committee, a violation of public procurement rules (PPR) 2003, a separate purchase committee was also formed at the BSMMU to purchase the machine, observed ACC.

The invitation for sending quotation of the machine was not published in any newspaper and a very brief specification was mentioned for intended participants of the bid. Moreover, technical evaluation was not done after quotations were received, said the ACC.

The ACC investigators found that the same machine that the BSMMU purchased at Tk 1.27 crore on December 18, 2003 was also purchased by Labaid Hospital the same year only for Tk 44.16 lakh.

The Daily Star on July 29 and 30, before the ACC started probing irregularities at the BSMMU, published a series report on various irregularities at the BSMMU including anomalies in equipment purchase for the hospital and recruitment of teachers for the university.

CHARGE SHEET
Former lawmaker Barkat Ullah Bulu, his wife Shamima Akter and their son Sharif Mohammad Imran will be charged with amassing over Tk 3.23 crore beyond known sources of income and concealing information about wealth worth over Tk 3.37 crore from the ACC.

RU violence

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RU student Humayun Kabir and 500 other unnamed university students on charges of damaging and torching the counter.

Following a syndicate decision, RU acting Registrar Prof Muhammad Shah filed a case with Motihar Police Station against 400 unnamed outsiders for hurling bricks at the vice chancellor's residence and damaging RU vehicles and properties.

Sub-Inspector Masud Pervez of Mother Police Station filed another case against 550 people including RU students and locals on charges of attacking policemen and destroying public property.

However, police are yet to arrest anyone.

Earlier, RU closed the university indefinitely on Wednesday following Tuesday night's violent clashes between university students and local transport workers that left 60 people including teachers, students and policemen injured.

Jamaica

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removed from the women's long jump final after her B sample was tested ahead of an International Olympic Committee (IOC) announcement on Friday.

Blonska's is the fifth drugs case involving athletes while horses from Brazil, Ireland, Germany and Norway also failed doping tests.

In one of the triumphs of the games, Dutch swimmer van der Weijden, 27, likened his 10 kilometre swim victory to his battle against cancer seven years ago.

"It teaches you to be patient when you are lying in a hospital bed and that was almost the same strategy I chose here to wait for my chance in the pack," he said.

Cuba's world record holder Dayron Robles easily won the men's 110m hurdles but received a subdued ovation from the largely patriotic Chinese crowd after their national lion Liu Xiang withdrew in the heats with a foot injury.

While the USA had woes on the track and were upset by Japan 3-1 in the last Olympic softball final, their peerless women's volleyball duo Kerri Walsh and Misty May-Treanor recorded their 108th consecutive victory beating China's Tian Jia and Wang Jie 21-18, 21-18 in the final.

In the women's football play-off, Germany won their third consecutive bronze medal beating Japan 2-0.

Great Britain, enjoying their best Olympic success in London in 1908 won their fourth yachting gold from 11 classes when Iain Percy and Andrew Simpson took the men's Star title.

Abdullah Al Mamun

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Square Hospital on July 10 with acute coronary syndrome coupled with diabetes, hypertension and kidney and liver conditions. Soon after he was diagnosed with subdural haematoma (bleeding in the brain).

A previous bypass surgery kept him from receiving coronary treatment. On July 13, he was transferred to the hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) following a brain surgery.

As his health deteriorated, he was shifted to Birdem Hospital on Tuesday.

As news of Mamun's death spread across the city, relatives, colleagues, cultural activists and acquaintances thronged the hospital.

His body was kept at Birdem mortuary and will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar today to enable people to pay their last tribute to the drama prodigy.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Dhaka University Jaame Mosque after the Jumma prayers. He will be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

Born on July 13, 1942, in Jamalpur, Mamun did his honours and masters in history from Dhaka University.

He began his acting career in an early age and rode high in all mediums—cinema, theatre, TV and radio. He wrote his first stage play, *Niotir Parihas*, in 1950 when he was still a schoolboy. Under the guidance of Shaheed Munir Chowdhury, he whetted his skills as a playwright, director and actor.

He got involved in the then Pakistan Television (PTV), later renamed Bangladesh Television (BTV), from its very start in 1965.

Mamun wrote 22 stage plays, mostly belonging to the middle-class. Ekhone Kritadas, Tomari, Amader Sontanera, Kokilara, Bibisab, Meraj Fakir Maa and Mayik Master are few of his popular plays. He directed most of these dramas produced by his Theatre troupe.

Mentionable plays produced by Mamun include *Sangshaptak*, *Pathar Somoy*, *Jibon Chhobi* and *Baba*.

Abdullah Al Mamun was also a popular filmmaker. He made his first movie *Angkar* in 1972 and earned much critical acclaim for movies like *Sareng Bou*, released in 1978.

His other mentionable films include *Ekhone Somoy*, *Dui Jibon*, *Sokhi Tumi Kaar* and *Bihanga*.

Mamun held many important positions in several departments. He rose to deputy director general of BTV, director general of the National Institute of Mass Communication (Nimco) and director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

In his long performing-arts career, Mamun won many awards including the prestigious Ekushey Padak, Bangla Academy Literature Award, Alakta Sahitya Purashkar and Tarokalak Padak.

A condolence meeting will be held at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on August 26.

The government also asked the authorities concerned to make sure that inter-district buses operate from inter-district bus terminals, not from inside the city and not using the city roads.

The meeting decided to re-fix the time for movement of trucks in the city at 9:00pm instead of 8:00pm.

The CEO of DCC apprised that garbage containers in the city would be set at right places by September 30.

The meeting also asked for making zebra crossings clearly visible. It was informed that out of 360 zebra crossings in the city, 45 are in good shape.

The meeting advised that DCC, DMP and DTCC should sit together to identify parking and non-parking areas by going through parking policy.

Providing updated information from police control room through radio and other channels to inform people about traffic flow and road networks was also discussed. And the DMP assured that it would immediately start giving update information about traffic flows and road networking through radio and other channels.

Digital illuminated information signboards on traffic flow will be set up soon.

A power-point presentation was presented on traffic situation and its possible solution in the capital by DMP traffic and the CA's office.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen about the meeting.

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Son-in-law

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submitting wealth statement to the commission.

The ACC issued a notice on April 15 this year, asking Prince to submit his wealth statement to the commission within seven working days.

The commission also filed a case against Justice Fazlul on April 13 on charges of amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information from the ACC.

Border talks

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border to reduce trans-border crimes," said a home ministry official.

The home adviser appreciated the BSF role in Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971, the official added.

Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed, Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty and senior officials were also present.

Victim Joj Miah

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League (AL) rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004, police arrested Joj Miah in Noakhali and cooked up a story centring him to fulfil the desires of their mentors in the then BNP-led four-party alliance government.

Joj's poor family had no idea when a guard of Kesharpar union picked him up from a local tea stall and handed him over to Senbagh police in Noakhali for a bounty of Tk 1,000. And overnight, Joj became the "approver" of the grenade attack and a front-ranking terrorist of the country.

Following his arrest, the then Special Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Ruhul Amin and his colleagues Abdur Rashid and Munshi Atiq asked Jobeda to come to Senbagh Police Station.

But the poor mother did not have money. So, the police gave her the bus fare to the CID office in Dhaka.

Ruhul Amin assured her that she would be provided with Tk 2,000 a month to run her family in the absence of Joj.

Jobeda was sent back home with Tk 2,500.

The conspiracy of the CID officers was revealed when Joj's sister Khorsheida Begum disclosed to the media that they were being paid by the police. This angered the CID officials who then stopped the payment.

"They told me that Joj would be sent abroad after his release," Jobeda quoted a police officer as telling her.

"My innocent son is a victim of police conspiracy," she said, alleging that the police did not only destroy Joj's future but also her whole family. "Now I have nothing to do but to pray for his release."

Jobeda Khatun has called upon the chief adviser and others concerned to help get her son out of jail.

Joj, whose "criminality" was invented by the police as a cover-up for the real culprits of the August 21 grenade attack, was relieved of his charges on June 11 but was not freed because, ironically, he is already convicted and sentenced to seven years in jail in another case filed in connection with the same attack.

Aug 21 mourned

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pay their tributes to their loved ones. Some of the injured victims also visited the spot to recall the tragic memories. Photos of the deceased were displayed on the Bangabandhu Avenue to mark the day.

Expressing frustration, some of the family members said they are yet to get justice for the killing of their loved ones. "We want nothing but justice and exemplary punishment to the masterminds," said Mazharul Islam Mamun, son of Rafiqul Islam, a victim.

Leaders of Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samantantrik Dal, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Ganotantri Party, Samyabadi Dal, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, AL's front organisations and many other organisations also placed wreaths at the temporary memorial in observance of the day.

Tight security measures were taken in the area. A large contingent of uniformed and plain-clothes police stood guard on high-rise buildings there. Police checked every one entering the area.

People gathered on Bangabandhu Avenue to pay homage to victims of the carnage.

Later, the AL held a discussion marking the day. Zillur said August is the month of mourning for them as Bangabandhu also was assassinated in this month. And grenade attack on an AL rally was carried out in this month to eliminate the entire AL leadership, he said.

He alleged that the then BNP-Jamaat coalition government was involved in the attack and that is why they did not bring the culprits to book. He demanded that the caretaker government bring masterminds behind the attack to justice.

AL Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu demanded a reshuffle in the administration as, he said, officials appointed by the BNP-Jamaat coalition would not probe the incident properly.

Abdur Razzak, another presidium member, said, "If a government led by our leader Sheikh Hasina is formed following the next election, it will bring the masterminds to book."

Tofail Ahmed said, "It is sad that the present government did not carry out a neutral probe into the incident."

Suranjit Sengupta demanded a special inquiry commission to probe the grenade attack.

Two other Presidium members—Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Motia Chowdhury—also spoke.

Major reshuffle

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list" prepared by the establishment ministry, sources said.

More changes in the posts of DC and UNO, who are to play crucial role in both the polls, are in the offing, sources in the ministry and cabinet division said.

The present caretaker government initiated the much-anticipated move to reshuffle the civil and police administration a week ago, aiming to hold upazila polls in October and the overdue parliamentary election in December in a free, fair and neutral manner.

It has also been decided in principle that field level officers who have been at their present workplaces for more than one-and-a-half years would be given new postings.

Apart from the transfers and postings of officials, the authorities will withdraw those who are