

Archives of neglect

FROM PAGE 1
About 2,500 films are "preserved" 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 *Parbat* 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, Shor Jon Porjonto*, all made in 1959, and *Onek 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 3-4 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 board 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 BFTV 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. But 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 digitised like other film achieves 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 a 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.

BSMMU

FROM PAGE 1
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 the land ministry including corruption in purchase, transportation, appointments and postings of settlement officers, acquisitions, khas land allocations, the land survey department and the Adarsa 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 ACC.

The meeting, Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed asked for preparing a plan of action with specific deadlines. The progress has to be reported at the next follow-up meeting.

On construction of bus bay, the meeting was told that Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) would construct five bays in different areas of the city by September 30 in cooperation with Dhaka City Corporation and DMP.

The meeting asked the education ministry to ensure staggered and flexible school timings in different areas to minimise traffic flow by September 30. The education ministry will monitor the matter and make report on it.

It was also asked for taking steps for introducing school buses by the school authorities as schoolchildren face nagging transport problem in the overcrowded capital city.

Illegal possessions, kiosks and makeshift shops on footpaths and highways from Progoti Sarani (Baridhara-Kuril area) to Saidabad via Rampura-Malibagh rail crossing will be cleared by September 30.

"Fine or penalty should be ensured if contractor concerned failed to complete construction works by the deadline. Road-repairing works should be done at night instead of daytime," he said.

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

RU violence

FROM PAGE 1
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 Shafi filed a case with Motihari Police Station against 400 unarmed outsiders for hurling brickbats at the vice chancellor's residence and damaging RU vehicles and properties.

Sub-Inspector Masud Pervez of Motihari 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

FROM PAGE 16
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.

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