

Archives of neglect

FROM PAGE 1
BFA sources added that the governments destroyed historically important films thanks to the absence of a policy and by making BFA a place to transfer bureaucrats and government officials as punishment.

"The Enam Committee report is not a rule. It is just the report of a committee. The BFA needs its own ordinance, rules and policy to ensure quality preservation of films. A policy is also needed to have modern equipments and facilities to preserve the present and the past in the most powerful form," Mohammad Jahangir, director general (DG) of BFA, told The Daily Star.

"An organisation preserving films, which is like preserving artifacts, and has to deal with creative people must have a policy or ordinance. Otherwise the institution would never become a centre for different cultures and it would not be able to perform its job of informing the next generation about their history," Jahangir added.

Jahangir said the BFA must have its own structure like Bangladesh National Museum and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy considering the importance and benefits of the institution.

The DG, however, said, "We have recently introduced a research fellowship programme, started a project to modernise the film preservation process and we published our first-ever journal. The caretaker government has also decided to hand over the allotted 1.86 acre land for BFA in Agargaon."

"Before a film archive is established, we must know the importance and benefits of the archive and criteria under which films are to be collected and preserved. It should not happen this way... once a government is changed the policy of an entire system gets changed and a certain genre of films is destroyed or removed in accordance with the likings of a government," prominent artist Mustafa Monwar told The Daily Star.

"What has become of the BFA today is just because of putting people, who were never related to films, in charge of the BFA. None of the people appointed as BFA chief were ever involved in anything related to films and they did not even have the ability to understand films," former director (design) of BTV and a film expert Mahiuddin Faruque told The Daily Star.

"I challenge you that you cannot name a single person appointed as chief of BFA as a film expert," he told The Daily Star. "It would be more appropriate if we consider the government's approach to film archive as the making of a concentration camp by transferring government officials to an institution which has been neglected and been under-budgeted over the years. This is indeed a punishment for the government officials," he added.

In the last 20 years since 1989-1990 fiscal year, the government has allocated about Tk 10 crore for the BFA.

A total of 17 transfers were made at the BFA with a number of them getting transferred to the BFA several times within a few months.

AKM Amzad Hossain was made DG of BFA thrice while Mubul Ahmed, Mahbubul Alam, Aminul Islam and Jahangir himself was made DG of BFA twice. Only the first curator of BFA AKM Abdur Rouf served for 13 years till 1991 and after that most of the DGs served their posts for periods ranging between two months to one and half years.

Replying to a question regarding political use and repeated transfers of director generals of the BFA, its chief Jahangir said, "It is the smallest department under the information ministry and one might feel deprived once he or she is transferred to the BFA. It is very normal."

Information Secretary Jamil Osman could not be reached for his comments on the issue despite repeated attempts.

Film directors and film experts demand that the BFA is made autonomous.

ENAM COMMITTEE REPORT AND ORGANIZATION

As the Enam Committee report restricted work of the BFA, the BFA has conducted only seven researches in 30 years by obtaining special permissions from the concerned ministry under "BFA Research Fellowship", introduced in 2007. The BFA introduced the research for the first time in 2007 since its establishment.

BFA officials, however, said it would not be possible to continue with research by obtaining special permissions every year until the BFA is entrusted with the job in its own structure.

The BFA's budget for 2007-2008 fiscal year is about Tk 1.30 crore including only Tk 5 lakh for research, Tk 7 lakh for training, Tk

10 lakh for publications, and only Tk 10 lakh for film collection and preservation, BFA sources said.

The BFA even has to get special permission for arranging any film festivals, film projections and certain publications. This hinders its activities. As a result, setting up of a film appreciation course remained inactive between 1985 and 2006. The BFA has so far arranged seven film appreciation courses, two advanced film appreciation courses and an animation filmmaking course.

The BFA published its silver jubilee memorial publication one year after its silver jubilee anniversary in 2004 as the publication did not get permission in 2003. The publication was the first-ever publication of the BFA.

The Enam Committee report has also not defined ways to collect and preserve films. The report only mentioned that the duty of BFA is to "arrange collection of films from different sources for preservation in the film vaults".

As of July 2008, only 129 negatives of feature films and 21 negatives of documentaries are "preserved" at the BFA. The BFA has no negative of foreign films.

The BFA also has prints of 491 feature films, duplicates of negatives of 17 feature films, prints of 183 short films, prints of 995 documentaries, 239 news footages, 72 videos of feature films, and 57 videos of short films, a BFA publication said.

Of the foreign films, there are 54 DVDs of Indian films and 251 DVDs of different other foreign language films.

"A lot of the films the BFA so far preserved are in video format and you might find a number of shops in Dhaka selling videos or DVDs from a better collection and with better preservation method. This should not be the approach of a film archive," said Mahiuddin Faruque.

"The government should have a criterion to collect films and encourage filmmakers to submit their films. A filmmaker cannot give a print of his film just after release. It should be purchased or the filmmaker can give it six months after the release of the film," prominent filmmaker Morshedul Islam said.

Filmmakers also suggested amending the copyright law for submitting a print of their film after its release since it costs them around Tk 60,000 to Tk 70,000. They said film archives in foreign countries make prints of a film and pay the director in addition.

The Enam Committee report asked "to maintain the already established temperature" but did not specify the temperature that should be maintained. The report does not have any suggestion regarding the BFA establishment, organogram, film exchange procedures with foreign countries and machineries necessary for preservation.

The organogram the BFA proposed to the information ministry mentioned requirement of 125 people at the BFA, it now has 38. BFA sources said the current organogram has discrepancies in maintaining rank and reduces scope of promotion of employees lower in the pecking order.

The discrepancies caused BFA officials' apathy and affected the preservation process severely, BFA sources said. In the current organogram, the BFA has a DG, a director and then five second-class officials.

As there is no post in between the director and second-class officials, promotion process remains halted, sources said.

The BFA proposed making the structure more balanced by having a DG, two directors, four deputy directors, eight assistant directors followed by second class officers. This would open up the scope for promotions of BFA officials.

INITIATION OF BFA
The BFA was established as Bangladesh Film Archive and Institution (BFAI) in 1978 after prominent Indian film personality Satish Bahadur submitted a proposal to the government on a structure of a film archive.

Besides making the film archive an autonomous institution, the report titled "Structure of Bangladesh National Film Archive" suggested that laws like Film Destroy Law, Declaration of Film List Act, National Deposit Act be enacted and establishments like Chalchitra Sangkrit Kendra, Chalachitra Antorjatik Sangroho and Film Distribution Library be set up.

The BFAI became BFA during the regime of Ershad and made a part of the National Institute of Mass Communication.

"The National Institute of Mass Communication has been established mainly for electronic media. The structure of the institution relates to radio and television and it does not have the structure to deal with films," said Mohammad Jahangir.

The BFA became a member of Federation of International Film Archives (FIAF) in 1980.

FILMS DESTROYED
Dhire Bohe Meghna, a film by prominent director and film activist Alamgir Kabir, can be taken as an example of how films are being destroyed due to lack of a policy.

In 1980, the film was shown across the country. The BFA could not decide whether it should collect and preserve the film when the director was alive. Later, the BFA collected a print of the film and it was so fragile that when the preservers started checking the film, it broke into pieces and Dhire Bohe Meghna is now lost.

BFA sources said prints of many films were destroyed in 1998 as those were kept in a BFA bathroom.

The BFA is yet to collect the print of Let Their be Light, a film by Zahir Raihan. The film is kept at Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC).

Filmmakers said the film is being projected by BFDC every now and then and they fear that the film may be lost just like Dhire Bohe Meghna if the BFA does not take immediate steps.

Filmmakers and BFA officials also said many films were also destroyed when political governments changed and the party in power tried to destroy films that go against their ideologies.

BFA sources said they have learned from former officials that many films and footages containing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were destroyed by military governments.

In a common trend of envy, a government comes to power and opposes decisions made by the previous government regarding the BFA.

"Due to the lack of policy, the BFA seems hanging in the air and different governments took different approaches regarding the BFA without considering the country's interest. Earlier DG's and ministry officials had not done anything considering the interest of the BFA or the country," said prominent filmmaker Morshedul Islam.

Pay salary, iftar
FROM PAGE 16
Owners and top officials of garment factories decided at the meeting to form a task force in order to cooperate each other with supplying information and taking steps if any violence erupts.

"A hotline will also be set up for quick dissemination of information about any kind of demonstration or violence," Mahbubur Rahman told the meeting at the Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station on its "open house day", adding that police patrol will be increased.

He also requested the garment factory owners to provide workers at least Tk 20 a day as iftar allowance.

There are around 100 garment factories in Tejgaon Industrial Area and owners and top officials of 35 factories attended the meeting.

At the meeting they said lack of understanding between the workers and the owners-management of garment factories often leads to workers' unrest.

"No problem will arise if the owners behave with workers as guardians, not as rulers," General Manager of SF Denim Apparel Ltd Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam said at the meeting.

It Col (ret'd) Mohiuddin, managing director of NASSA Complex, observed that workers often stage demonstrations being provoked by a number of so-called workers' organisations. These organisations sometimes even pay workers to carry out their plans to create unrest in garment factories cashing on which they earn huge benefit.

A few participants stressed the need for keeping vigil on workers who can make trouble.

The participants observed that almost all garment factories have already cleared the salaries and other allowances of their workers.

They said the garment sector is losing because of disunity among the authorities of different garment factories as some of them are engaged in an unhealthy competition by taking orders from foreign buyers at lower rates.

"The workers would have been paid more if the disunity among the garment owners could be removed," said Sheikh Shaheenul Islam, general manager of Les Complices Textile Ltd.

Another participant said owners in Tejgaon area patronise criminals to sell the "jhut" (garment by-products) which often causes trouble. He suggested calling open tender for selling jhut to get rid of criminals.

Janmashtami

FROM PAGE 1
progress of the country in the morning and Krishna Puja at night.

Besides, a discussion will be held at Dhakeswari Temple auditorium on life of Sri Krishna on August 29.

Similar programmes have been chalked out across the country to mark Lord Krishna's birthday.

Zardari to run

FROM PAGE 1
"The coalition partners were informed about this decision and we are optimistic that the coalition will remain intact," he said.

The PPP and the party of former premier Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted by Musharraf in a 1999 coup, have been at odds over how to reinstate dozens of judges sacked by Musharraf last year.

Sharif has said he would back Zardari for president if he were to do away with the presidential power -- created by Musharraf -- to dissolve parliament.

"I have no objection over Mr Zardari contesting presidential election, if he removes the 17th amendment," Sharif told reporters at his residence after meeting the PPP delegation led by Information Minister Sherry Rehman.

Sharif said he had a firm agreement with Zardari on the restoration of judges sacked by Musharraf and clarified that neither he nor anyone from his party wanted to become president.

"The agreement says that next president will be after removing 17th amendment. The PPP will have a right to nominate its own president then," Sharif said.

On the issue of the judges, Rabbani said the "judges will be restored" but said a timeframe would be announced at a later unspecified date.

The election follows the resignation of Pervez Musharraf and comes amid a prolonged struggle against Islamic militants who have wreaked havoc across the nuclear-armed nation in suicide bombings and fighting on the Afghan border.

A fragile coalition government comprising the PPP, now led by Zardari, and the party of another former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, is at loggerheads over how to reinstate dozens of judges sacked by Musharraf last year.

Political instability and a nosediving economy have alarmed Western nations looking for continuity after key US ally Musharraf's departure but talks between the PPP and Sharif's party have so far failed to resolve the dispute.

Zardari is seen as a frontrunner for the presidency despite having previously denied any ambitions for the post made vacant by Musharraf's resignation in the face of impeachment charges.

Zardari thanked Pakistan People's Party of which he is the chairman, and said he will announce his decision within the next 24 hours. Information Minister Sherry Rehman said Friday, announcing the PPP's backing for Zardari.

The fate of the 60 judges, including the chief justice, has become a

political sticking point with crucial repercussions for the coalition.

There has been no immediate comment from Zardari or the PPP on the issue. A resolution on their reinstatement would require their support, but they have shown no sign yet of keeping a pledge made in May to restore the judges.

Sharif has pushed back his deadline for the judges to get their jobs back until Wednesday next week, having previously threatened to quit the coalition if they were not restored by Friday.

The former premier said representatives of the two parties would draft a resolution on restoring the judges over the weekend and then introduce it in parliament on Monday, with a vote on Wednesday.

Meanwhile a delegation of PPP stalwarts Saturday met Sharif in the eastern city of Lahore to apprise him on the party decision about the presidential election, party sources told AFP.

Earlier the military said troops had killed up to 35 militants in an offensive in northwestern Swat valley after a suicide attack on a police station killed six people, including two policemen.

Separately a bicycle bomb targeting a senior police official in southern Karachi city wounded four people, police said.

A double Taliban suicide bombing at Pakistan's biggest weapons factory on Thursday, the deadliest ever attack on a Pakistani military site, has put fresh pressure on the coalition to end its bickering.

Critics have suggested that Zardari is against the return of crusading chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry because he could overturn an amnesty on corruption charges that allowed Bhutto and Zardari to return to Pakistan.

The amnesty allowed Bhutto and Zardari to end years in exile in return for an agreement on a power-sharing deal with Musharraf, which later collapsed.

Bhutto was killed in a suicide attack at an election campaign rally in December and the parties in the current ruling coalition defeated Musharraf's allies in polls held in February.

Pakistan's election commission on Friday announced the September 6 contest for Musharraf's successor.

Under the constitution, the new president must be elected by a simultaneous sitting of the upper and lower houses of the national parliament and the country's four provincial assemblies.

Nomination papers will be scrutinised on August 28 and the final date for any withdrawals will be August 30, officials said.

35 new UNOs

FROM PAGE 1
M Shahul Arif, UNO of Kaptai, Rangamati, to Patiya in Chittagong, AM Parvez Rahim, UNO of Madhupur, Tangail, to Betagi in Barguna, Khan M Rezaunnabi, UNO of Alamdanga, Chuadanga, to Tala in Satkhira, Krishna Kanta Biswas, UNO of Morelganj, Bagerhat, to Rajibpur in Kurigram, and M Monir Hossain Khan, UNO of Companiganj, Noakhali, to Morelganj.

M Mokammel Haque, UNO of Barhatta, Netrakona, has been transferred to Maulvibazar Sadar while Arun Chandra Mohattam, UNO of Boalmari, Faridpur, to Kotchandpur of Jhenidah, Khalid Parvez Khan, UNO of Dewanganj, Jamalpur, to Alifdanga of Faridpur, M Sabirul Islam, UNO of Fulbaria, Mymensingh, to Jaintapur of Sylhet, M Shafiqur Reza Biswas, UNO of Bajitpur, Kishoreganj, to Sonamuri of Noakhali, M Habibur Rahman, UNO of Fulchhari, Gaibandha, to Pabna Sadar, Dewan Shahrir Firoz, UNO of Rajibpur, Kurigram, to Bagha of Rajshahi, and Foyez Ahmed, UNO of Doulatkhan, Bhola, to Munshiganj Sadar.

Among the senior assistant secretaries, M Jahidul Islam Bhuiyan has been appointed UNO of Gouranadi upazila in

Barisal while Redwanur Rahman to Burichang in Comilla, M Mahmudul Hasan to Agailjhara in Barisal, M Matiar Rahman to Sylhet Sadar, and M Abdul Awal to Jibonnagar in Chuadanga.

Among the senior assistant commissioners, Begum Nasrin Jahan of Gazipur has been transferred to Muktagachha in Mymensingh while M Badrul Haq of Chandpur to Muladi in Barisal, M Faruk Ahmed of Sylhet to Akhaura in Brahmanbaria, Mina Masuduzzaman of Jhenidah to Sreepur in Magura, M Mahmudur Rahman Habib of Sunanganj to Tarash in Sirajganj and SM Ferdouse of Bogra to Mahadevpur in Naogaon.

M Kayesuzzaman, deputy director of BPATC, has been transferred to Patuakhali Sadar as UNO while Khalid Ahmed, estate officer of DCC, to Kalaroa of Satkhira, Rathindra Nath Datta, deputy director of BCS Administration Academy, to Wazirpur of Barisal, M Kazi Anwar Hossain, programmer of BCS Administration Academy, to Puthia of Rajshahi and Mihir Kanti, assistant director of Bangladesh Public Service Commission Secretariat, to Nawabganj of Dinajpur.

Rahul

FROM PAGE 16
recently. It (concept of micro financing and self-help groups) is a huge success there with workers saying they can win Nobel Prize for their efforts in this direction," he said.

The Indian lawmaker mentioned that women in Bangladesh have been empowered, and they are taking their own decisions. If India has to move forward, poverty has to be eradicated first, he added.

Son of Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Rahul urged Indian women to move out of the confines of their houses to ensure success of micro financing scheme and victory in the fight against poverty.

Rahul, who had initiated the concept of micro financing in Amethi in 1990s, said, "A sapling has been planted which has grown into a tree in Amethi. Now I want to create a jungle and spread it all over Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere in the country."

The scheme has now involved more than 20,000 women in Amethi.

Tarique was arrested at his mother's cantonment residence in the city on March 8 last year.

UZ poll budget

FROM PAGE 1
roadmap announced in July last year, new electoral laws were supposed to come into force by February and the political parties to register with the EC by June this year.

The EC will have to announce schedule by early November to hold the long-stalled parliamentary election in December.

As per the roadmap, the parties were to get four months to prepare for registration. But they now have barely two months (September-October) as only recently the commission has to hold new electoral provisions in the Registration of People Order (RPO).

All major political parties will have to revise their constitutions and elect new committees through national councils to fulfil the criteria laid down for registration. As per the amended RPO, they will have to sever ties with their front organisations and do away with chapters abroad.

The parties say it's not possible to hold national council and do the tasks in such a short period of time.

Officials at the commission secretariat however say the EC would need two weeks to examine the documents to be submitted by the parties applying for registration.

Khowai

FROM PAGE 16
several breaches from Ballah to Habiganj town. In addition, a 7.5-km stretch between Ballah and Rajarbaraz has no protection wall.

The WDB last year asked the government for Tk 12 crore to buttress the weak points on an emergency basis.

Tk 3.27 crore was sanctioned. Officials now claim the repair work was done well and monsoon rains would no more pose any threat to the embankment.

But locals say the repair work did not follow the river's course. Besides, they allege the contractor used poor quality blocks and boulders in the knowledge of WDB officials.

The swollen river now threatens the dam at Govindapur, Eralia, Masulia, Bhadoi, Moshajan and Shaistaganj points. People fear that a few days' rain may lead to the busting of the riverbank.

Big hilsa

FROM PAGE 16
Wholesalers said they have to buy even this small size hilsa after a lot of struggle because of the competition with the exporters.

On an average they buy a medium size hilsa at Tk 300 per kg and a small size weighing 600g-800g at Tk 150-180 per piece.

Retail hilsa trader at Karwan Bazar Shukkur Ali said he sold large hilsa weighing 2.5kg last year but this year he has not yet seen a hilsa of that size.

"I sold the largest hilsa of this season weighing 1.5kg at Tk 1,000 per piece on Friday," he said. "At this time last year the same size hilsa sold at Tk 500-600 per piece as the supply was adequate."

Market sources said mid-size hilsa weighing 1kg-1.2kg is sold at Tk 320-400 per kg and small size hilsa weighing 600g-800g is sold at Tk 150-220 per piece.

Nazrul Islam, a wholesaler from Barisal, said less hilsa are being found this year and the crisis is being multiplied by exporting of the fish. "At this time last year I supplied around 2,500-3,000 pieces of hilsa every day but this year I cannot even bring 1,000 pieces," he said.

Mohammad Sharif, manager of hilsa wholesaler and exporter company Al-Medina Fishing, said after cyclone Sidr an unusually large number of hilsa was caught in Barisal region which has caused the scarcity of hilsa in the right season.

Electricity line

FROM PAGE 16
anyone that got between the sending and receiving units.

"The trick with wireless power is not can you do it: it's can you do it safely and efficiently," Intel researcher Josh Smith said in an online video explaining the breakthrough.

"It turns out the human body is not affected by magnetic fields: it is affected by electric fields. So what we are doing is transmitting energy using the magnetic field not the electric field."

Examples of potential applications include airports, offices or other buildings that could be rigged to supply power to laptops, mobile telephones or other devices toted into them.

The technology could also be built into plugged in computer components, such as monitors, to enable them to broadcast power to devices left on desks or carried into rooms, according to Smith.

"Initially it eliminates batteries and eventually it eliminates batteries all together," analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said of Intel's wireless power system.

"That is potentially a world changing event. This is the closest we've had to something being commercially available in this class."

Previous wireless power systems consisted basically of firing lightning bolts from sending to receiving units.

Smith says Intel's wireless power system is still in an early stage of development and much research remains before it can be brought to market.

Rattner spoke of technological transformations he expects by the year 2050.

"You'd like to cut the last cord," Smith said.

"It's great that we have wireless email and wireless internet and stuff like that but at the end of the day it would be nice to have wireless recharge as well."

Obama taps Biden

FROM PAGE 16
Obama's decision leaked to the media several hours before his aides planned to send a text message announcing the running mate, negating a promise that people who turned over their phone numbers would be the first to know who Obama had chosen. The campaign scrambled to send the text message after the leak, sending phones buzzing at the inconvenient time of just after 3 a.m. on the East coast.

Hundreds of miles to the west, carpenters, electricians, sound stage gurus and others transformed the Pepsi Centre in Denver into a makeshift television convention venue.

Tucked away in one corner were thousands of lightweight rolled cardboard tubes, ready-made handles for signs bearing the names of the Democratic ticket once the identity of Obama's running mate was known.

While Obama decided against adding Clinton to his ticket, he has gone to great lengths to gain the confidence of her primary voters, agreeing to allow her name to be placed in nomination at the convention and permitting a roll call vote that threatens to expose lingering divisions within the party.

Biden slowly emerged as Obama's choice across a long day and night of political suspense as other contenders gradually fell away.

First Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine let it be known that he had been ruled out. Then came word that Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana had also been passed over.

Several aides to Clinton said the Obama campaign had never requested financial or other records from her.

Other finalists in the veep sweepstakes were Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and Texas Rep. Chet Edwards.

Among those on the short list, Biden brought the most experience in defence or foreign policy areas in which Obama fares relatively poorly in the polls compared with Republican Sen. John McCain.

While the war in Iraq has been supplanted as the campaign's top issues by the economy in recent months, the recent Russian invasion of Georgia has returned foreign policy to the forefront.

In addition to foreign policy experience, Biden, a native of Scranton, Pa., has working-class roots that could benefit Obama, who lost the blue-collar vote to Clinton during their competition for the presidential nomination.

Biden was elected to the Senate at the age of 29 in 1972, but personal tragedy struck before he could take office. His wife and their 13-month-old daughter, Naomi, were killed when a tractor-trailer broad-sided her station wagon.

Biden took his oath of office for his first term at the hospital bedside of one of his sons. On Friday, he spent the day at his home in Delaware with friends and family. The normally loquacious lawmaker maintained a low profile as associates said they believed, but did not know he would be tapped. They added they had been asked to stand by in case their help was needed.

No sooner had word spread of his selection than McCain's campaign unleashed its first attack. Spokesman Ben Porritt said in a statement that Biden had "denounced Barack Obama's poor foreign policy judgment and has strongly argued in his own words what Americans are quickly realising that Barack Obama is not ready to be president."

As evidence, Republicans cited an ABC interview from August 2007, in which Biden said he would stand by an earlier statement that Obama was not ready to serve as president.

Biden is seeking a new Senate term in the fall, there was no immediate word whether he intended to change plans as he reaches for national office.

Michael Silberman, a partner at online communications firm

US-led forces

FROM PAGE