

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Art Exhibition

Abdur Razzaque Retrospective
Title: Rhythms of Figures, Forms and Nature
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275F, Rd 27 (old), Dharmondi
Date: October 10-29
Time: 12pm-8pm
Inauguration: October 10 at 6pm



Film Screening

Alexander Kluge Retrospective (Part 1)
Organiser: Zahir Raihan Film Society
Venue: Goethe-Institute Bangladesh, H 10, Rd 9, Dharmondi
Date: October 12-14
Time: 2:30pm onwards



Solo Photography Exhibition

Title: The Journey of a Legend
Photographer: Shahadat Parvez
Venue: Zainul Gallery-1, Faculty of Fine Arts, DU
Date: October 10-16
Time: 12pm-7pm
Inauguration: October 10 at 4pm



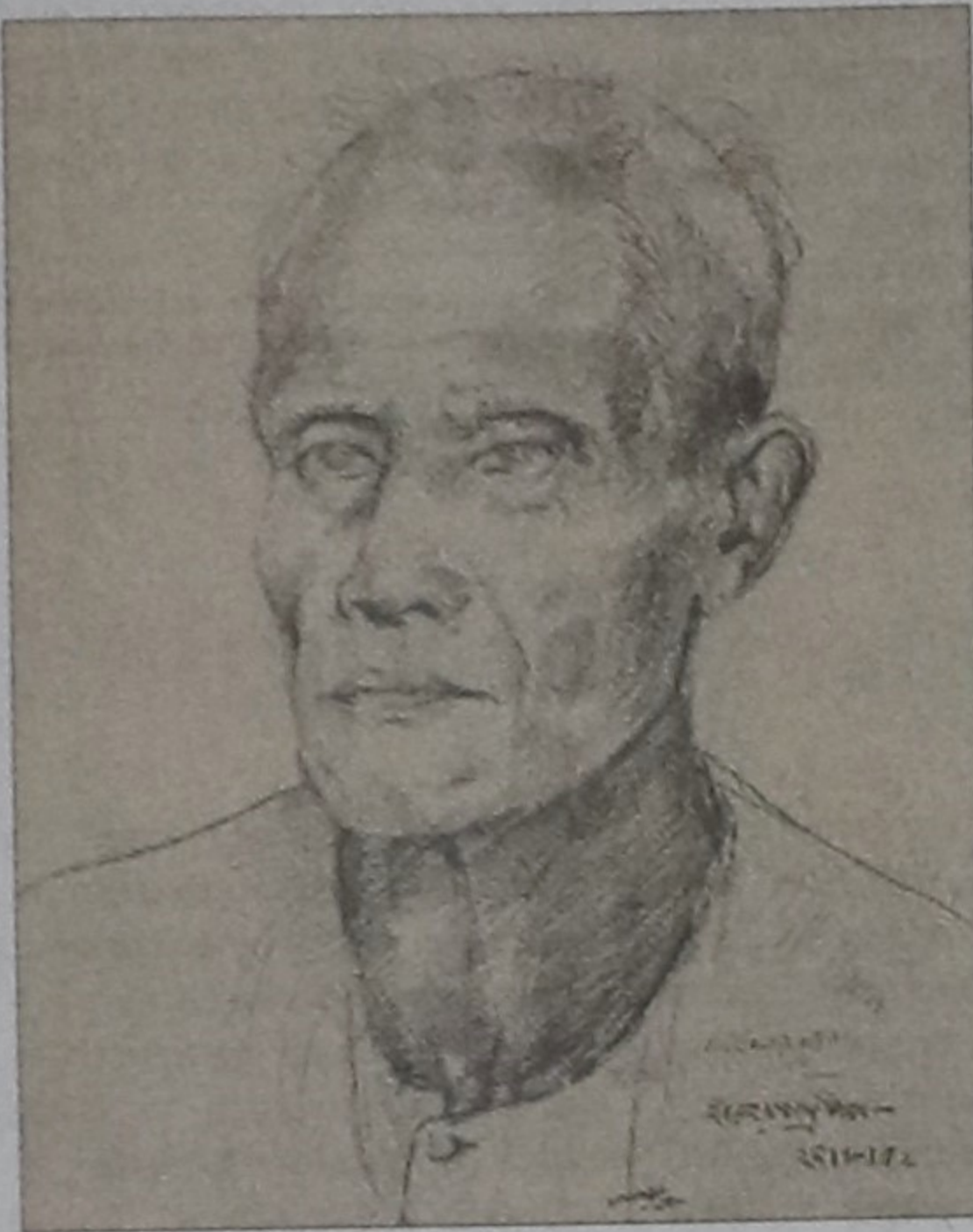
Photography Exhibition

Title: ACCU Asia-Pacific ESD Photo Exhibition
Organiser: Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO
Venue: Exhibition Hall, National Museum, Shahbag
Date: October 11-17



A tribute to Abdur Razzaque

Rhythms of Figures, Forms and Nature exhibition at Bengal Gallery



Portrait of Ramesh Shil; Goldsmith Woodcut and Figure Study 1, watercolour.

TAKIR HOSSAIN

Abdur Razzaque is regarded as one of the greatest sculptors of our country. He was the first person to take up sculpture in the independent country from the centre point of Joydevpur. A versatile individual in arts, he was not only immersed in the sculpture medium, but print making and painting were also among his favourite media of expression. He had shown outstanding evidence in both creativity and skill in each branch. Even on the day prior to his death, he was silently involved in his work. Abdur Razzaque was 73 when he passed away on October 23, 2005. He died in Jessore where he had conducted a drawing workshop. The participants were his former students.

Passionate and introvert, this artist, Razzaque, shied away from the atmosphere of humans occupied with fame, wealth and domination. With a long and

chequered life, Razzaque gradually transformed himself into an abstract expressionist painter. His works were form and colour-oriented and nature was a recurring leitmotif in his works. His watercolours give us a serene and tranquil feeling which was one of the hallmarks of his works. He always enjoyed creating new forms and shapes that represented unfamiliar and unconventional facets. This avant-garde painter had associated with modern art movement in Bangladesh from its very early days. Razzaque was the student of the second batch of the Dhaka Art College (now Institute of Fine Arts). His classmates included Murtaja Baseer, Rashid Chowdhury, Qayyum Chowdhury, Zunabul Islam, Ekramul Huq, Emdad Hossain, Humayun Kabir and others.

In a retrospective show titled *Rhythms of Figures, Forms and Nature* Razzaque's where work of six decades were placed on display. These included watercolour, drawing (pen, ink, pencil,

charcoal, pastel, print (etching, aquatint, lithograph, dry point, wood cut), sculpture (white cement, bronze, metal) oil colour and mixed medium. The exhibition presents his versatility and dedication to art. From the beginning of his career, he liked to work in different media and was always striving to unearth the mystery of nature and human beings. In his portrait sketches he is profoundly true to the characters. The characters evoke soulful and touching emotion, which is very rare and unusual. Razzaque always tried to articulate the inner essence of nature in many of his works. It is noteworthy that he had a deep capacity to feel and respond to the beauty of nature in his works. He not only produced works, but also introduced an aesthetic and artistic element. Razzaque did figurative work—rural men, goldsmith, his companions, his parents, boatman, hard working people, boats, crows, indigenous flowers, people at leisure, and

other facets. Razzaque's landscape transported the viewers far away from urban life. He arranged the motifs in different combinations of light and shade.

Razzaque liked to work in bold brush strokes, bright colours, light and shade that mark his figures and forms from the ambience around him. In his use of colours, he frequently went for vital colours from our natural world. His application of paint was also singular and distinctive. Razzaque was increasingly imparting messages through his paintings and he was becoming more innovative, using his space to increasingly interact with his figures and objects. The finely honed and though provoking themes were really praiseworthy. His watercolours and oil paintings are highly impressive for their colour, tone and texture. These works are simultaneously of technical excellence and intellectually very mature.

The sculptural works by Razzaque at Joydevpur and other

locations are largely figure-based. He also did many semi-abstract and purely abstract pieces which were also acclaimed by art enthusiasts. Always willing to experiment, he had a passion for creating art that was fresh and novel. These vary in media, materials and size. As mediums he has used cement, stone, steel, iron, bronze and wood. In metals he has used both the welding technique and casting. Wood, one of his favourite mediums, has been carved and shaped to give a by the touch of his adroit hand. In his figure-based works, Razzaque adds outstanding force and an animated quality.

Abdur Razzaque's solo exhibition titled *Rhythms of Figures, Forms and Nature* at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts is on till October 29.

The writer is a freelance contributor.

DVD launch and flute recital by Ustad Azizul Haque

NADIA SARWAT

While on the high seas as a captain of a merchant vessel, Ustad Azizul Islam kept his loneliness at bay and indulged in flute. His passion for this particular instrument had its beginnings in his childhood. Ultimately it became a passion for him. Leaving his job, he devoted the rest of his life to what is regarded as one of the earliest musical instruments of the East.

Now a renowned flutist, the Ustad Islam launched his new DVD under the aegis of Laser Vision. The ceremony was held on October 10 at the National Theatre Stage of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. The DVD features flute performances of raag *Bagesree*, *Kirwani*,

Handsadhvani, *Mishra Pilu dhun* and others. Later he captivated the audience with a solo flute recital.

Organised by Sanskriti Bikash Kendra, the event drew Mabub Jamil, special assistant to the chief advisor, ministry of industries, civil aviation and tourism; as the chief guest. Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, director general of BSA; noted educationist, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui; AKM Arifur Rahman, chairman of Laser Vision, noted cultural personalities were also present at the programme presided over by Dr Liaquat Ali, chairman of Sanskriti Bikash Kendra.

"We dream of a brighter future, a beautiful Bangladesh which cannot become a reality merely through economical develop-

ment. The cultural arena need to be developed alongside, and we can't expect such development without cherishing our rich heritage," said Mahbub Jamil, appreciating the effort of Ustad Captain Azizul Islam to promote classical music through his flute.

The much-awaited performance of the artiste began with a brief performance of raga *Yaman*. A self-styled *gaat* by the flutist followed. The one-hour long performance included raga *Hameer* in *madhyalaya*, raga *Darbari Kanada* in *bilambit ektal* and *druto teen taal*. He concluded his performance with a *Bhatiyali dhun*.

The artiste was accompanied by Madan Gopal Das on the *tabla* and Jahangir Alam on the *tanpura*.



Ustad Captain Azizul Islam performs at the programme.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Traditional boat race in Chapainawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A traditional boat race was organised on the Mohananda river in Chapainawabganj recently.

The District Sports Association was the organiser of the boat race. The race kicked off at Khal Ghat point in the town. After meandering through several areas of the water body, the race ended at Mohananda Bridge in the town. Thousands of people, including men, women and children, gathered on the banks of the river to witness the competition.

Sirazul Haque Khan, Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj was present as the chief guest. SM Mahfuzul Haque Mohammad Nuruzzaman was the special guest. Among others Additional District Magistrate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commis-



Traditional boat race at the Mohananda River.

PHOTO: STAR

sioner Sultan Abdul Hamid, vice president of the District Sports Association and former lawmaker Dr. Meshbahul Haque Bachchu and secretary Toufiqul Haque Tofa were present on the

occasion. Later, Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj, Sirazul Haque Khan distributed prizes among the winners and participants.

A Dirge

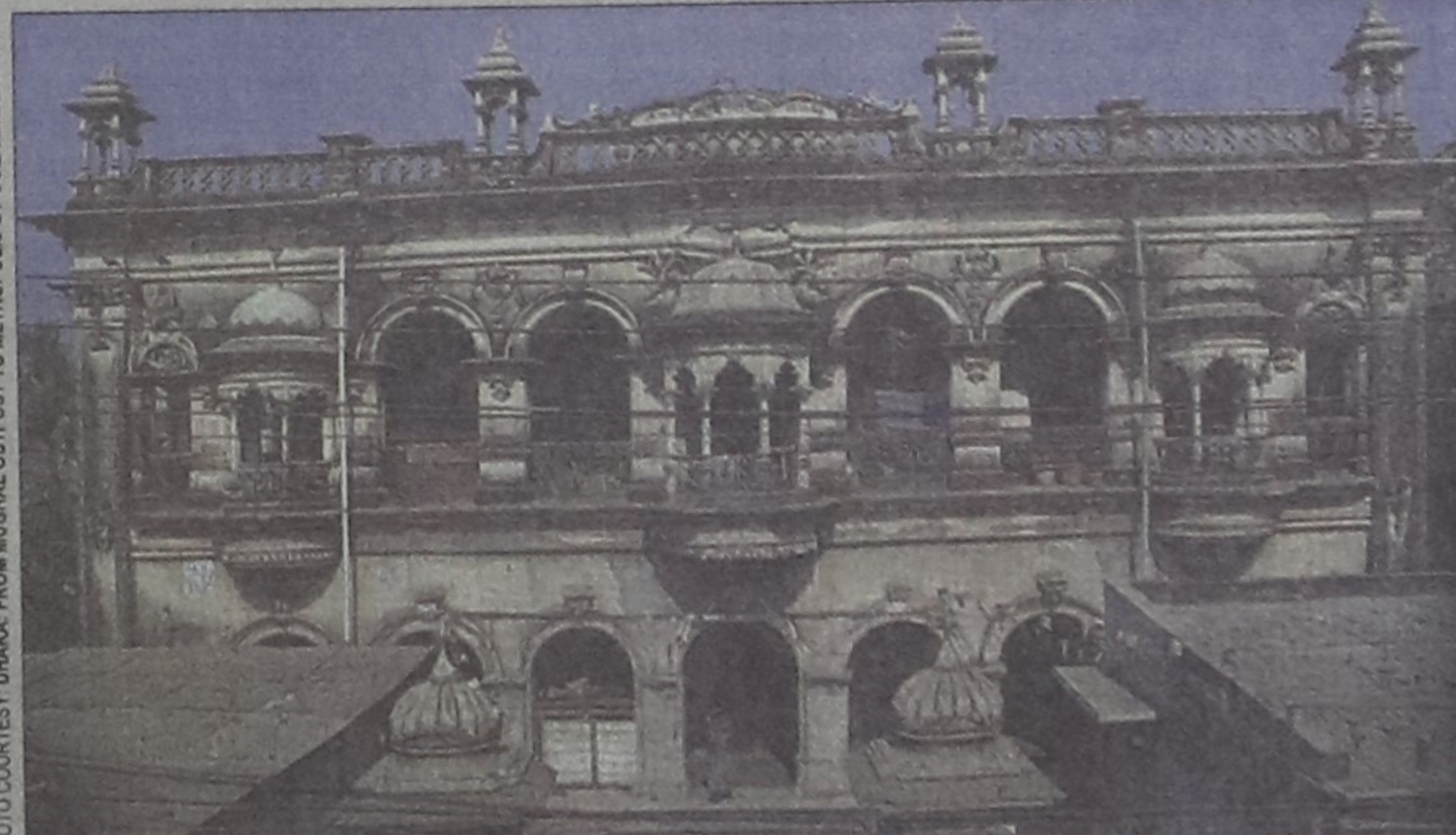
NAUSHABA KHATOON

Yes, it was not there. But where was it then? Twice we went up and down the crowded road but to no avail. Sushila Nibash on 92 Aga Sadeq Road had disappeared! The beauty of a house which Golam Rabbani had thought fit enough to be included in his commendable album "Dhaka from Moghul Outpost to Metropolis", the house in which my days as a young mother were spent, the house in which two of my babies were born, the house that had given us refuge, had dipped like the setting sun only never to appear again. Gradually it dawned upon me that those of us who had lived there would never see it again because it had been replaced by ugliness incarnate. In its place stood 97A to 97B Age Sadeq Road. The original majestic grandeur was replaced by common concrete bricks which resembled the heavy make up on a wrinkled face. The hideous, after a desecration of the beautiful was having the last laugh.

It was a shock akin to the sudden news of loss of a loved one. Golam Rabbani's album has mistakenly captioned it as 'A Zamindar's House'. This is misinformation. Sushila Nibash was built by a sub-inspector of police known as Mr. Addy. Surely this gentleman had the exquisite tastes of a Moghul king.

It so happened while showing our visiting British born grandson-in-law Sukhi photographs of old Dhaka in the album, we came across one of the house which attracted his attention. British environs had made him appreciative of things rare and antique. Sukhi expressed a desire to see it, and a Friday morning was set aside for the purpose. And this is how the story should have ended, but for some the beginning can be an end and the end a beginning.

Way back in 1947, on a wintry November evening when dusk had settled in, weary travellers from



Sushila Nibash: aesthetic beauty that is no more.

Kolkata, men and women with two toddlers, entered through the portals of Sushila Nibash. It was the year of partition—partition of roots from soil, partition of flesh and blood, partition of beliefs and friendships, partition of identity.

Four women, my grandmother, mother, aunt and myself, went to the backyard and sat on the broad steps. Three of us started sobbing, my aunt did not join the chorus as she was from Faridpur and was delighted to be back home. When shelter was scarce on both sides of the border this house was a haven of refuge for us. Did the steps ask the cudgels to be gentler because they had given some homeless people a place to sit and mourn for things lost forever?

In times to come, our Kolkata property was exchanged with Sushila Nibash. My uncle's family lived upstairs and we downstairs. Though cousins, my uncle's children were of the same age group as mine. By the late fifties there were nine of them altogether.

Little feet pattering up and down the stairs, the naughty ones stealing snacks from the 'niamat khana', dipping dirty little fingers in the pickle jars out in the sun and what not. Did the staircases remember the sound of their hushed voices and the light patter of their feet when heavy, brutal bars were pounding on them?

The intricate designs were carved out of multi coloured porcelain chips which in our days were called "China crazy". The floors, though, were of glossy red cement. Our children's unostentatious, joyous and much looked forward to birthdays were celebrated on them. Did the even floors remember the shows our children along with Mrs. Akhter's kids Yasmeen, Afreen, Shafaat and Rukhsana performed on summer vacations?

Readers, if you ever come across the photograph you will notice a bar protruding from the central point of the roof. It is the support around which was a magnificent

peacock spreading out of its flamboyant feathers. Way back in 1964, it was hit by lightning and so what now remains is only the roof, which held the structure together. Death for the peacock was sudden. A better end when compared to the mason's prolonged painful hammering.

There was a violin of multicoloured chips on the east wall; the strings were carved meticulously. What was the last music it played to stop the tormentors? Was it the last post?

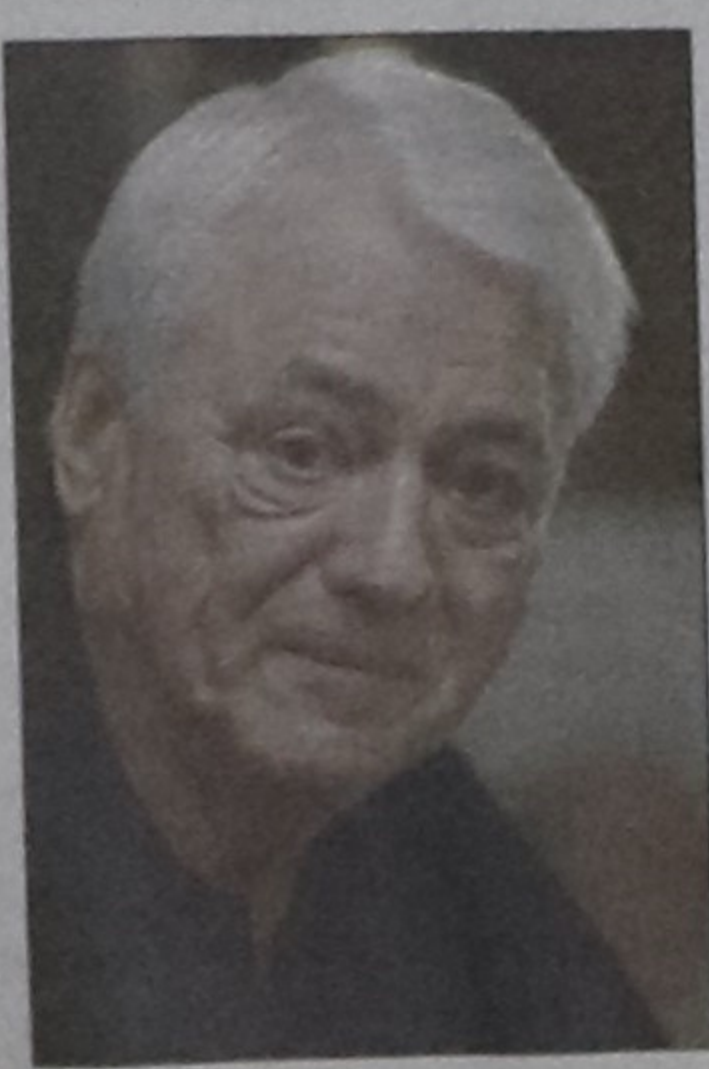
It makes little sense being sentimental when sharing an era with Bill Gates and others like him. The old order has to change but the speed is astounding. The pride of living in ancestral homes is no more. Sheer logic demands that since the original price of the land on which they stand has gone up a hundred fold or more, why not go for a vertical expansion and satisfy personal and community needs that the explosive and claustrophobic population upsurge demands? But given the chance

and the means, some old fogies like me would like to hold on to these priceless gems, repair them, renovate them and retrieve them from the clutches of time. Irrefutably run of the mill dilapidated houses should give way to multistoried apartments. The poplars have to be felled and the whispering sounds of the cool colonnade must give way to the groaning of bulldozers and the screeching of relic machines. But to tear down relics or disfigure them is sacrilege. God bless the people who saved Ahsan Manzil from this disgrace. The un-aesthetic crudity is not of recent origin. Way back in the sixties Shashi Lodge in Mymensingh was turned into the Women's Teacher Training College. Worse, ugly boxlike brick buildings were erected in front of it for hostel purposes, thus marring its pristine beauty. Was land so scarce that a relic had to be wantonly disfigured?

The horizo-vertical movement began some years back. Encroachment of land, filling up of water bodies and other such anomalies have been rampant, the infrastructure is not as reliable as expected, earthquake proof structures are hard to come by. But whining on in this labyrinth of no return has done no good to braver souls than mine.

Wanting to end on a lighter and happier tone, I would like to add that old Dhaka, after all, is a homely, friendly and neighbourly place to live in. My children living abroad have had the experience of seeing eyebrows raised when their friends came to know that I live in Churnhatta in Old Dhaka. I enjoy their friends' reactions, but the offspring being of a different generation are hopping mad at me for owning such a postal address! Is the locality one's seal of gentility? Old Dhaka to me is synonymous with Sushila Nibash, which again is synonymous with refuge and beauty.

The writer is an educationist.



Alexander Kluge

Retrospective on German filmmaker Alexander Kluge

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A three-day retrospective film festival featuring German theorist and filmmaker Alexander Kluge (1932-present) opens today at the auditorium of Goethe-Institute Bangladesh. Organised by Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with the Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, the retrospective

will showcase 12 of Kluge's films.

The retrospective takes off with the screening of Kluge's much acclaimed film *Yesterday Girl* (1966) at 3pm. Today three more films—*Part-Time Work of a Female Slave* (1973), *Artists in the Big Top: Perplexed* (1968) and *The Indomitable Leni Peickert* (1970)—can be viewed at 4:45pm, 6:30pm and 8:15pm respectively.