filmmaker Shibu Kumer Shill, the iconic

New Wave'. Can you elaborate on this?

significant in the history of Iranian cinema.

ney in cinema.

and won major awards.

was great.

on the New Wave?

helmer talked about his four-decade-long jour-

"Gaav" is a pioneering film from the 'Iranian

Mehrjui: I feel fortunate that it's considered

Before the Revolution (1979), we started the New

Wave and "Gaav" was the first film that earned

both commercial success and critical acclaim.

Revolution Iranian filmmaker) films had been

screened at international festivals, "Gaav" was

"Gaav" was banned in Iran for almost two

earned fame. Suddenly Iran became famous in

global cinema. Yet, the film remained banned in

Iran until the Festival of Shiraz in 1970. The film

premiered in Iran at that festival. The response

Mehrjui: We were good friends. We were

always together. Kimiai and I started almost at

"Qeysar" also attained success but it was more

"Qeysar". They induced a lot of discussions and

festivals and they, sort of, divided the critics

Some loved mine, whereas some praised

"Gohine", however, does not mark her

debut as a producer. Previous works

under Saatkahon include the serials

actress says that she also has to give

extra time to her production house.

serial, titled "Kana Sirajuddoula O

"Simanto", "Uposhonghar" and several

other one-hour plays and tele-films. The

Apart from "Gohine", Suborna also

plays the role of Komola Bibi in a new

Komol Bibir Otithishala", being jointly

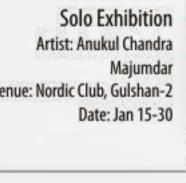
the same time. Like "Gaav", Kimiai's second film

years. So I smuggled a copy of the film through a

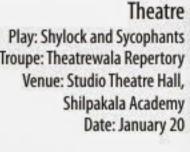
much talked about at Venice, Cannes and Berlin

Although, Golestan's (Ebrahim Golestan; pre-

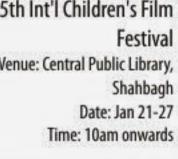
















The septuagenarian Iranian filmmaker -debates. Before these two films, Iranian cinema whose second film "Gaav" (1968) is considered was purely commercial -- with a lot of singing to be the stepping-stone in 'Iranian New Wave' and dancing and imitations of Indian cinema. - is in town to attend the 12th Dhaka Interna-There's heavy use of metaphor in "Gaav", and tional Film Festival. In a freewheeling conversait presents a complex philosophical premise. tion with Jamil Mahmud and independent What made you delve into philosophy?

Mehrjui: Well, I was always attracted to movies that had philosophical depth. I was very much impressed by Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni, whose films had different layers of interpretation. Those are the kind of films I was interested to make. The story of "Gaav" had that philosophical dimension.

"Gaav" is the story of a man whose cow is very dear to him. When the cow suddenly dies, he changes so much psychologically that he somehow finds himself to be the cow. This idea of love/affection -- dissolving into the object of one's love -- is a theme, which had been repeatedly expressed by poets like Hafez, Omar Khayyam and Maulana Rumi.

You changed your major at UCLA. You wanted to study Films, but graduated in Philosophy.

French friend. That's how it made it to Venice and Mehrjui: At UCLA, the emphasis was more on the technical aspects of cinema. They tried to create Hollywood type directors. This attitude did

For me, just concentrating on cinema was not enough. I had a course with Jean Renoir Did you exchange views with your contempowho helped me a lot. I was more interested in raries such as Masoud Kimiai and Nasser Taqvai theoretical aspects rather than those technical

Some of your protagonists, such as Hassan (from "Gaav"), Pari, Hamoun and Banoo deal with dialectical crisis regarding their respective existence. Do they, in some way, represent the

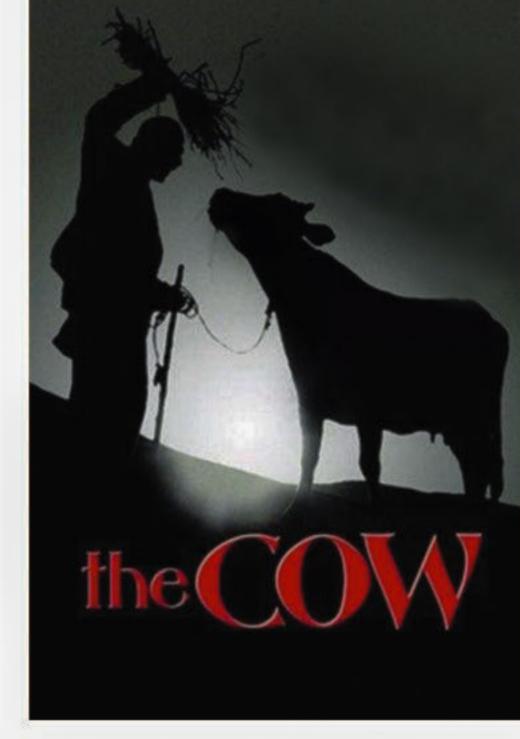
commercial. Both films were screened at Iranian Mehrjui: Not necessarily. But there are always certain aspects of my life, my temperament or my attitude towards life that are reflected in my films,

biographical, but not exclusively. All of my films deal with existential issues. They deal with the What are the main reasons behind the global existence of individuals and the crises the protag success of Iranian cinema? Mehrjui: Alternative/art house films from onists are thrown into. The situations force them

to change their lifestyles in order to attain a new Europe and the US are more or less banned in our country. Because of this prohibition, all It's more or less like Carl Gustav Jung's "the the theatres are obliged to show local films. individuation process". An individual undergoes Iranian cinema, because of the strict control a situation in which s/he suffers a tremendous by the government, deal with human relation ships. They are essentially simple films on the become a new person with higher level of conexterior. Iranian cinema has become success-

sciousness. My films present situations like this.

expressed by poets like Hafez, Omar Khayyam and Maulana Rumi.



"Just narrating a tale with no purpose

The idea of love/affection -- dissolving into the object of one's love -- is a theme, which had been repeatedly

otherwise is superficial"-- Dariush Mehrjui

ful globally, because it's still following the traditional trend of art films. And we have

to produce such films. Minimalism is very apparent in Iranian cinema. Why so?

the opportunity and necessary investmen

Mehrjui: Minimalism is a form/method, not content. Our cinema started with small funds, so we initially dealt with simple stories, featuring modest characters with humble backgrounds. That is why it seems minimal.

What is your impression of the third genera-

tion Iranian filmmakers? Are they capable of carrying on the legacy established by Abbas Kiarostami, Dariush Mehrjui and Mohsen Mehrjui: Yes, why not? I'm very optimistic.

young filmmaker has emerged, Asghar Farhadi, whose films are very good, almost at the same level as ours. I hope that his films would only get better. In our culture, the influence of literature and poetry is great. Thanks to all the filmmaking schools, inspiring literature and encouraging ambiance, aspiring directors are likely to make good films.

Several of the third generation Iranian film makers are in exile at present. Do you think they've chosen the right path?

Mehrjui: No, I don't think they have chosen the right path. I was in Hollywood and I had the opportunity to make films there. I was in Paris for four years and made films over there as well. But it didn't satisfy me. I came back to Iran because the ideas that'd encourage me to make films were here. My filmmaking becomes meaningful here.

What, according to you, is the main purpose of a film?

Mehrjui: Filmmaking is a work of art. The main purpose of a film, for me, is to reach out to the audience and try to stimulate their awareness. Just narrating a tale with no purpose otherwise is superficial

Do you follow a process when choosing stories for your films?

Mehrjui: No, I don't have any particular method. I usually write down my ideas for stories. When I want to make a new film I go over those ideas and contemplate the possib ties of doing such a film. That is how I choose my storyline -- either I write it myself or collab orate with friends.

How important is combining craftsmanship

and ideas to make a film a success? Mehrjui: Literature is a good source for cin-

ema. A good screenplay is very important. You pick up a story and you don't know what to do and you write down a bad screenplay. This story may be written by you or someone else. I think a good filmmaker dominates the screenplay to turn it into a good film.

In "Santoori", you've shown a darker side of Iranian society. The subject (drug abuse) is bold and unique in Iranian cinema..

Mehrjui: Drug addiction is a very serious problem in our country. In the past decade, it has gotten worse. The government tries to fight the situation, but somehow hasn't been successful. I wanted to address this issue.

You have faced heavy censorship throughout your career. Are Iranian filmmakers still going through such censorship? Mehrjui: Every single film of mine has had to

face censorship, both before and after the Revolution. "Banno" was banned for nine years and "The School We Went to" for 11 years. When the films came out nothing had happened. So I don't know why the authorities banned them. Yes, Iranian filmmakers have to face strict censorship, and it's getting worse.

What kind of political responsibilities are apparent in your works?

Mehrjui: Politics is everywhere. Every film is political in this sense. I don't like directly political films that preach one ideology or the other. I think that cinema or art should be above this. Cinema is like poetry, and poetry cannot take sides. Art should not be a simple tool of propa-

Eighteen of Dariush Mehrjui's films are available on www.asiapacificfilms.com

Badrul Anam Saud.

PERFECT TAKES Catching up with Suborna Mustafa

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Actress Suborna Mustafa has a demand ing schedule these days. Her regular appearances in the daily soap "Gohine" take her every month to a remote village in Gazipur where shooting for the serial

Suborna says that her character, Romola, and the serial's storyline are great, adding that she is enjoying the versatility of her role in the serial.

produced by Suborna and Badrul Anam Suborna is also the producer of Soud. On the new serial, Suborna says it "Gohine", being made under the banner is a comedy sure to entertain viewers. of her production house Saatkahon and



3rd Suchitra Sen Film Festival concludes in Pabna



AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The 3rd Suchitra Sen Film Festival concluded in Pabna on Monday night with noted personalities vowing to free the ancestral house of the screen legend from unjust occupation. Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, as the chief guest on the concluding day of the festival, highlighted th government's steps to promote the film industry so that it could produce more quality films.

"The present government is determined to restore the image of our film industry. We have taken initiatives to promote quality film productions," said Azad.

The minister said that the present government has plans to set up a 'Film City' that would enable the production of more quality films. Towards that end the government has taken steps to streamline the Film Development Corporation (FDC), he added.

"We are trying to update FDC. We have already bought machinery valued at Taka 60 crore for the corporation. We will provide mor support to introduce a film city for producing quality films," asserted Azad. President of the Suchitra Sen Sen Smrity

Shangrakhhan Parishad, Pabna, Md. Saidul Haque Chunnu, chaired the concluding programme held at the Pabna Town Hall premises. Veteran film actors Alamgir and Sujata spoke as special guests on the occasion. "Pabna people should take pride as Suchitra

Sen, the screen legend of Bangla films, is originally from this town. Her stellar performances still linger in the hearts of the people," said

A nostalgic Alamgir said, "Although Suchitra

Sen continues to stay out of the limelight, I was lucky to meet her three consecutive times in the

memories of Bangladesh when I met her." Actress Sujata said that there were few screen pairings that could compare with the Uttam-Suchitra duo.

'90s. Sen loved Bangladesh and harboured fond

often unconsciously. "Hamoun" is sort of auto-

amount of suffering. This causes him/her to

sense of awareness.

Among others, lawmaker of Pabna-4 constituency, Samsur Rahman Sharif; veteran educationist Professor Md. Nurunnabi; Deputy Commissioner of Pabna, Md. Mostafizur Rahman; Pabna Police Superintendent Jahangir Hossain Matobbar; secretary, Suchitra Sen Smirty Shangrakhhan Parishad, Pabna, Dr. Ram Dulal Bhoumik and secretary, Ekushey Boi Mela Udjapan Parishad, Pabna, Zakir Hossain, spoke on the occasion.

The speakers said that the ancestral house of Sen at Gopalpur village was illegally occupied by an institution. Pabna residents have taken up cudgels since 2009 to free the house from the illegal occupant, but the matter was still unresolved in the courts. They said that the residents of Pabna had demanded that an archive be set up at the ancestral house of Sen once it was freed from the illegal occupants. The third film festival was a platform to demand the restoration of Sen's ancestral home, they told Azad at the concluding programme.

Abul Kalam Azad said, "I will discuss the matter with the attorney general and see how the problem could be resolved." The minister also ordered the district administration to keep a close eye on the historic house so that the occupiers did not destroy it.

Sen's film "Ekti Raat" was screened at the concluding programme.

UNLIMITED MODE

Maruf Ahmed's solo painting exhibition at Bengal Gallery



Dignitaries at the inauguration.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts in Dhanmondi, Dhaka has organised a solo painting exhibition, titled "Unlimited", featuring the artworks of Bangladeshi expatriate painter Maruf Ahmed. Mijarul Kayes, Secretary, Ministry

of Foreign Affairs inaugurated the exhibition on January 17. Historian Muntasir Mamun was present as chief guest. Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Giorgio Guglielmino and Bangladesh Ambassador to Germany, Mosud Mannan, were present as special guests on the occasion. Judith Mirschberger, director, Goethe-Institut Dhaka also attended the opening. Artist Maruf Ahmed and Subir Chowdhury, director of Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, spoke at the inauguration of the

The exhibition features 39 artworks in different mediums where Ahmed mainly focuses or flamboyant colours and forms. The painter is fascinated with red, yellow and blue. Over the years the artist has earned recognition for his individual flair.



A painting by Maruf Ahmed.

January 28.

Inspired by German Expressionists Ahmed left the country in 1976 and went to the Federal Republic of Germany on a scholarship from the Goethe Institut. Ahmed's journey in art spans over four decades. He began his career as a figurative painter, depicting varied moods with vivid colours and thick texture. The exhibition will continue till

Bollywood goes gaga over Oprah

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Top stars of Bollywood came in droves to meet American talk-show queen Oprah Winfrey at a private party hosted in her honour in Mumbai on her maiden

Draped in an orange colour sari designed by Tarun Tahiliani, 57-year-old Winfrey, who was here for "Next Chapter", a new series of her famous talk show, attended the star-studded party organised by socialite Parmeshwar Godrej on Monday night. Earlier, she met Amitabh Bachchan and his family

members at their residence in suburban Mumbai. The Bachchan-Oprah connection goes back to 2005

when Aishwarya made her first appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show". Again in 2009, she was invited with her husband Abhishek to the show.

The Oprah party saw several stars including Amitabh Bachchan, son Abhishek, daughter-in-law Aishwarya Shahrukh Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Preity Zinta, Lara

Dutta, Shilpa Shetty, Anil Kapoor, Imran Khan, Neha Dhupia and Sameera Reddy who went gaga over her and were all click-happy.

On Tuesday, Winfrey visited a Mumbai slum as part of research for her new show. "For my new show 'Oprah's Next Chapter' I'm doing a

story on India and I wanted to see all aspects of the country to get a broad view of what it is like to be an Indian. It is very revealing and very amazing to me so I met people from Bollywood and others," she told reporters. "What I love most about this country is their toler-

ance...how the families learn to love and live together. When I was in America and talking to famous people...I would ask how you (Indians) live with your parents, now I see how you do it," she said.

"I'm not just doing one story; I'm doing five hours on

Oprah would attend the Jaipur Literature Festival to be held from January 20 to 24. She is also expected to shoot a portion of her show at the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

Beetle Baily

YOU WON'T TELL

MILL YOU'S

Henry

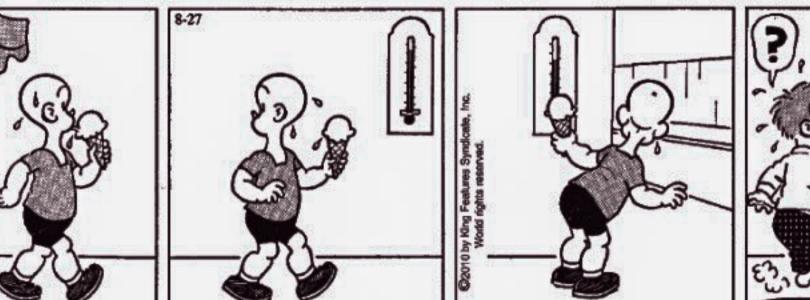
ICE CREAN

LT. FUZZ I BROKE

BREAKFAST IN BED?

by Mort Walker

by Don Tranchte



All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not

be responsible for any change in the programme

Cinema R Gaan

09:40 Drama Serial: Choshma

Maasranga Television 10:02 Bangla Feature Film

On ATN BANGLA at





Tomay Gaan Shonabo 09:00 Amaro Gaite Ichchhe A View From the Top

The Legend of Zorro The Hurricane Sports Plus Witless Protection Neel Paerar Gaan

Ekushey-er Chokh 09:30 10:10 Drama 04:40 You Only Live Twice Boishakhi TV 10:30 Bangla Feature Film 04:15 Shorashori Doctor

Star World 06:10 Music at Fun Dot Com 11:30 Love2 Hate U 09:20 Drama Serial: 03:30 Charlie's Angels

10:30 The Shield BANGLAVISION National Geographic 11:05 Shokal Belar Roddur

02:30 Naked Science Shyamol Bangla 09:00 Prehistoric Park Bipashar Otithi

BBC World DRAMA SERIAL 08:10pm Fourth Class Society

19:35pm Shokal Shondhya Raat 09:50pm Dhan Shaliker

Maasranga Television

NEWS BULLETIN

News (Bangla) at 7:30am. lews (English) at 10:00am, 1:00 pm, 10:00 pm. ate Night News (Bangla and 10:00am, 12:00am, 4:00pm English) 11:30 pm. (To be News (English) at 6:00pm telecast on all Bangla News (Bangla): 2:30 pm,

CHANNEL-i News (Bangla): 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am ATN BANGLA NEWS (Bangla): 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm, 1:00 am, 4:00 am 01:00pm, 3:00pm, 04:00pm

ATN BANGLA

CHANNEL i

Boishakhi TV

12:30am Lead News

4:30 pm, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am News (Bangla):7:30am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, lews (English): 9:00 am,

TALK SHOW

BANGLAVISION

07:40pm Our Democracy

09:45am Tritio Matra

Maasranga Television

05:30pm Amader Sthaniyo

12:00am Zero Hour 11:25pm Talk of the Week