

## 8th Dhaka International Film Festival Shaheen Kabir

The 8<sup>th</sup> Dhaka International Film Festival 2004, organized by the Rainbow Film Society of Dhaka, was held from 15 to 23 January, 2004. The slogan of the festival was "Better Film, Better Audience, Better Society". Over one hundred films from different countries of the world were shown at the festival. There were films from Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, from Germany, France, Switzerland, U.S.A., Canada and Russia, from Egypt and Tunisia, from Sri Lanka, China, Iran, Pakistan and India. Films from the Scandinavian countries like Norway, Denmark and Sweden were one of the main attractions of the Dhaka festival.

For the first time the Dhaka cine-lovers had the opportunity to see a Latin American film from Colombia. Works of renowned German film director Fassbinder, great Polish film maker Krysztof Zanussi and distinguished Indian film maker Shyam Benegal were shown in the Retrospective segment of the Festival. A selection of the full length feature films of Sergei Bondarchuk were also screened. A number of Swiss feature films as well as short films and documentary films were shown in the Country Focus section. Another interesting feature of the festival was the screening of children's films. Altogether seven children films were screened and these were open for children.

Among the films that the audience liked very much and wanted to see more than once were Women's Prison (Iran), Swaraaj (India), Adhlar (Bangladesh), Secret Love (Switzerland), Hold My Heart (Norway), Raghu Romeo (India), The Flag (Indonesia) and Harivillu (India). The films at the festival were shown at the auditoriums of Central Public Library and the National Museum, in three regular cinema halls and at the Russian Cultural Centre and the Goethe Institute. There were four to five shows everyday at all these venues which attracted large crowds.. The Dhaka Festival this year has positively succeeded in creating a lot of enthusiasm among the film lovers, cine-goers and the film activists of the country.

A good number of renowned filmmakers, critics, journalists, actors and actresses from different parts of the world had attended the festival as delegates. To name only a few, Roland Reber of Germany, Adoor Gopalakrishnan of India, Father Gaston Roberge (Canada/India), Ms. Amita Malik (India), Nan Achnas (Indonesia), Ansu Sur (India) and others. There were a few women directors who had come to the festivals with their films. Nan Achnas's 'The Flag', Manju Borah's 'Akashitobar Kothabe', Ananya Chattarjee's 'Dwitiya Paksha' were among the audience favourites.

The main festival venue, the Central Public Library complex for the last nine days had become vibrant with the lively presence of the foreign delegates and the local film makers and activists. One important feature of the festival was the warm participation and involvement of the young members of different film societies and cine-clubs of the country. There was an open forum where film makers, critics, actors and actresses and film activists, from both home and abroad, participated throughout the festival, talking, exchanging views and ideas, giving interviews to the press and TV channels and getting to know each other.

Besides screenings of movies, an important event of the festival was the seminar on “Globalization and Film” organized by the International Film Critics Association of Bangladesh (IFCAB). The seminar was presided over by IFCAB President Professor Kabir Chowdhury. The theme paper of the seminar was presented by Shaheen Kabir (Bangladesh) while Father Gaston Roberge presented an interesting paper on Film as Accidental Documentary, and Roland Reber on Man, Society and Cinema. Bojidar Manov (Bulgaria) could not unfortunately attend the festival, but sent his paper, titled Ozu Centenary and the Globalisation of Film. Bojidar Manov’s paper was read out in the seminar.

The main issues that the paper writers addressed and which were discussed by the participants covered issues of harmonization of ideas and values versus cultural relativism, cultural identity versus diversity, free movement of films versus restrictions, piracy, censorship and global standards in the context of globalization today. Debates and discussions on issues of censorship and funds for making alternative films were carried over beyond the seminar on to the open forum till the last day of the festival. The festival also afforded an opportunity to the mainstreaming filmmakers of Bangladesh of interacting with makers of alternative films from different countries, including that of the host country.

The official jury of the 8th Dhaka International Film Festival awards the prize for The Best Actress to Ms. Damitha Abayaratna “for lending her role of the main character a high degree of credibility and conviction” in the Sri Lankan film, SULAN KIRILLI- The Wind Bird, directed by Ms. Inoka Satyangani.

The official jury of the 8th Dhaka International Film Festival awards the prize for The Best Actor to Mr. Vijay Raaz, “for a very compelling and convincing portrayal of the simpleton hero” in the Indian Film RAGHU ROMEO directed Rajat Kapoor.

The official jury of the 8th Dhaka International Film Festival awards the prize for The Best Director to Mr. Anwar Jamal “for the deft and inspired handling of a topical subject” in the Indian Film SWARAJ- The Little Republic.

The official jury of the 8th Dhaka International Film Festival awards the prize for The Best Film in Competition to the Sri Lankan film, SULAN KIRILLI- The Wind Bird, directed by Ms. Inoka Satyangani “for its humane and sensitive treatment of the humdrum of our existence that is at once specific and universal in its appeal”. The award was included a certificate and one hundred thousand LEVEVR BROTHERS cash prize.

Renowned Indian film maker Mr. Adoorgopala Krishnan was chair the jury committee. The other members was Canadian film critic now based in Kolkata, Father Gaston Roberge, new wave German film maker Mr. Roland Reber and Bangladesh film maker Mr. Badal Rahman.

FIPRESCI, the international film critics federation and the Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) was also separately provided its own award. The FIPRESCI jury was consist of Ms. Lydia Maslova (Russia), Ms. Shaheen Kabir (Bangladesh) and Mr. Shajedul Awal to the Sri Lankan film, SULAN KIRILLI- The Wind Bird, directed by Ms. Inoka Satyangani.

While Ms. Nan Triveni Achinas from Indonesia, Aijaz Gul from Pakistan and Abu Sayeed from Bangladesh has serve as the NETPAC Jury. The prize was given to the Indian Film SWARAJ- The Little Republic by Mr. Anwar Jamal.

The Rainbow Award has given to a film judged a best film in the Festival (covering all segments). A five-member Special Jury of Mr. Ali Ahmed, Mr. Wasimul Bari Rajib, Mr. Mofidul Haque, Ms. Shameem Akhtar and Mr. Mijarul Quayes to the Colombian Film The First Night by Mr. Luis Alberto Restrepo.

The Audience Award has given to an Indian film Akashitober Kathere by Monju Borah, Best Juvenile Audience Award has given to an Indian film HARIVILLU by Mr. Narsing Rao. Special Audience Award was Given to the Iranian film Tehran 7 am by Amir Sahab Razavian.

Bangladesh Film Director Association was given to Best Director Award to the Indian Film Director Mr. Anwar Jamal for SWARAJ- The Little Republic.

After the award giving ceremony two films, *The First Night* (Colombia) by Luis Alberto Restrepo and *Matir Moyna* (The Clay Bird, Bangladesh) by Tareque Masud were shown to the audience. And with that the Dhaka festival came to an end.