



fried eye

JANUARY 1, 2010

eeNew

as the River flows : A Prologue

Bidyut Kotoky
shares his experience

City City
Bang Bang : Guwahati

Visit Guwahati
with Ajatasatru

Think green think
ecotechnology

with EARTHSTUDIO

Wish Me a Happy New Year !

says Hashan Hazarika

Children's Section

Discover the universal
sentiment of **SOLACE**

with Sneha Khound

Miss Cellany

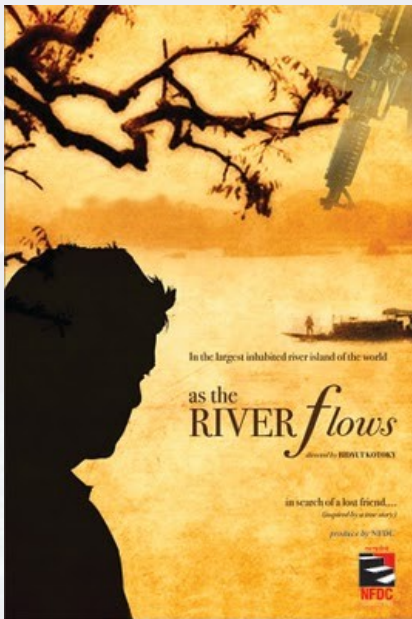
Poetry

REGULAR
PLATTER

Wise Bachelor | Miss Cellany | Movie Desk
55 Fiction | Poetry | Through the Lens

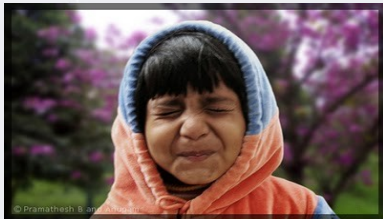
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Jorhat-785010

Note by the Publishers:

Views expressed in the magazine are personal views expressed by the authors. Fried Eye is not liable for it.

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Editorial

When a new dawn breaks, hope rains dewdrops on little blades of grass
The wet earth basks in the golden warmth ready for a new beginning.
Owing to this dawn our fragile dreams past, present and future,
We step out into the unknown; knowing just our beliefs and convictions...

Dear Readers,

It is New Year time- time for reflections on the year gone by, time for some resolutions and, of course, time for new beginnings. The year gone by has been a memorable one for us at Bamboo Lounge and January 2010 begins with new hopes- the most auspicious being Fried Eye which begins its journey today.

At the very outset let me introduce Fried Eye to you. Fried Eye is an experimental e-venture by a bunch of youngsters from the Northeast who believe in the region's unique and complex multi-cultural identity. As the name itself suggests, what we say or see is not new but we believe we need newer perspectives to the mundane and the everyday. More importantly, we need to accommodate the ways in which the youth of today likes to see things around them. And that is precisely what we hope this magazine will allow space for. We hope that the magazine emerges as a compendium of insights from all fields of life.

It is with great pleasure that we offer before you the inaugural issue of FriedEye. In this maiden issue, revisit Guwahati with Ajatasatru . Get acquainted with green technology through environmental developer Gerard Pde and relive the experiences of filmmaker Bidyut Kotoky's journey as he reminisces the making of as the River flows... .Tanmoy evokes the spirit of Fried Eye in his poem while Jumi's verse evokes the experience of a regeneration. In the Children's Section we feature Sneha, a talented young writer from Carmel School, Jorhat. Hashan shares his New Year experience with us in Random Take while Mani Padma urges us to stop and reflect about the plight of the less fortunate around us through her thoughtful piece in 55 Fiction. In addition, we bring to you the first pages from the new diary of a young lady who has granted us access to her inner world on conditions of anonymity. Besides, do not forget to sneak peak into the column of the Wise Bachelor who is determined to help mankind with ready answers to any query his readers may have. As you journey through the eclectic palette of Fried Eye we hope every page that greets you emerges a treat for the eye and the mind. Happy Reading !

With warm regards,

Myra B

Editor

(on behalf of the Fried Eye team)

Good News

4 Manipuri Plays to be Staged in National Theatre Fest

New Delhi: Four Manipuri plays will be staged in the 12th Bharat Rang Mahotsav to be held from January 6 to 22 in the National Capital. The festival organized by the National School of Drama will have the plays *When We Dead Awaken* by Ratan Thiyam, *Rajarshi Bhagyachandra* by M C Thoiba, Sanabam Thaninleima's *Ashang Eina Aton* and Toijam Shila Devi's *Black Orchid*. These along with other select plays from the country will share the stage with entries from other countries in the 17-day long festival— the biggest of its kind in this part of the world.

When We Dead Awaken by the Chorus Repertory Theatre is a 70-minute adaptation of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's eponymous last play. It is a story of creativity, life and relationships in artistic and metaphysical realms.

Rajarshi Bhagyachandra is based on the life of a saint king of 18th century Manipur. This 75-minute play by Banian Repertory brings to the fore issues like war and peace, tradition, change and power politics. Playwright MC Arun presents Manipur's rich political and cultural history through this contemporary play.

The 120-minute long *Ashang Eina Aton* is scripted by Ashing Zimik in the Tangkhul dialect. Staged by the artistes of Khenjonglang, this play is based on the Tangkhul folklore of Shimreisang Maitonphi.

Black Orchid is an 85- minute play by Budha Chingtham and presented by Prospective

Repertory Theatre. It looks at the lives and experiences of people in a terror-riddled village and attempts to explore how scarred memories stand as testimony to gory histories. It especially focuses on women and children caught up in armed conflicts.

-Fried Eye News Service

On the Anvil: New Law to

Guarantee Govt. Services

New Delhi: There is good news for the people in rest of India too. The Prime Minister's Office has decided to implement 'service-level agreements'(SLA), which will mandate penalties to be deducted from salaries of dealing officials if there are delays in providing citizen services like issuing ration cards and driving licences.

According to sources, Delhi will be the first to implement it in April, 2010. The Union Territories will follow suit. It is expected that other states would also take an initiative to implement the law. The people of the Northeast too hope that their state governments would go for it as soon as the beginning is made in Delhi.

At a November meeting with the Delhi government in the PMO, it was decided to initially cover nine services. These include:

- Issuing of ration cards
- Issuing and renewal of driving licences
- Registration of voters

- Issuing of voter identity cards
- Registration of births
- Registration of deaths
- Registration under Department of Value Added Tax
- Issuing of SC certificate
- Issuing of OBC certificates

The government will issue a notification to make the SLAs statutory, and just as commercial establishments are bound by their public claims, officials say the aim here is to bind government departments to time commitments for the service they seek to provide.

As per the new law, the clock starts ticking the moment the department concerned accepts the application form for any of the above services. A dealing official will be identified and the applicant will be informed at the point of submission of forms about who will be handling the case.

In fact, the agreement makes it clear that the onus to help an applicant complete and submit the form also falls on the officials of the department concerned. Once accepted, it will be assumed that all formalities have been completed and a time limit will be set for each applicant's case. If any shortcomings are detected in the form after it has been accepted, then the SLAs hold the official who accepted the form accountable and not the applicant.

Erring officials will be penalized and their pay deducted. Although no slab has been identified, it is believed that it will start from a basic cut of Rs 200 and upwards through treasury receipts. The entire process will be monitored on the Internet through a centralized web.

-Fried Eye News Service

City City Bang Bang: Guwahati

-Ajatasatru

No one knows for sure when the story of Guwahati began. Perhaps it was in existence when man first learnt the concept of civilized living. The city had already become a prominent place by the time the great epics were written. The Mahabharata talks about Kaurava prince Duryodhana marrying princess Bhanumati of Pragjyotishpura, which is identified as ancient Guwahati. King Bhagadutta, Bhanumati's father, excavated a huge tank to mark the wedding. The tank is identified as the Dighalipukhuri located in the heart of the city.

Thus speaks mythology. The city finds its first historical mention as Kamrupa a tributary kingdom in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Emperor Samudragupta. Subsequent records of King Harshavardhana's reign over Aryavarta (North and Central India) highlight economic and cultural exchanges with the kingdom of Kamrupa under King Bhaskarvarman of the Bhauma Naraka dynasty.

Kamrupa prominently figures in both medieval and modern history. The Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang and Turkish chronicler Al-Beruni have referred to the place as Kamru and Kamrut respectively. These are believed to be corruptions of Kamrupa. The Battle of Saraighat that ended the myth of Mughal invincibility was fought in what is today Guwahati. Of course, that episode is part of folklore now, but most of its historicity is lost in the race for modernity. In fact, Guwahati is perhaps one of those few cities in the world where traces of the past are few and far between.

There are several interpretations about Guwahati's ancient name, Pragjyotishpura. One school of thought believes it means "city of eastern lights", while another says the city was named such because it was a centre of astrology (Jyotish). A third view by Dr Banikanta Kakati breaks the word into *Pagar-juh (jo)-tic (c-ch)* or "land of mountain heights".

The name Guwahati first finds mention in Mughal chronicles penned during the several imperial campaigns to the region under Ahom rule. An old adage in Cooch Behar, "khata khuta Majum Khan mukhe chhap daari, beharaka bhang jaibe Gauhata baari" refers to Nawab Mir Jumla's (Muazzam Khan) Assam campaign mentioning Guwahati as 'Gauhata'. When Assam was finally annexed to the British Empire, the English named it Gowhatty.

With time, Guwahati has transformed into a metropolitan city in tune with modern lifestyle. By virtue of its being the 'gateway to the Northeast', the city today enjoys several advantages. MNC brand outlets, upscale multiplexes, amusement parks, eateries and coffee joints with a pan-India presence—Guwahati has them all. Some complain about the haphazard growth, both living as well as material, in the city. Nevertheless, they do little to make the place any less charming. The greatest asset of the city, though under-utilised, happens to be the mighty Brahmaputra on the banks of which the city thrives.

Once upon a time a steamer service operated between Calcutta and Guwahati. Now, there is

none. Although it is expected that someday the river will be made good use of, there hasn't been any policy initiative towards that. It is remembered by authorities only during the monsoons when it rises in an angry menace. Nevertheless, the Brahmaputra adds to the city's scenic beauty. The river also makes possible for Guwahati to be among the few Indian cities to have floating restaurants. The lone floating discotheque, Kamakazi, is probably the only one of its kind in the country. Since 1962, Guwahati has boasted of the multi-sports Nehru stadium that has hosted many one-day internationals and football matches. Today it has over six stadiums and with the National Games in 2007 also enjoys world-class sports infrastructure.

In the field of education, Guwahati scores an edge over other parts of the Northeast. Some of the best known schools and institutions of higher learning, including an IIT, are located here.

As the economic nerve centre of the Northeast, the city has the highest volume of trade and commerce in the region. The world's second largest tea auction centre is located here and Sualkuchi in the city suburbs is a silk hub of importance. Besides Guwahati provides good inter and intra-state air, rail and road connectivity. Media, telecommunication, and public utility services are also well developed. In all respects, Guwahati is truly a modern city. Some of the most frequented places in Guwahati :

- **Accoland:** With several interesting rides for both children and adults, one can spend an entire day with family here without a heavy toll on the pocket.

-**Assam State Zoo-cum-Botanical Garden:** Located amidst the hustle and bustle of the city, the sprawling zoo houses some rare

species of wild animals settled comfortably in their natural habitat including white tigers, one horned rhinos, swamp tapirs and leopards. The Botanical Gardens boasts of around forty-five species of orchids besides being a popular picnic spot for lovebirds and schoolchildren alike.

- **Dighalipukhuri:** This is an ideal location for those struck by Cupid's arrow. With one of the country's most scenically located coffee shops by its side, the place is never without cooing couples- often students of nearby colleges. But beware: this place is also frequented by creeps who are forever ready with their cameras to capture you and your significant other as soon as you share an intimate moment. Nevertheless, it's probably the only everyday place that justifies the name Kamrupa.

- **Guwahati Planetarium:** Although less frequented, it has an amazing ambience and offers quality shows at cheap prices.

- **Jyoti Chitran:** This is the place that houses Jollywood- the Assamese film industry.

- **Panbazaar:** The education as well as the cultural hub of the city. Prestigious institutions like Cotton College, Handique Girls' College and Don Bosco School are located here. The State Museum, District Library as well as Rabindra Bhavan are situated here. The city's best known bookstores can also be found in this area.

- **Shankardev Kalakshetra:** Built on a huge plot, this cultural hotspot is inspired by the first amphitheatre in Asia, Ranghar in Sibsagar and includes in its premises a museum, library and exhibition galleries.

Besides, numerous places of worship dot the cityscape including the famous Kamakhya, Umananda, Ugratara, Sukreswar, Balaji Tirupati and Vashista Ashram.

Chef's Pick: EarthStudio

-An Interview by Pramathesh Borkotoky

This corner is for individuals, events or groups who spin their own tales with a twist, and thereby make a difference to the way we live, see and feel things. We hunted around for an apt start to the column and zeroed in on a Delhi-based company as the first Chef's Pick.

EarthStudio is a venture committed to the application of "green design principles in Building Science" and has been around since 2008. The primary goal of the company is to integrate environmental design principles with the physics of building to achieve the lowest consumption of energy, while maximizing comfort. We spoke to the Principal of EarthStudio, Mr. Gerald Pde. Following are the excerpts.

Tell us something about yourself.

I was born and brought up in Shillong and moved out in the early nineties to pursue an undergraduate degree in Architecture. After completing the course in 1999, I returned to Shillong for a few months and worked as an architect. As I was always drawn towards nature and architecture, I decided to pursue a master's in Environmental Design, which I did from the Arizona State University. Thereafter, I worked in New York for nearly 6 years as an Environmental Designer.



Tell us something about EarthStudio and its genesis. What was your inspiration?

I always wanted to return to India, but it took a long time before my wife and I finally took the plunge a year ago and set up EarthStudio. It is a design practice comprising of environmental designers, who are committed to the application of green design principles in buildings. We provide environmental design consultancy and building performance analysis to assist in the design of low-energy and climate responsive buildings. EarthStudio has been envisaged as two entities – a hardcore environmental consultancy, where we specialize in building performance modeling and environmental design; an architectural practice that will provide architectural design services primarily in the Northeast.

What is the USP of Earth Studio?

Considering that EarthStudio is itself in a very niche market, our specialization in terms of the delivery of environmental solutions is unique to the conventional market.

What is Environmental Design? Why should we go for it?

Environmental Design is the application of green or sustainable design principles in building and the larger built environment.

Most buildings today do not respond to factors such as climate and the environment. Conventional buildings do not address the issues of energy, water, economy and the health and well being of its occupants. This approach is unethical in today's strained environment and has a number of long-term effects on buildings, users and the community as a whole.

Appropriately designed buildings (green building, ecological buildings etc) will try hard to address all these issues to arrive at a product that really works.

What are the costs involved in Environment Design? How affordable is it for the common man?

Incorporating environmental design strategies into building need not cost more. In fact, there have been instances when environmental design has saved a lot of money and energy due to the initial design and choice of materials. The concept has proved to reduce initial costs in terms of infrastructure and materials and operational costs in terms of energy, water, durability, insurance and the like. In addition, green buildings have been proved to increase property value by 10-25%, rapid lease-out and sales. There are other benefits such as improved health that reduces absentees, and the increase of productivity of people working in green buildings. All these when factored in make cost appear little.

Who are the other major players in this business?

There are a number of companies abroad that provide the service. In India, there is only a handful, but it is a growing practice and I do feel that once climate change and our lack of resources become a major issue, more people would consider it as an option and the demand will increase.

Tell us briefly about your clients.

Currently our clients are mostly from the US, Canada and the Middle-East. We have very few clients in India as these concepts have not really caught up yet.

Tell us about your team.

We are quite a small team. We have Valte Chongthu, who specializes in building simulations; Gilbert Lyngdoh, who is involved in Architectural Design; and me. We are also looking to hire a couple of more people for our Delhi Office. In addition, we partner with a couple of Architectural and Environmental Design practitioners in Delhi.

What are the credentials you look for while hiring someone?

She/he has to be smart, passionate about work and willing to learn.

How was your working experience in Shillong? How is it different from your work experience in other places?

To be really honest, it was not what I was hoping when we first started there. Shillong has a number of drawbacks such as infrastructure, connectivity and the lack of talented people. Shillong is also very easy going, which might work well with other organizations, but for us, where we really need to be ahead of the curve, it's a major drawback. In addition, the lack of collaboration amongst other disciplines is non-existent in Shillong that makes innovation a major challenge.

Scorpio

- Mani Padma

He looked at it longingly. He only had five, but it cost ten. He did not want to ask anyone for the rest. Why was he so unfortunate? With a heavy heart he gave the Scorpio a last look. Just then a little beggar went by shouting: "My lucky day. Madam gave me ten rupees!"

Solace

-Sneha Khound, Class X, Carmel School, Cinnamora, Jorhat

An expression of anger can be liberation.

When Mike Wool was a young boy, he was called 'Springs'. Not for nothing. He could leap and run and shoot in the basketball court like he had spring on his soles.

They also called him shy, but they weren't too correct in that. Mike was quiet, but the great NBA star was famous in the tabloids for sudden violent outbursts. A glimpse of the faint scar on his neck and it would all come rushing back to him; his father pushing him to practice, thrashing him when he didn't want to. He built that anger in him to such a mountain that peace became a flimsy, elusive word. Now sitting on the benches for the game to begin, he hated the kids in the stands for their childhood, for being able to watch the game without being expected to learn from it to be the best.

Peter Maxwell was, of course, was not like those kids. He was in the VIP section of the audience. He hadn't wanted to come. He wanted to practice his piano lessons. His teacher said he was a prodigy to be able to play Tchaikovsky at 10. His friends laughed but he didn't care. He felt connected to music so deeply that he breathed and lived through those melodies. If only his father would stop forcing him to play basketball....

He hated his father for bringing him to meet to Mike.

Eventually Peter's father introduced him to Mike.

Peter went up to Mike and whispered in his ear... "I hate you."

Mike looked up. Peter's expression was strange, of dread and victory, and something. He didn't know why he did that, he whispered back, "I hate you, too."

Mike understood that something for he felt it too. It was Solace.

as the River flows : A Prologue

Independent filmmaker Bidyut Kotoky has his own production house, dhruv creative production. His documentary, Bhraimoyan Theatre—where Othello sails with Titanic, which was produced by IN2 Infotainment India in association with dhruv creative, got a Special Jury Mention in the 53rd National Film Awards. Bidyut has written and directed his maiden feature film, 'as the River flows', which was mentored by the famed Binger's Film Lab of Amsterdam. He also attended Rotterdam Film Festival's producer lab on Jan 2009.

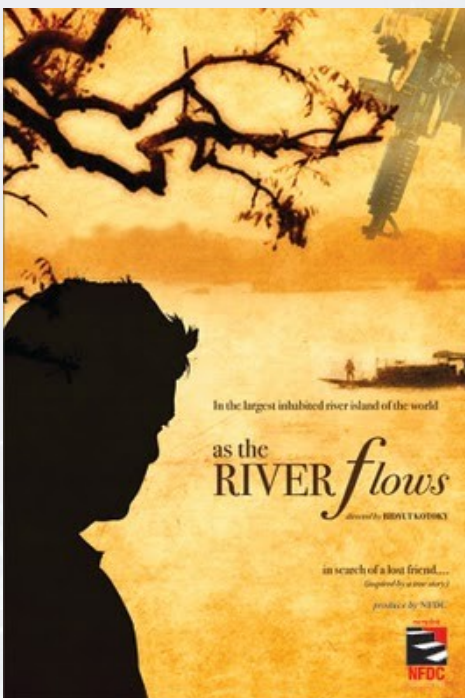
Apart from as the River flows, Bidyut is presently also involved in another docu-venture titled 'Of many lives' that is based on the Buddhist belief of reincarnation.

When he is not making films, Bidyut loves to do still photography, travel, read and play cricket.

'I do not enjoy writing at all. If I can turn my back on an idea, out there in the dark, if I can avoid opening the door to it, I won't even reach for a pencil.'

- Richard Bach

I completely identify with these lines. Honestly, I hate to write...So when Pramathesh mailed to me requesting for a write up, my first instinct was to look for an excuse and say no. But then, something inside told me that if I have demanded from these guys their support for my film 'as the River flows', they also have a right over me to demand a write up from me for their noble venture...



So here I am. He had given me complete freedom on the subject I want to deal with in my write up, thus making it even more difficult for me! I end up asking myself, 'why would anybody approach me today for a write up?' I still remember the day less than two years ago, when I got to read on the net that I was honoured with other dignitaries in Rabindra Bhawan Guwahati by the govt. of Assam for winning a special mention in the 53rd national film award for my documentary 'Bhramimoman Theatre – where Othello sails with Titanic'. The only glitch – I was very much in Mumbai when the supposed facilitation was happening! Latter on, I was told that I could not be contacted by the organizer because nobody knew where to look for me....So

if today somebody want me to write an article as a guest, it is only for one reason – 'as the River flows'. I don't have an identity today beyond that film and it is only natural that if anybody want to read any of my writing (which I still doubt), it will be mainly because of that film...So perhaps I

could use this time to bask in the reflected glory – at least till the time the film is out and hopefully, not rejected by people...

How it all started? In the late 90s, I had got a few opportunities to visit the river island of Majuli to shoot a couple of documentaries. And somehow, I developed a strange attraction for the place...something which cannot be easily explained in words...something I never experience till then or since, with any other place... That was just after the time the tragic disappearance of Sanjay Ghosh had taken place from Majuli. And like any other visitor, many a time I used to talk to different people of Majuli about him. Unofficially, and without any agenda – just plain curiosity. What people had to say about Mr. Sanjay Ghosh – a person I never met, left a strong impression on my subconscious mind.

Almost half a decade later, when I sat down to write my first feature film, I realised that the research for the same has already been done...unknowingly. Let me clarify one thing right here – ‘as the River flows’ have nothing to do with the disappearance of Sanjay Ghosh. The film is NOT based on his life. I hardly know anything about him to even think of attempting a film on his life.

I met his wife Sumita Ghosh in Delhi before starting the film to clarify the same thing. My take on this is simple – if a person like Sanjay Ghosh existed, then somebody like Sridhar Ranjan – the protagonist of my film – could also have existed in Majuli. True, the film is inspired by the unfortunate disappearance of Sanjay Ghosh – but inspiration ends there. The entire story is totally fictitious – having no connection to any person dead or alive...

So what is the film is about? The film is about people like you and me. The people who are caught in the cross fire...

Whenever we talk of terrorism, we know the point of view of the terrorists. After all, they survive on propaganda. The people opposing them also have no option but to counter those propagandas, so we know about their point of view as well. But what gets lost in this crossfire of propagandas is the point of view of the common man – in spite of being the vast majority, they have long lost their voices.

This, unfortunately, is true in any place that faces the problem of terrorism– whether it is Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Kashmir or Assam. Yes, in this film I’m talking about Assam as I know her better than any other place. But the story of ‘as the River flows’ could very well have been a story in any part of this world. The story of my films protagonist Sudakshina could very well have been my story. Or yours.

The film is an attempt to ask a few questions which has been bothering me for quite some time. After all, if we don’t ask those questions, then who will? We may not have answers to these questions, but does it mean that we are not even entitled to ask the questions?? As long as my questions reaches a few like minded people forcing them to think, I would consider that my journey has started on the right direction...

As any first time film maker will vouch, the process of churning out your first film is much, much more difficult than one imagined. ‘as the River flows’ is no different...after countless rejection by producers who had found the subject matter interesting but too volatile to commit themselves, National Film Development Corporation(NFDC) had stepped in. First they wanted to come as co-producer, with Kerala Film Development Corporation (KFDC). However, at the last moment I realised

Are you Coming?

-Tan

I am gonna fly now
Gonna fly real high now,
I've no time to rest
I shall be soon the best!
Are you coming?
Are you coming, my love?
Together we can
We can make it happen
It will not be you and me
Now the world will see.
Are you coming?
Are you coming, my friend?
My wings are growing
My thoughts are flowing,
Come, share some feathers
And lets get together.
Are you coming?
Are you coming, my brother?
It will be lots of fun
There'll be roses, no guns
What a wonderful journey
In peace and harmony!
Aren't you coming?
Aren't you coming, my people?

The Revival

-Jumi Bhattacharya

Lost was I, somewhere in the dark;
Veiled by the shadows of despair:
My soul derelicted by the waves of time,
My heart depredated by a sudden gush of
wind,
Marooned was I, on a lonely island
With solitude as my sole solace-
None to share a tear or a smile,
None to give me an ounce of love.
And then you came, like, like the first rays of
the sun,
That illuminates the darkest of the dark;
You flowed like a never-ending stream,
That changes the desert into a river new.
You infiltrated unknowingly,
And held my hand that had turned to ice-
I turned back into my old self again
And found myself in a world so new
With the sun shining, swallows chirping
And daffodils swaying gracefully to the tunes
of the breeze
My tears gave way to a smile so great,
And I learned to live and love again:
For every word you spoke,
And every smile you gave:
Made me live life once again,
And gave me hope anew;
Making my world full of bliss,
Just like the Heaven above!

New Year Resolution

- Miss Cellany

It's New Years Eve. And it has worked up frenzy among some of us to take New Year Resolutions. Habituated to acting in a pack (umm well almost) I have decided to take a resolution too... I have most resolutely resolved to be proud of being a Female- with all its inherent strengths and shortcomings.

Whoa! What a resolution you may say. Amounts to having no resolution at all. Well, actually think again. Being a female can have its own sets of positives and negatives. And that is without even adding additional labels of careers, dreams, responsibilities -familial or otherwise.

Yes, dear diary, I love being a female. And I realize that in all these years, I have never once told you how happy I am being one. So let me begin this New Year by letting you into this little secret. They say the female is the weaker sex. I am not ashamed to belong to the physically weaker sex. In fact, I love being labelled the weaker sex. See the perks it gets us. Reserved seats , special trains , special queues at counters etc. I mean what's there to be ashamed of? It's not our fault if we were made with weaker skeletal structure. (Plus, I do believe we have greater cunning to compensate it but's let's not say that too loudly.) You see, I never believed in equal rights. Equal rights are just a compromise. I want what was rightfully ours – all the rights, in whatever way possible. So self respect and seats, guys? Be darned. They were always ours.

But then being female is not just about seats and transportation perks. There are larger issues involved with violence and victimization being the two omnipresent capital Vs in the whole game. Flippant as it may sound, domestic violence however doesn't arise because the perpetrator realises one fine day that the person sharing a roof with him is a female and has to be beaten black or blue. Rather a sick person will beat up anyone who he/she knows is going to take it lying down- be it a wife, children or even old parents. No male/female issue here. And when it comes to dowry, rape, molestation and what have you, the solution to the ills definitely does not lie in being ashamed of one's gender. Victimization is present everywhere. Every person, male/female/transgender and every animal must have been bullied at least once in life. Its the law of nature. Remember the food chain? Yes, something similar. It has nothing to do with being a female and the only way to tackle it is to catch the bull by the horns... Survival of the fittest you see.

So then diary dear, this year I will happily take you on a few (bumpy) trips on the joys and perils of being a female. Hope you are game for it!!!

Wise Bachelor

In the dark recesses of a Delhi office, Fried Eye spotted a young man quoting a cheap Hindi writer and imparting gyan to all and sundry around him. The accessible man that he is, we came to know from Wise Bachelor his story. He first made an impression when he dirtied the hospital nurse's dress and spared his mother from the smelly truth that she has a son who shall rub all on their wrong sides with his uncanny wit. As he grew up, he took a keen interest in life and everything around him; third-grade movies, K-series and Indian politics became his favourite subjects. As a veteran of five failed romantic relationships, Fried Eye decided to offer him the role of an Agony Uncle; WB took the offer as he was more than willing to give many people a square deal.

Q. WB, there is a girl I like, but she ignores me like anything. Initially, I got all the positive vibes from her, but now she avoids even the slightest eye contact with me. This is not the only time that it has happened. Several other girls I liked have ever since married different people. What should I do now? A confused bachelor, Jorhat.

A: Bhai, apna Adolf Hitler also loved a Jewish girl in his youth. But she didn't give him any bhau. Hitler Sahib was so hurt that he started hating the Jews. Baaki to history hain. You could follow Hitler and forever stamp your name with ignominy. Or you could think about doing something saner. That angrez Kalidas, John Keats, had a broken love affair, too. He, however, chose to translate his grief into verse. La Belle Dame Sans Merci resulted from it, and Keats' name came to be engraved with golden letters in the annals of literature. It is now up to you to decide which way you want to go. As for those girls marrying other people, well, they were also looking for good guys, the same way you were looking for good girls. Let them go, brother, and continue with your search.

Q. I am doing my master's from a reputed university and have recently moved into a rented apartment. But I have a big problem: my landlord owns pigeons that fly into my part and make a mess of things. They have made my life hell. I have tried to take it up with my landlord, but every time his college-going daughter accuses me of being insensitive to the 'beautiful' birds. Help me, WB! Dude in distress, Guwahati.

A: I once had pigeon meat at a roadside dhaba in western Uttar Pradesh. Couple of hours later, I felt the urge to crap at every statue of Mayawati I passed by, like a pigeon. Now, coming to your question, I don't understand why your landlord should keep such unruly creatures at his place. He should have known that you being a guy would anyhow leave his apartment messy; why send pigeons to do a job when he has a capable tenant? Tell him that it can be life threatening to have pigeons in the house. Mughal Emperor Babur's father, Umar Sheikh Mirza, had fallen off the ramparts of his fort while trying to feed his pigeons. In Ruskin Bond's A Flight of Pigeons, the male protagonist's (Javed Khan) brother-in-law (Sarfaraz) blames the pigeons for the rebel army's defeat in the Revolt of 1857. Pigeons had also created the biggest misunderstanding of my life so far. For a long time, I had believed that the red mark on Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev's bald pate was left behind by a pigeon devoid of any toilet manners. But going by your question, it seems your landlord's 'activist' daughter is a greater nuisance than the pigeons. After all, who wants to be neighbours with a bad imitation of Maneka Gandhi? Is she secretly corresponding with her lover through the pigeons a la Rajkumari Chandrakanta and Kunwar Virendra Vikram Singh? If it is so then perhaps you could play the role of Kroom Singh and have the birds for dinner one by one. If, however, you think you cannot try these two options, you could yourself become a pigeon and fly out of this apartment and find a new nest.

Q. WB, my eight year old son keeps on asking embarrassing questions whenever he sees intimate scenes on TV. No cajoling or scolding has helped. It becomes very embarrassing when there are guests around. Please help. An embarrassed parent, Tezpur.

Ans: Bhai, the Age of Innocence vanished a long time back, when songs like choli ke peeche kya hain kicked out a generation of Adams and Eves from the Garden of Eden, into a big bad world of Mamta Kulkarnis and Mira Nairs. In our times, a bunch of flowers with bumble-bees hovering over them, used to make things understood. Today, the media has ruined things so much that a simple nursery rhyme sounds obscene when they say "Jack and Jill went up the hill..."

The best way to tackle your child's questions is to sing a song every time he/she opens his/her mouth in public. Or tell him/her about the birds and the bees early on. After all, your child is no TV channel playing matured content that you can shuffle when you have company.

You ask, he will answer. Send in your questions to wise.bachelor@friedeye.com and wait for interesting answers. WB is on a mission to make this world a better place.

Wish me a Happy New Year

- Hashan Hazarika

"You don't have sufficient fund" – spat the monitor of the ATM machine right across my face. What??? I don't even have 300 rupees in my account?

I entered 200 rupees. After a long counting sound ATM machine puked two hundred rupee notes. Thank God. Hope salary will be credited tomorrow in first half. I will be able to last tonight out with this two hundred : 50 rupees Old Monk rum. 100 rupees food. Ekdum perfect New Year!! and 50 rupees will be in my pocket after that...Waah savings of this year! (I usually talk to myself when I am alone.)

I looked at the watch. 6 PM. I need to hurry, otherwise will get stuck in Bangalore's corporate traffic. No one use public vehicles here (thanks to the privates banks and sales guys)...

"Hey Asan, Thank God I met you" – Balasubramaniam T Kuppaswamy took a deep breath and said.

"Its Hashan"- Sometimes Krantiveer's Nana Patekar wakes up in me if someone mis-pronounces my name.

"Hey what happened da" I unlocked the helmet from my bike and said.

"My ATM card is locked. I don't have a single rupee in my pocket. Could you lend me 100 bucks, I'll return it tomorrow"

"Well Bala..um...actually..um..*cough*...*long sniff*...ok da.. ..Take"- I gave him 100 bucks" Duhh have to compromise with food...45 rupees ka egg biriyani"

I kickstarted my bike. It will take an hour to reach home. But as luck would have it, my driving was comparatively slow and I was still on the road for quite some time.

The weather was much colder that day...the wind somehow found a way to enter into my pullover and was beginning to chip into my bone.

When I took a left turn a police appeared in front of me blowing his irritating whistle.

"Stop ... Stop"

"You need a ride?" –I stopped my bike and asked.

"Show me your DL."

"Why? What happened officer?"- I showed him my DL and said.

"Insurance and emission?"

"They are under my seat. What happened sir?"

"You broke the signal. There is no free left...300 rupees fine."

He started writing my name from my DL on a pad.

" I did not realize that it's not a free left turn. So many bikes and cars just passed this way before me. Why didn't you catch them? "

He did not give a damn to that.

"I don't have 300 rupees sir."

"How much you can give?"

"50 rupees"

"Give 200 rupees and go."

"I have only 100 rupees in my wallet."

"Okay ... Give, don't break traffic rules. They are made for your safety and convenience only."

I gave him hundred rupees and started my bike. God...Enough. I don't want any more happenings for today. Ticket koyi bhi khareedey, Lottery toh humesha apni he nikalti hai. I wonder why???


Review: Raat Gayi Baat Gayi?

- Noyon Jyoti Parasara

Cast: Rajat Kapoor, Vinay Pathak, Neha Dhupia, Dalip Tahil, Iravati Harshe, Anu Menon, Navniit Nisshan and Ranvir Shorey

Director: Saurabh Shukla

Music: Ankur Tiwari

Rating: 

Hangovers, all of us will agree, are something that tends to leave behind quite a headache and sometimes more. And trouble could just increase if you are struck by some forbidden beauty, especially if you are a married man. 'Raat Gayi Baat Gayi?' takes you through one such situation in a rather light hearted manner. And it is complete with Indian sensibilities. So much that it is quite predictable actually. But then it is enjoyable at the same time.

Rahul (Rajat Kapoor) wakes up at his house after getting drunk at a party the previous night and all he remembers is he was with another women Sophia. His memory fails when he tries to remember what he may have done with Sophia. And when he figures out that his wife is so angry that she prefers not talking to him he is really worried. Here on starts his efforts to know what had happened. And in the process he sees his close friend Amit (Vinay Pathak) thrown out of his face and also the true face of another friend Saxena (Dalip Tahil) revealed.



'Raat Gayi Baat Gayi?' does not really have a story in the sense that it does not have a beginning, middle and an end. The film completely stands on the screenplay penned by Saurabh Shukla and Rajat Kapoor. Also the dialogues work wonders, especially the one-liners which keep you smiling if not breaking into occasional laughs! Technically too the film comes clean on edits and the way it is shot.

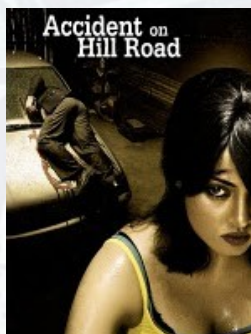
Rajat Kapoor comes up with one more of his cool performances which is matched by Neha Dhupia's sensuous appeal. The actress has in fact grown such extents that it

would be hard to find in her the actress who did films like Julie. Vinay Pathak too comes alive after a long time. Iravati Harshe proves her stage credentials and Ranvir Shorey's tiny appearance, where he is aptly names 'Gags' gives you all the laughs!

Overall, 'Raat Gayi Baat Gayi?' is one movie which proves that it's how you tell a story than the story itself that is interesting. With the deftness shown by the writers and director in their respective jobs, RGBG stands out as one movie which would really like to watch on any night.

Review: Accident on Hill Road


- Noyon Jyoti Parasara



Cast: Celina Jaitley, Abhimanyu Singh, Farooque Shaikh

Director: Mahesh Nair

Producer: Nari Hira

Rating: 

There is a scene in Accident On Hill Road when a small boy and his mother find that a person is stuck on the windshield of car parked inside the garage of the neighborhood bungalow. They understand that they should do something to save the man and hence the woman calls up her carpenter husband. That was one of the times I forced myself to a laugh. A carpenter to get a body out of a car is quite an idea! Sadly though the carpenter

in the film decides it is none of his or his family's business. Hence the trauma of the man stuck in the windshield continues, and so does our trauma of watching the film.

Remake of an independent film called Stuck made in the US some years back expectations were that Accident On Hill Road would be an interesting watch. And the expectations were also raised considering the presence of Farooque Shaikh. However by the time the movie ends it is clear that it is no accident but deliberate lack of interest that makes it a bad film.

A man (Farooque Shaikh) is run over by a car driven by a drunk girl (Celina Jaitley) and he is stuck in the windshield but refuses to die. The petrified drives the car to her house in the same state and keeps it in the garage. The man does not die. When he asks for her help she just whacks him with a bat asking him to die.

Directed by debutant Mahesh Nair this film is a great example of lack on details and efforts to make a watchable product. The film is written badly and shot shabbily. Dialogues never make sense and the characters do anything but help create drama – which was supposed to be the intention.

Accident On Hill Road as a story was supposed to throw light on human behaviour – how people are shallow enough to leave someone to die rather than helping him. And how the wish to have a better future drives people evil to such extents that they could induce it to someone else too! But it does it in a rather forced way – almost amateurish at times. This is one accident you know you could avoid. And we shall not even talk about performances.

To end it, there would probably be just one person who benefits from this movie – Abhimanyu Singh. He gets to romance a sizzling Celina Jaitley and even shoots a steamy and completely unrequired scene with the actress. Relax guys there is nothing to see.

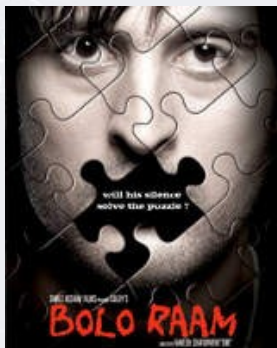
Review: Bolo Raam

- Noyon Jyoti Parasara

Cast: Rishi Bhutani, Padmini Kolahpuri, Om Puri, Govind Namdeo, Naseeruddin Shah, Disha Pandey, Krishan Khatra

Director: Rakkesh Chaturvedi 'OM'

Producer: Goldy



Rating:



What a week! Actors like Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Farooque Shaikh all wasted! While Farooque Shaikh may be feeling cheated in Accident On Hill Road, I am feeling worse cheated after watching Bolo Raam, and only wondering what made an actor like Naseeruddin Shah take that film, especially when he hardly had a role in it.

When you have actors like Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri coming in for a project the respectability of it increases automatically and so does expectation. But then actors don't make a film, script does. Bolo Raam fails the audience and its cast because it is a frail script, which was forcefully decorated.

Bolo Raam promised to be a psychological thriller. And the last thing it does is give you any thrill or test you psychologically. It could have been a drama but it is too lose to hold your interest. The story is about a Raam (Rishi) who is arrested for his mother's murder. The film goes about exploring his character and why he may have murdered his mother. By the time the end is revealed you are too bored. And in any case the end is too weak to shake you out of your slumber.

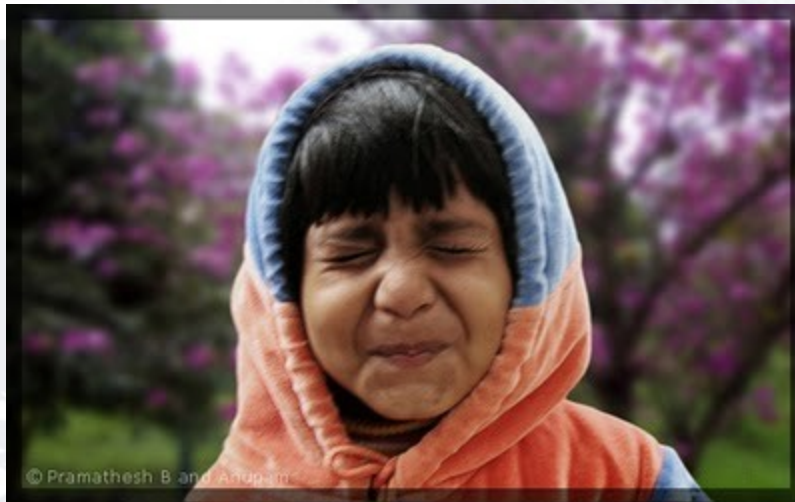
Technically Bolo Raam is one of the worst shot film I have seen in a long time. The cinematographer seems be completely clueless as he chooses to focus on unimportant details. Sample this – Om Puri is talking on the phone and the camera is focus on the sub inspector sitting five feet away while blurring out Om Puri. The edits are also unfitting of a thriller and same goes with the music.

Naseeruddin Shah is a delight to watch in the five minutes he is there. But after that there is nothing watch. Om Puri and Govind Namdeo try desperately to help but nothing works as the director is too interested in showing off the debutant hero Rishi Bhutani's body.

Bolo Raam is easily one film you could leave out and keep your new year more boredom free. The only thing that keeps you from dozing off is the strange background music.

Untitled

- Mani Padma



My daughter... my sweet little daughter.

How I love this photograph. It is going to be probably my last memory of yours. Your innocent smile, eyes tightly shut, shutting away the caterpillar, willing it to go away from your world...

How I wish it was easy to shut things away from this precious world of ours- unpleasant unwanted things...

There is a war going on here. Tomorrow I will be sent to the front to fight. Am I afraid? Yes! I am. Afraid of losing you all. Afraid of what I might have to do there. Afraid of what might be done to me. There we are robbed of our souls and stripped of our humanity

I wish I could shut the war away by closing my eyes. But it is not easy my love.

That day I killed a militant. He was just 16 years old.

I wish I could shut away the memory of his mother crying over his dead body.

I am torn between my love and duty for my country and my own principles.

I wish I could shut away those doubts and insecurities by closing my eyes

And I wish most that, the next time I met you I could meet you with my eyes open and not shut.