

exhibition

# The War We Forgot

Chobi Mela to reconstruct our memories of the war

BY NAJID IMRAN AHMED

Twenty-nine years ago we had the bloodiest wars of the century. And for the loss of millions of souls we achieved our independence in 1971. But what did we actually do to preserve our past? Apart from a number of monuments and a few efforts by the Liberation War Museum we have not done much to sing about.

While in the West, the "Concert for Bangladesh" raised millions of dollars, and the US and the Soviet Union flexed muscles at each other did they possibly know what we were going through. It was only after the 16th of December, when the national tragedies were discovered, the corpses of the intellectuals at Mohammadpur, the mass graves, and the torture cells, only then the horrors of the massacre the nation had suffered began to surface. There are still numerous stories of death and sufferings that are lost into oblivion and the full measure of the holocaust would be lost from our national memory if we do not try to reconstruct them.

After twenty-nine years of the War Drift Picture Library Ltd, Pathshala, The South Asian Institute of Photography, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, The British Council, The Alliance Francaise, The Indian High Commission and the Goethe Institut, are jointly organising Chobi Mela, the first Photography Festival in Asia. Apart from various other programmes related to Chobi Mela, the festival will start with a photography exhibition titled The War We Forgot.

Over a quarter of a century later, on the eve of the millennium, we would like to give the rest of the world a piece of Bangladesh's history, said Dr Shahidul Alam the festival director.



BANGLADESH Veterans Shirin Banu Mitil, Veteran of the Bangladesh war, with photo of herself dressed as a boy in the war. Photo -- Don McCULLIN

tor said while talking to the press at the Liberation War Museum. 'A history that must be told for the many who have given their lives for their freedom, for those who have been left behind, who live with the pain, for the perpetrators

of the crime who must confront what they have done, and for the youth to know the pangs of the birth of their nation.'

Chobi Mela is going to be the single biggest media event in Asia. The festival will start on the

December 15. The festival has already been featured in the Internet and in international magazines. Throughout the month there will be over 18 international exhibitions as well as workshops, lectures, slide shows

and films. Almost 250 pieces of rare and historical War photographs will be put on display in these programmes.

Akku Chowdhury of Liberation War Museum was also present at the press conference. During his speech he said that after 30 years the people of Bangladesh and the rest of the world would get the chance to see the actual history. 'The credit of course goes to the uncountable foreign photojournalists, the organisations and of course Dr. Shahidul Alam who took the initiative in 1994 and has worked really hard to arrange everything altogether.'

Dr. Shahidul Alam expressed that, our country is always known for the floods and poverty to the outside world. 'But we have a glorious past that everyone should know about. Chobi Mela is just going to do this. There are a lot of organisations and people working for this festival. Two separate teams are working in New York and Paris. There is a lot of work involved in this activity. The photojournalists who took the photographs are scattered all over the world, they had to be contacted. This is not only an Asian festival, it is going to be international one. There is also a virtual community known as Alochoma, who is working for the festival. They are putting up a website for the festival. The URL for it is <http://www.chobimela.com>'

A slide show followed the press briefing highlighting different aspects of the festival. The show previewed some of the spectacular and horrifying photographs which, no one in the world has ever seen. These photographs were just a glimpse of what the festival has in store for the viewers.

There is no doubt that these photographs of the war of independence will definitely awake the inner souls of every Bangladeshi.

Photo -- Don McCULLIN



A Bengali woman pours polluted water onto the brow of a feverish child suspected of having cholera. Border between India and Bangladesh. Photo -- Don McCULLIN

Bangladesh during the liberation war 1971 Photo -- Don McCULLIN

**BTV**  
Morning Prog. 12:30 Closing  
9:00 Opening Announcement From The Holy Quran And Programme Outline 9:05 Patriotic Song 9:10 Bangla News 9:15 Alor Dishan (Islamic Education For Children) 9:35 NHK Programme 10:00 The News 10:05 Cira jagat / Shuvo Sakaal 10:30 Mithsriya (Talk Show) 10:35 Computer (Programme On Computer) 11:20 Aye Prithibi (Programme On Nature) 11:45 Dristipaat (Programme On Human Rights) 12:10 Pusti Tatho (1st Week) 12:25 A

Bj National Song

Dubb 9:00 Chhaya Mela (Film Based) 10:00 News At Ten (English) 10:20 English Series: The X-Files 11:30 Bangla News 11:35 English News 11:40 A) Programme Outline For Saturday B) National Song 11:45 Closing

**Sony Ent. TV**

7:30 Amit Varsa 8:0 Sant Asaram Wani 8:30 Music Mantra (Trailer show) 9:00 Good Morning Disney 10:00 Family No.1 #101 10:30 Boogi Woogi 11:00 Just Mohabbat #168 11:30 Daily Soap: Aurat 12:00 Daily Soap: Ithihas 12:30 Movers & Shakers 12:00 Daily Soap: Imthiaan (\*Renuka Shani, Ferdous Dadi) 3:30 Chartbusters (Trailer Show) 1:30 Cook It Up With Tarla Datal 2:00 Boogi Woogi 2:30 Daily Soap: Imthiaan (\*Renuka Shani, Ferdous Dadi) 3:00 Daily Soap: Aurat 3:30 Daily Soap: Ghar Ek Mandir 4:00 Daily Soap: Nazdeekyan 4:30 Daily Soap: Ithihas 5:00 Daily Soap: Junoon 5:30 Chartbusters (Trailer Show) 6:00 Music Mantra (Trailer show) 6:30 Disney Hour 7:30 Boogi Woogi 8:00 Mera Aangan Mein #21 (\*Tiku Talsamiya, Swayata, Vishal, Biju Kholey) 8:30 Cats #33 Ep. (\*Nafisa, Malini,

Kuljeet) 9:10 Heena #93 (\*Rakhi Bhajan, Simon Singh, Rahul Bhatt, Nina Kulkarni) 9:50 Ek Mahal Ho Sapna Ka (Daily Soap) 10:30 Tujh Pe Dil (\*Parmesh Sheth, Grusha Kapoor, Ronit Roy) 11:10 Movers & Shakers 12:00 Daily Soap: Imthiaan 12:30 Nazdeekyan 12:30 Saaya #96 1:00 Choodiyan #5 1:30 Missing #65 2:00 Yeh Duniya Ha Rangreem #5 Ep. 2:30 Movers & Shakers 3:00 Daily Soap: Imthiaan (\*Renuka Shani, Ferdous Dadi) 3:30 CineNite-Film:

**ZEETV**

6:15 Yealon Ki Pal (B/W Songs) 6:45 Old Is Gold 7:00 Bhakti Songs 7:30 Jagran 7:55 Fitness Plus 8:05 Breakfast Zee (News, Views & Chat) 9:00 Guidasta 9:30 Nicolodon Kid's show 10:30 Ek Nazar 11:00 Daily Shop: Chattan #48 (\*Shammi Kapoor, Anang Deshay) 11:30 Samay #14 12:00 Sound of Music 12:10 Naya Nazrane 12:40 Bourvita Quiz Contest 1.10 Zee For U 1:40 Jhalak 1:45 Daily Soap: Hasrat-ein #45 2:25 Saath Saath #82 (\*Seema Kapoor,

Ritupraj) 3:00 Daily Soap: Banegi Apni Baat 3:30 Picktonary Game Show 4:00 Daily Soap: Adhikar #44 4:30 Apna Apna Style 5:00 Intermission 5:10 Aashiana #14 5:40 Lakeeran #52 6:10 Ek Nazar (Trailer On Film) 6:30 Nicolodon Kid's show 7:30 Ek Nazar (Trailer On Film) 8:00 Daily Soap: Dastaan 8:30 Close Up Antakshri (\*Game Show Anchore- Anu Kapoor) 9:00 Ashirwad #115 (\*Nasir, Poonam Narula, Navin Nischal, Govind Namit, Sonali, Manosi, Smita Banshal, Sanjeev Shetty, Anjana Muntaz) 9:45 Daily Soap: Kartavya 10:30 Thriller At 10 Ep. 11:00 Huqumat #29 (\*Shachin Khadker, Sudhir Pandit, Manosi) 11:30 Daily Shop: Chattan #49 (\*Shammi Kapoor, Anang Deshay) 12:00 Arth #5 12:30 Koshish Ek Aasha 1:10 Daily Soap: Adhikar 1:40 Chingari #74 2:10 Indias Most Wanted 2:40 Naye Nazrane 3:10 Hindi Feature Film (B/W):

**BBC World**

6:00 BBC World News 6:30 World Living : Talking Movies (Presenter- Tim Sebastian) 4:00 BBC World News 5:00 BBC

## TV GUIDE

### PICK OF THE DAY



Superhit Raja Hindustani on Star Plus tonight at 9

7:30 Asia Today 8:00 BBC News 8:30 Asia Today 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 Asia Today 9:45 World Business Report 10:00 BBC News 10:30 World Living: Click Online (Presenter- Stephen Cole) 11:00 BBC World News 11:30 World Living : Click Online (Presenter- Stephen Cole) 12:00 BBC World News 12:30 BBC World News 13:00 HARDtalk (Presenter- Tim Sebastian) 9:00 BBC World News 9:30 Asia Today 10:00 BBC World News 10:15 World Business Report 10:30 Made In India: Question Time 11:00 BBC World News 11:35 World Business Report 11:45 World Sport 12:30 HARDtalk (Presenter-

Tim Sebastian) 1:00 Kapoor) 11:30 Aaj Ki Baat 11:45 Film Contd.

World News 1:30 Small Wonder (Hindi Dub) 1:30 Daily Soap: Saans #70 2:00 Daily Soap: Meri Saheli #69

2:30 Cincinnati 2:30 Bublaboo #21 3:00 Tu Main Main 3:30 Saher #26 4:00 Rajdhani #20 4:30 Deewarein #26 5:00 Pal Chhinn #78 5:30 Hit Ya Fit

Bullet In The Head 2:00 Action: Navy Seals (\*Charlie Sheen, Michael Biehn, Joaneene Whalley-Kilmer) (15)

Motorsports News 2:00 Cricket Up Close- Javed Miandad 2:30 Inside Cricket: 1st Session 3:00 National Sports Report 4:00 Auto Racing- Max Power 5:00 Asian Basketball Show 5:30 Asia Sport Show 6:00 Formula Nippon 2000 Mine Central Park, Japan Round 9 7:00 Soccer Road To Asian Cup 2000, Part 2 10:00 Class 1 Uim Preview 8:00 Live Sport News - C'Ships 2000 Bodrum, Turkey- Mediterranean Grand Prix 9:30 World Wrestling Federation Live Wire 9:30 Asian Football Special 11:00 Soccer/Futbol- Fila Wild Futsal C'Ship 2000 - News Direct/Asia 11:00 Golf- Inside The Park Tour 11:30 Nba

Tonight 12:30 Trans World Sport

**ESPN**

7:50 Hockey- NHL Hockey Post Game Report 8:00 IAAF Track & Field- World Grand Prix Final 2000 Doha, Qatar 10:00 Inside Big Game

Fishing 10:30 Motorcycle Programming

Firm Individual World Speedway C'Ship Gp 2000 Denmark, Denmark 11:30 Western Union World Football

12:00 Live- Sportscenter Bristol, Ct USA 1:00 Auto Racing- Motorsport Asia 1:30 English Premier League Highlights 2:30 Auto Racing- Cart Texaco/Havoline Grand Prix Of Houston (Abc) Houston, Tx USA 4:30 Extreme Sports- ASA World Tour 2000 Asia

Inline Pro Tour: Stop 6 Vert London, England 5:00 The IRB's World Of Rugby 5:30 Motor

Cycle Racing- Motoworld 6:00 Billiards- Pool 2000 World Pool Masters 7:00 ICC Knock-Out Kenya, Africa- England Vs Bangladesh 3rd Odi, 1st Session 9:30 Icc Knock-Out Kenya, Africa- England Vs Bangladesh 3rd Odi, 2nd Session 12:00 Football Italian Serie A 2000/2001

## interview

### 'More Local Interactions at German Cultural Centre in Future'

Dr Markus Litz, the new Goethe Institut Director speaks to Fayza Haq

came here?

ML: Of course, Bangladesh is

facing a lot of severe problems. But I do not like the manner of European reporting on Bangladesh. This country as a result is faced with little else but catastrophes in the mind of the European people. Even the members of my family did not understand why I wanted to go to Bangladesh. I was naturally influenced by these reports on Bangladesh but I wanted to get my own impression. I also intended to get in touch not only with educated partners in the field of culture but also with ordinary people. I got an idea of the conditions in which they are living. The astonishing fact for me was that they are able to deal with their conditions and have a very strong will to cope with their circumstances and environment. My first impression when I came was that I was surrounded by beggars. My problem was that I did not know at first as how to react. I felt pity and wondered the best way to help the needy. I decided that I should give something like food rather than money to beggars who often assault foreign people.

ML: What was your impression of the country before you came to Bangladesh and did your preconceived notions match with what you saw in Dhaka?

ML: We have the opportunity to travel to the country approximately six months before we commence our work. I came to Bangladesh in August '99 for a week and I was very impressed, especially by seeing how open-minded people are regarding culture. I got into close contacts with some artists and when I took over my duties at the GI in January, my knowledge of the country naturally increased. I think both Germany and Bangladesh will benefit from this.

ML: Did you just meet visual artists or also singers, dancers etc.?

ML: I am also in contact with dancers, film-makers (which is at present the main field of cultural activities of the GI) and we are also working with scientists because it is also our aim to have mutual exchanges between German and Bangladeshi scientists.

ML: The media in the west tends to present Bangladesh as a poor country with little else but floods and cyclones. Was that your impression too after you

came here?

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CUL: Having stayed here for

eight months how does the coun-

try treat you?

ML: It was very fascinating for

me to experience the landscape of

Bangladesh. I had the chance to