

A photo exhibition on environment

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"My world, My Future," a photo exhibition that was recently inaugurated at the British Council is displaying an unusual blend of aestheticism, subtleness, sentimentality and information in the works of the participating photographers.

The exhibition organised by the British Council in collaboration with Map Photo Agency displays 47 photographs taken by 32 photographers that were selected from a competition held last year as part of a joint initiative taken by the British Council, British High Commission and DFID (UK Department for International Development).

"We intend to encourage photography on environment and create an awareness on environment among ordinary people," said Syed Masud Hossain, the culture and science programme manager at the British Council.

The photographs, both colour and black & white, are displayed at the exhibition with captions depicting messages and themes. "Visual messages and textual messages are complementary,"

said Mahmud, a photographer from Map Photo Agency.

Among the photographs, the one that won the first prize in the competition, shows an inundated road in Mohammadpur with rickshaws plying and a family travelling on a raft in the background. "This signifies that what was once a road now looks like a river," said the photographer Abu Taher, who is also the chief photographer of the daily NewAge.

The photograph that won the second prize shows a man partly immersed in floodwater carrying his daughter to school. The photographer, Monirul Alam of the daily Prothom Alo, said the theme of the photograph is that life goes on despite natural calamities.

Another photograph of Alam shows three monkeys, one with a face that seems to be twisted in pain, clinging her baby. The caption states that 300 monkeys live on the rooftops in the old Dhaka houses, most of whom are chased and killed by people for stealing food from their houses due to which their lives are in danger.

"The mother holds her baby as she jumps from one building to another which means that they



The photo exhibition on environmental issues has been a unique experience for the visitors.

too have feelings like human beings," said Alam.

The photograph that won the third prize shows a woman and a girl standing beside a cow and a calf at a field in Kishoreganj. The caption states that both the pairs have suffered from droughts, floods and want of food. "Each of the pairs is a mother and a daughter and both are families," said the photographer, Md Moin Uddin who works at Drik gallery.

Another photograph shows the sail of a boat shaded in red and green with a shadow of a man looking down at a river. The caption states that the likely destruction brought in by rising sea levels would be a stark reality in the next decades.

"I have shown it in an aesthetic way," said the photographer, Deen Mohammad Shibly who works in a monthly magazine. He pointed at another photograph of cracked earth as a conventional means of expressing environmental degradation.

A particular photograph expresses nostalgia with a woman and a child sitting with their backs towards the camera in the middle of a paddy field. The photograph was taken during the 80s. The caption states that those were the times when mothers would dream of a never-ending highway of abundance that with changing times is being devoured by "mushrooming concrete buildings and metal roads that we call development."

Another photograph shows two flowers with fragile stalks and some chimneys of a brick kiln emitting smoke in the background. The photograph apparently gives the impression of a decaying natural beauty in the wake of urbanisation.

"It is an awareness building initiative," said Humayun Hashim, a TV journalist who came to the exhibition as a visitor. Other visitors gave similar comments. "The subject matters and the photographers' insight are both excellent," said Ferdous, a university student.

Faisal, an environmentalist, focused on the subtleness of the photographs by saying that one could hardly understand the inner significance of the photographs unless one looked at the textual messages. "I don't think I have ever seen an exhibition like this before."

5x3

3x2

5x3

10x2

8x3

8x3