

A festival like no other

Shahidul Alam on 'Chobi Mela IV'



KARIM WAHEED

CHOBIMela IV – International Festival of Photography, Bangladesh 2006 – ended on November 30. The three-week-long festival included 49 exhibitions highlighting works of photographers from 23 countries, seminars, workshops and more.

In an interview with *The Daily Star*, Shahidul Alam, noted photographer and the festival director shared his views on *Chobi Mela*, photography as a profession and more.

This year the theme of *Chobi Mela* was "Boundaries", themes of previous festivals were "Differences", "Exclusion" and "Resistance"; is there a certain trend when it comes to themes? Shahidul Alam, who is also the managing director of Drik says, "Drik has always tried to be socially aware. We try to come up with themes that can include diverse views and can be stretched by the photographers."

How does *Chobi Mela* rate when compared to other international photography festivals? Alam's response: "*Chobi Mela* has become one of the most important photography festivals in the world. Historically, photography has been Euro-centric. So the festival culture developed in the western world. *Chobi Mela* became the first photography festival in Asia and that's a significant achievement for us. Photographers from other Asian countries attended our festival to get ideas to start their own photography festivals."

"*Chobi Mela* is not just another assortment of exhibitions. It includes lively debates, critique and discussions. The festival was more interactive this year; diverse range of issues like copyright, archival process, value of visual heritage and more engaged a broader public. Mobile exhibitions (on rickshaw vans) generated interest

among people that are not traditionally gallery-goers. We had rag-pickers from the streets come to the galleries; they had some interesting questions regarding the images."

"I feel we're at a point where we can be proud of *Chobi Mela*. Outside of London and New York, Dhaka has become an exuberant centre for photography exhibitions. Yet, unfortunately, our people are not aware of this phenomenon and photography remains an underrated art form," he adds.

On the difference between how western and eastern photographers view the world, Alam says, "Western photographers are mostly driven by their editorial needs. For the most part, devel-



Shahidul Alam

Photographs by Alam featured at the festival

oping countries to them are – poverty, diseases and natural disasters. Eastern photographers tend to be more comprehensive. They engage themselves with the subjects, which becomes apparent in their work."

And what is his opinion on upcoming Bangladeshi photographers? According to Alam, "They are perceptive and talented. They are driven by motivation and they possess certain values that have become sort of passé in the western world."

However, Alam feels photography as a profession has yet to evolve in our country. "Bangladeshi photographers have yet to understand the international market. We do have some brilliant photographers but being able to take good pictures is just a part of the profession. Learning how to develop a network, how to communicate efficiently are extremely important. Use of freelance photographers is still an alien idea to the newspapers. It's tragic that none of our public institutions offers extensive courses in photography. However, Pathshala, The South Asian Institute of Photography (the educational wing of Drik) offers basic, diploma and degree courses and is at par with the best of the world."

Is he content with the way *Chobi Mela IV* turned out? "Extremely!" – Alam says, "we had anticipated 200,000 visitors and the turn out exceeded that. We were discouraged initially by the *oborodh* (blockades), but despite the continuing political turmoil, people thronged the galleries. The media should be thanked. BBC World service aired a special report on the festival. *The Daily Star*, a media partner of *Chobi Mela IV*, has been very supportive as well."

An exhibition titled "By Brahmaputra Banks", featuring photographs by Alam, was held at the Drik Gallery as part of *Chobi Mela IV*.

Book Launch

Mosque Architecture in Bangladesh

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

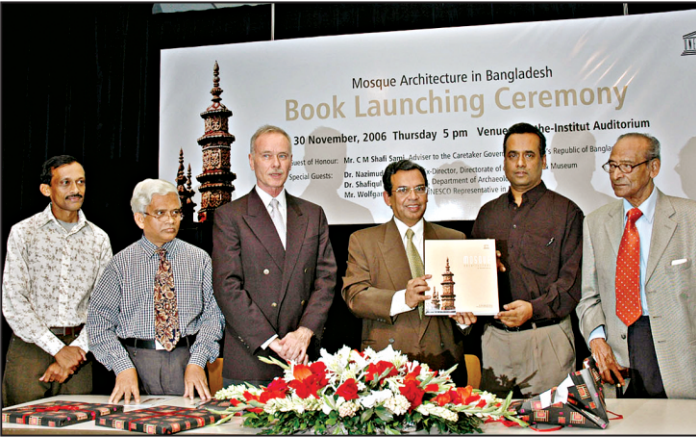
When Muslim settlers came to Bengal, they brought a different architectural approach. They built mosques and secular structures with the use of imported features modified by local culture, climate, tradition, materials, and technology. From that period through the present, mosques in Bangladesh have developed a unique style in terms of architecture. The notion of mosque architecture has been changing over time, according to the desires of the ruling class and the common people as well.

Mosque Architecture in Bangladesh, a book featuring a thorough research and insight on the development of designs of mosques in our country through the ages by architect Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed (Head, Department of Architecture, University of Asia Pacific) was launched at the Goethe Institut on November 30. CM Shafi Sami, Adviser to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, was the guest of honour at the book launch.

Others present as special guests were Dr Nazimuddin Ahmed, former director, Directorate of Archaeology and Museum; Dr Shafiqul Alam, director, Department of Archaeology and Wolfgang Vollman, UNESCO Representative in Bangladesh.

During a presentation, the author said, "Mosques, being the centre of Islamic spirit and activities, are edifices of special significance. The then Bengal (now Bangladesh) came within the ambit of Islam in the early 13th century and from then onwards people in this region built numerous mosques. Many of the mosques have survived but they need to be properly documented, analysed and conserved."

The first chapter of the book offers a comprehensive thought on the revolution and influence of mosque architecture in Bangladesh. The following chapter titled "Catalogue" is an attempt to compile the representations of these mosques, classified in three phases – Early Islamic, Mughal and



(L-R) Syed Zakir Hossain, Dr Shafiqul Alam, Wolfgang Vollman, CM Shafi Sami (Adviser to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh), Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed (author) and Dr Nazimuddin Ahmed at the book launch

Colonial. The physical form of thirty selected mosques is analysed and illustrated with plans, elevations and photographs. Images used in the book are by Syed Zakir Hossain, a photographer of *The Daily Star*.

The mosque architecture of Bangladesh do not demonstrate large-scale construction but its

appearance, proportion and designs are inventive, original and balanced. The book provides an insight to that and can be of great help to architecture and history enthusiasts.

UNESCO Dhaka is the publisher of *Mosque Architecture in Bangladesh*.



Photographs from the book (L-R): Kusumba Mosque (Naogaon), Bazra Mosque (Noakhali) and Bagha Mosque (Rajshahi)

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

CULTURAL FEAST

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Down Memory Lane

Artist: Rafiqun Nabi

Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Bengal Shilpalaya, House no-275/F, Road no-27 (Old), Dhanmondi

Date: November 20-December 3

Time: 12:00pm-8:00pm

Artist: Jalilur Rabbi Tamim

Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dacca, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi

Date: November 24-December 7

Time: Sunday to Friday 9:00am-12:00pm and 5:00pm-9:00pm, Saturday 5:00pm to 8:00pm

Artist: Hasibur Rahman Kiron

Organiser: Alliance Francaise de Dacca

Venue: La Galerie, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi Dhaka

Date: December 7-13

Time: 9:00am to 12:00pm and 5:00pm-8:00pm

Except Saturday 5:00pm-8:00pm

'Dhrupodi': In praise of quality films

MAHMUDA AFROZ

On the 44th anniversary of the Bangladesh Film Society, the 6th edition of the exclusive book *Dhrupodi* was launched at the Russian Cultural Center on November 30.

President of the Bangladesh Film Society, Professor Kabir Chowdhury chaired the programme. The chief guest was Tasmina Hossain, editor of the fortnightly magazine *Ananya*. Veteran journalist Wahidul Haque launched the book.

The 692-page book which is based on films and documentaries around the world has three chapters – first is the Bangladesh episode; second is South Asian and Malayalam movies and the third chapter is based on Latin American movies. People from a cross section of cultures, societies and calibers

have contributed their thoughts and expertise in the book. Muhammad Khasru is the editor of *Dhrupodi* and the book is priced at Tk 500.

The Bangladesh Film Society was formed in 1969 and was known then as the East Pakistan Film Society. The first edition of *Dhrupodi*



Tasmina Hossain speaks at the programme

PHOTO: STAR

also came out the same year. Says Hasan, a member of the society for 15 years and a documentary maker, "The society was established with a vision to promote and appreciate quality films. We have tried to do this by screening foreign movies, encouraging local ones and by bringing out *Dhrupodi* from time to time."

Professor Kabir Chowdhury shared his views on the book: "I have always wanted to keep myself associated with uncontaminated entertainment. But it is becoming difficult in our society to keep things that way."

"However we have to continue with our efforts and also get the youth involved," he added.

The programme wrapped up with the screening of an Argentine movie, *The Cloud* (directed by Fernando Solanas).

Murphy back for more 'Beverly Hills Cop'

Eddie Murphy is hitting the beat for *Beverly Hills Cop IV*, working with Paramount as producer.

Paramount is keen on reviving the classic action-comedy franchise, which features Murphy as detective Axel Foley.

Murphy, who will next be in theatres with *Dreamgirls*, has always been attached to star in the fourth instalment.

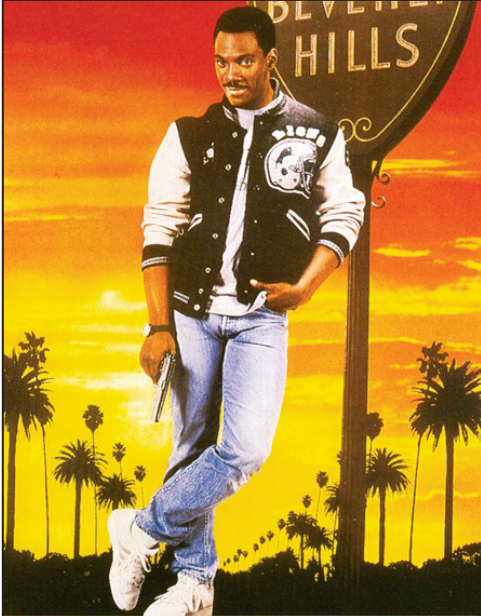
The first instalments did enormous box office. *Beverly Hills Cop*, released in 1984, grossed more than US \$234.7 million domestically and another \$81 million overseas. The next instalment, released in 1987, took in more than \$153.6 million in the US and another \$146 million overseas.

The franchise ran into trouble with the release of *Beverly Hills Cop III* in 1994, grossing only \$44 million domestically.

Di Bonaventura, who has a producing deal at Paramount, said it would be a challenge to do the fourth instalment as well as the previous films. "Axel Foley is one of the great action-comedy characters, a character that Eddie loves. I'm lucky enough to help bring it back," di Bonaventura said. "This genre is missing from the landscape."

Murphy is in post-production with *Norbit*. He also reprises his voice role in the upcoming *Shrek the Third*.

Source: Internet



TV GUIDE

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTV

News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.

News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.

News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.

Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).

CHANNEL-i

News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15 am.

ATN BANGLA

News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm.

News (English) 8:20am, 7:00pm

Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

ntv

News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm.

News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm.

CHANNEL 1

News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 6:30pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm, 12:30am

BANGLAVISION

News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 2:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:30pm.

News Headlines (Bangla) at 9:00pm

News Headlines (English) at 9:05pm

RTV

News (Bangla) at 7:00am, 3:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:00pm.

News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:30am

08:30

Shokaler Gaan

09:30

Shangbadpotrey Bangladesh

09:45

Public Reaction

09:50

Grameenphone Tritiomatra

11:05

Na Bola Kotha

11:30

Mukto Bazar

12:30

Citycell Taroka Kathan

01:05

Ebong Cinemar Gaan

01:30

Shangbad Potre Bangladesh

01:45

Public Reaction

02:40

Shath Rang

03:20

Dhaka Guide

03:30

Banglalink Money Talk

04:05

Educational Programme

04:25

Shangshkritir Ei Shoptaho

05:30

X Music

06:00

Nirbachon 2007

06:35

Shath Goenda

07:50

Mega Serial: Bhober Haat

09:35

Hridoye Mati O Manush

ntv

09:30

Right Click

10:05

Shangshkritir Ei Shoptaho

10:30

Aktel Hip Hip Hurray

12:05

Apar Jigyasha

02:35

Closeup 1 Tomakei Khujchhey Bangladesh

03:50

Megh Bolechhey

04:25

Nupur

05:15

Din Dorpon/ Itihasher Ei Diney

06:50

Amra Ekhon Unish Kuri

08:25

Drama Serial: Ramizer Aaina

09:10

Washington Barta

11:25

Din Darpan

CHANNEL 1

09:30

Chokh Mele Dekhi

10:00

Cartoon

10:30

Mot Motantor

11:15

Drama: Amar Prothom Dekha

12:30

Telefilm

03:30

Drama: Nindito

05:15

Norokey

06:00

Shoptaho Sheshey

06:50

Saaj Bela

06:45

Itihasher Path Dhorey

07:00

Bishwa Jurey Shathdin

08:15

Drama Serial: Shunney Boshobash

09:00

Shondhi Khoney

09:30

Drama Serial: Ghodhuli Belay

BANGLAVISIO

08:35

Shubho Shokal

09:05

Get Set Fit

09:30

Drama Serial: Kachhey Durey

10:00

Shomoy Ashomoy

10:30

Drama Serial

11:00

Drama Serial: Rupantor

11:30

Media Bhuvan

12:00

Cinebit

02:30

Drama of the Week: Bela Sheshey

03:30

Apnar Agami

04:00

Shurer Bhuvan

04:30

Amader Ranna Ghar

05:00

Ebong Classer Bairoy

05:30

Din Er Sheshey

06:30

Talk Show: Khola Mon

08:10

Drama Serial: Krishopokho

09:15

Amar Ami

09:50

Drama Serial: Shukher Kata

STAR MOVIES

09:00

Patch Adams

11:00

The Village

01:10

The Passion Recut

03:15

King Arthur

05:20

Edison

07:00

Shattered Glass

08:35

Licence To Kill

10:45

Goldeneye

12:45

Tomorrow Never Dies

STAR PLUS

08:30

Hum Saath Aath Hain

09:00

V First Day First Show- Starplu

09:05

V Trailers - Star Plus

09:30

Saans

10:00

V Trailers - Star Plus

10:30

Antariksh

12:25

Bolly V - Star Plus

12:30

V Trailers - Star Plus

12:55

V First Day First Show- Starplu

01:00

Mirch Masala

01:30

Golu Ke Goggles

01:55

V First Day First Show- Starplu

02:00

V Trailers - Star Plus

02:25

Bolly V - Star Plus

02:30

Kalash

03:00

Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii

05:00

V Trailers - Star Plus

05:25

V First Day First Show- Starplu

05:30

Krishna Kathaiyen

06:30

Aladdin

07:00

The Emperor's New Groove

07:25

Bolly V - Star Plus

07:30

Golu Ke Goggles

08:00

Saathii Re

08:30

Lucky

09:30

Prithviraj Chauhan

10:00

Baa Bahoo Aur Baby

10:30

Aek Chabhi Hai

11:30

Thegreatindia-laughterchampion

03:30

Malcolm In The Middle

04:00

The Office

04:30

Criminal Minds

05:30

Desire: Table For Three

06:30

Ghost Whisperer

07:30

The Simple Life

08:30

Tna Xplosion

09:30

World's Most Amazing Videos

10:30

Enterprise

11:30

Desire: Table For Three

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

08:00

Ab Slim Pro

08:30

Secret World of Bats

09:30

Deadly Obsession

10:30

Stalking Leopards

11:30

Nights with Leopards

12:00

Spell of the Tiger

12:30

Assault On The Megaherd

01:30

Stampede Of Megaherd

02:30

Monkey Business

03:00

Black Bears

03:30

Lightning

04:30

Nat Geo Junior

05:00

Dogs With Jobs

05:30

Nat Geo Junior

06:30

Paris Train Crash

07:30

Bringing Home The Bear

08:30

Indyeha!

09:30

Sunset Bollywood

10:30

Melas

11:30

The Mafia

SONY

08:30

Om Namah Shivay Spiritual

09:30

Chart Busters Movie Based

10:00

Music Mantra Music

10:30

Music Beats Music

11:00

Cadburys Bournvita Quiz Contest Drama

11:30

Current Bollywood Others

12:00

Mohalla Mohabbat

02:00

PM Boogie Woogie Dance

03:00

Matnee - Ye Dillagi Movie

06:30

Music Beats Music

07:00

Music Mantra Music

07:30

Chart Busters Others

08:00

Khushi Ki Duniya Drama

08:30

Boogie Woogie Dance

09:30

Bigg Boss Masala Reality Based

11:30

Khauffnaak Contd.

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

08:30

Wild Discovery

09:30

Discovery Spotlight

11:30

Honey We're Killing The Kids

12:30

Stunt Junkies

01:00

One Step Beyond

01:30

Wild Discovery

02:30

Discovery's Biggest Shows

04:30

Wild Discovery

05:30

Discovery Marquee

07:30

Wild Discovery

08:30

Discover India

09:30

Destination India

10:30

Mean Machines