

# Letting pictures do the talking

KARIM WAHEED

On the occasion of World Photography Day (August 19), Drik Gallery arranged a photographic presentation, featuring dynamic, edgy works of Abrir Abdullah, Andrew Biraj and Munem Wasif.

In an informal setting, photographers and photo-enthusiasts huddled during the presentation and discussed the images. Renowned photographers Golam Mostafa and Bijon Sarkar attended the event as well.

The presentation began with Munem Wasif's series on Bangladeshi jute mills that are on the verge of extinction.

Following the prescription of the World Bank and other donors, state-owned jute mills -- once a thriving industry -- have become ghosts of their former selves. It's easier to shut down factories that are not making any money. But for every factory that goes belly up, thousands of workers and their families are left in panic, wondering where their next meal will come from. Many employees have not been paid in months.

According to Wasif, "I know I cannot ease their situation but I wanted to bring to light what these people are going through, hoping their stories will hit our collective conscience."

Wasif, who considers himself a 'documentary photographer', is a graduate of Pathshala -- the South Asian Institute of Photography. He now works with DrikNEWS (international news photo agency) as a staff photographer. His photographs have been published in numerous national and international publications including *Le Monde*, *Himal Southasian*, *Asian Geographic*, *Issue Magazine*, *Zonezero*, *Forum*, *The Daily Star*, *New Age* and *Daily Shomokh*. He won an "Honourable Mention" in the 2007 All Roads Photography Program by the National Geographic Society, 1st Prize in the Konkurs Fotografii Prasowej, and 2nd Prize in the 2007 Polish BZ WBK Press Photo Contest for his extensive work on tea garden workers.

Abir Abdullah's series on the recent flood was next.

An elderly woman throws a blank look to the heavens. A mother crouches on her bed, holding her child tight; all her belongings, even the clay stove, piled next to her. People, not wading, but swimming with all their earthly posses-

sions. A corpse is left covered on a boat; death came in the form of a submerged electric pole. A woman, visibly in pain, at ICDDR,B. No captions needed.

Abdullah completed his Diploma in Photjournalism from Pathshala in 1999 and worked as a staff photographer at Drik Picture Library from 1996 to 2005. He joined European Press Photo Agency (EPA) as a Bangladesh correspondent in 2005. Currently, he is a tutor at Pathshala. Abdullah won 1st prize at the WHO photo contest in Switzerland (2002), 3rd place in the Gordon Parks photo contest in USA (2002), 2nd prize at Unicef Photographer of the year contest (2004) and more.

Andrew Biraj's presentation titled "State Excluded" covers Biharis living in the Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur.

Predecessors of the residents of Geneva Camp or camps outside Dhaka migrated to Bangladesh from Bihar, India during the decades following the partition in 1947. They speak Urdu; have a unique culture. Their role during the Liberation War sided them with the Pakistanis. Following the Liberation of Bangladesh, they were rendered "stateless" or "refugees". Pakistan does not want them and Bangladeshis mostly resent them. Cramped in shanties, often devoid of basic facilities like running water or indoor plumbing, their children consider education as "luxury". These are people who have integrated into the mainstream society, like the man cutting your hair or cooking your kebab; yet remain alienated.

Biraj just narrates their story, does not put labels.

Andrew Biraj completed a basic course in photography from Pathshala in 1999. In 2004 he received a scholarship from the University of Bolton, UK, where he did his B.A in Photography. His works featuring political brutality in Bangladesh have earned him wide acclaim. He focuses on people living on the fringes of society. He has won Bronze prize in the 3rd China International Press Photo Contest in 2007. His editorial works have been published in *The Guardian*, *The Observer Magazine*, *Photo File*, *New Age* and *The Daily Star*.

## Photographic presentation at Drik Gallery



(From top) Photographs by Munem Wasif, Abir Abdullah and Andrew Biraj

# World Photography Day celebrated

Shilpakala plans to open Department of Photography

ERSHAD KAMOL

The World Photography Day is celebrated on August 19, marking the date when the first announcement of photography was made in 1839. In observance of the day, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) arranged a programme at the National Art Gallery.

Eminent photo-artist Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed was the chief guest at the programme and photo-journalist Nasir Ali Mamun was the special guest. The discussion was presided over by A.B.M. Abdul Hawk Chowdhury, secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Director General of BSA Quamrul Hassan, ndc, and photo-artist Golam Mostafa also delivered speeches. Director of the Department of Fine Arts, Nazrul Haque delivered the welcome speech.

In his speech Nazrul Haque focused on the endeavours taken by BSA in the field of photography.

Emphasising on the role of photographers in the country, Golam Mostafa said, "In the last two decades, the photographers of Bangladesh have won over 900 prestigious awards, competing at international events. Photography, these days, is a recognised art form. However, in Bangladesh 'photographers' still do not get their due."

Announcing the plan of setting up a photography department, Director General of BSA Quamrul Hassan, ndc, said, "A proposal for establishing a Department of Photography at BSA was introduced in 1989. However, nothing was finalised. We hope to establish the department in a couple of months. We will place the issue in the next Jatiyo Parishad -- the decision making body of BSA -- meeting."

Photo-artist Nasir Ali Mamun said, "We hope the BSA goes ahead with its plan of establishing a photography department. We also

hope that the government will set up an institute of Photography."

Hoping for better days for the photo-artists, Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed said, "Our photo-artists have made some remarkable achievements in the international arena. If we receive support from the government, we can do even better."

Secretary of Ministry of Cultural Affairs A.B.M. Abdul Hawk Chowdhury, who is also the vice president of Jatiyo Parishad of BSA, announced, "If everything goes smoothly we will set up the

Pakistani junta and more. The BSA collection also includes rare photographs of Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, President Ziaur Rahman and others.

Portraits of different local and migratory birds by Rafiqul Islam are also on display. The main attraction of the exhibition are the photographs by Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed. Capturing the contrast of light and shadow, Nowazesh has presented images of simple things. The aes-



Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed describes his photographs to ABM Abdul Hawk Chowdhury proposed Department of

Photography shortly.

At the venue, a weeklong photography exhibition was opened by A.B.M. Abdul Hawk Chowdhury. Sixty photographs including 20 from BSA collection, 20 by Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed 18 by Rafiqul Islam and two by Enam Talukdar are on display.

Photographs from BSA collection feature historic moments including the Language Movement, valiant Freedom Fighters, the genocide carried out by the

thick rich photos are like paintings, yet more vibrant. A unique combination of art and techniques is evident in his collage, which portrays a famine and a war behind a girl's visage. Another interesting moment captured in Nowazesh's frame is a famine scene in 1974, which features a distressed, starved boy looking for food in empty *dekchi* (pot). Beauty of rivers and landscapes have also been presented uniquely in Dr. Nowazesh Ahmed's photos.

## TV play "Dokhiner Manush" on Banglavision today

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Banglavision will air a single-episode play *Dokhiner Manush* today at 2:40pm.

In the play, Rashid is a poor logger who travels through villages, looking for work. In a village he comes across Jaigun and falls for her. However, Asmat's entry into the scene makes the whole situation complicated as he entices Jaigun's father with his wealth to win his approval. After Jaigun rejects him, he gets enraged. Asmat traps Rashid in a sack and casts it away on a *bhela*.

Fazlur Rahman Babu, Tomalika Karmakar and Ratin play the lead roles. The play is written by Mozammel Haq Niyogi and directed by Sadia Swati.



Fazlur Rahman Babu and Tomalika Karmakar in *Dokhiner Manush*

## ON AIR

### PICK OF THE DAY



Moner Janala  
On ATN Bangla at 08:00pm  
Drama Serial  
Cast: Abul Hayat, Dolly Zahir



Psych  
On Star World at 10:30pm  
TV Series  
Cast: James Roday, Dulé Hill

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

### News Bulletin

**BTW**  
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, 12:15am.

**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.

**CHANNEL 1**  
News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 12:00pm, 2:30pm; 6:30pm; 7:30pm; 10:00pm, 12:30pm.

**BANGLAVISION**  
News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 2:00pm, 6:00pm; 7:15pm; 10:30pm. News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00am, 12:00am, 4:00pm. News Headlines (English) at 8:05pm.

**Rtv**  
News (Bangla) at 10:15pm. and 12:15am.

**ntv**  
News (Bangla) at 7:30am, 12:02pm, 2:00pm; 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am.

**ETV**  
News (Bangla) 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm; 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 11:00pm.

**BTV**

08:45 Pakhkhik Barta

11:15 Documentary Programme

11:40 Educational Programme

12:05 Maa O Shishur Kotha

01:00 Heritage

01:30 Mati O Manush

02:15 Shurer Shurobhi

02:40 Selected Programme

03:05 Cartoon

03:30 Shukhi Poribar

04:00 Amader Angina

04:30 Geet Bitaan

05:05 Moner Kotha

05:30 Anushilon

06:10 Quiz Quiz

06:40 Shotyer

07:00 Onneyshoney

07:30 Jonor Kotha

08:30 Protidin Bangladesh

09:05 Tax Helpline

09:30 Drama Serial: Adolot

09:00 Drama Serial: Shongshaptak

09:30 Shongbadpotrey

10:30 Talk Show

11:00 Shotyer Onneyshoney

12:00 Selected Programme

12:30 Lead News

### CHANNEL-i

09:30 Shongbadpotrey Bangladesh

09:45 Public Reaction

09:50 GrameenPhone

10:15 Trityomatra

10:30 Quiz Quiz

11:05 Cricket On Line

11:30 Amar Chobi

12:30 Citycell

12:30 Tarokathan

01:05 Tax Helpline

01:15 Ebong Cinemar

01:30 Gaan

01:45 Shongshaptak

02:00 Protikhon

02:40 Public Reaction

03:00 Special

03:30 Drama Serial: Prio Bash

04:00 i-Sports

04:30 Drama Serial: Adolot

05:00 Drama Serial: Shongshaptak

05:30 Drama Serial: Shongbadpotrey

06:00 Drama Serial: Protikhon

06:30 Drama Serial: Prio Bash

07:00 Drama Serial: Shongshaptak

07:30 Drama Serial: Shongbadpotrey

08:00 Drama Serial: Protikhon

08:30 Drama Serial: Shongshaptak

09:00 Drama Serial: Shongbadpotrey

09:30 Drama Serial: Protikhon

10:00 Drama Serial: Shongshaptak

10:30 Drama Serial: Shongbadpotrey