

It's been almost a year since Mad Koffee expanded from being a medium of expression online to a medium of expression on stage. Dubbed "The Mad Koffee Show" – the website created a platform for individuals from different fields like tech, storytelling and art, to come together and share their stories and achievements with people. The two-day show, hosted by popular comedian and magician, Max Mystel and copywriter, Bushra Rubaiya Zerine, was held at Moar in Banani, drawing in crowds of young people looking to be inspired and motivated.

The show consisted of an assortment of talks, performances, and exhibitions by talented young people. Works of Alia Kamal, Syed Rashad Imam Tanmoy, Manik and Ratan, Humairah Shams, and Md Ata Islam Khan Mojlish were exhibited around the venue throughout the event.

Day 1: Koffee Korner

Day 1 of the show followed a central theme of tech and storytelling. Shehzad Chowdhury, the founder of Latitude Longitude 6, was the first speaker of the evening. He spoke about his experience as a curator, how such professions work and how it ties into art itself.

Following Shehzad Chowdhury, tech genius Riyadh Al Nur took the stage to talk about online footprints and how essential social media has become to modern life. The crowd intently listened as he provided some tips and tricks on how to control one's information, which is accessible to the government.

Third speaker of the night was stand-up comedian Yamin Khan. He offered the audience a refreshing break and soon got the crowd roaring with laughter, and awaiting the next speaker – who happened to be the writer and poet, Samira Sadeque. She took to the stage sharing her personal experience with writing and ended it with captivating spoken-word poetry, which was met with thunderous applause.

After a short break, the show came back with Priyanka Chowdhury performing some beautiful songs,



THE MAD KOFFEE SHOW 2.0

including classical favourites, while the entire audience sang along. The next performer for the night was Rakat Zami of Embers In Snow, who performed a cover and three original songs from his EP. The last performer for the night were The Aloonies, who had their first public performance at the Mad Koffee Show last year. They had the crowd belting out songs by the Beatles, Foster the People and even Courage the Cowardly Dog theme song, ending Day 1 on a high note.

Day 2: Truly Madly

Day 2 focused on creativity and aspiration. The first speaker was Syed Rashad Imam Tanmoy, shared insights on what it's like to be at the heart of the creative community as a professional cartoonist. Md Ata Islam Khan Mojlish,

took to the stage next with his art pieces inspired by his own experience and spoke about the different mediums of expressions – like art, writing and his personal medium of expression – digital art.

The founders of Mad Koffee, Amiya Atahar and Monoshita Ayruali then share the story of Mad Koffee. It had an unusual start, with a Facebook page ready and waiting for three years before the idea had even taken shape - That is what Mad Koffee exists to be - a playground where yet-to-be-formed ideas, unfinished projects, or simply fresh, new concepts can be experimented with and perfected. While the entity started off as a blog, it has now expanded to gain more of a social presence with its theme song, "Stay", and annual event, "The Mad

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Koffee Show" – the latter an impulsive decision made during a sleepover and implemented within a week of inception in December 2014 - as well as various other small side-projects.

Waiz Rahim, founder of projekt.co took to the stage right afterwards and emphasised the importance of crowd-sourcing platforms as a facilitator for booming startups in Bangladesh. He spoke about his idea and how he raised funds through Kickstarter which led to him launching projekt.co.

Ayman Sadiq, founder of The 10 Minute School talked about the best sidekick for a student and working professional: PowerPoint. He engrossed the crowd in few fascinating stories about how he got around, doing some intense design work simply by using PowerPoint. After this session, we could certainly say that there's more to what we know, seriously.

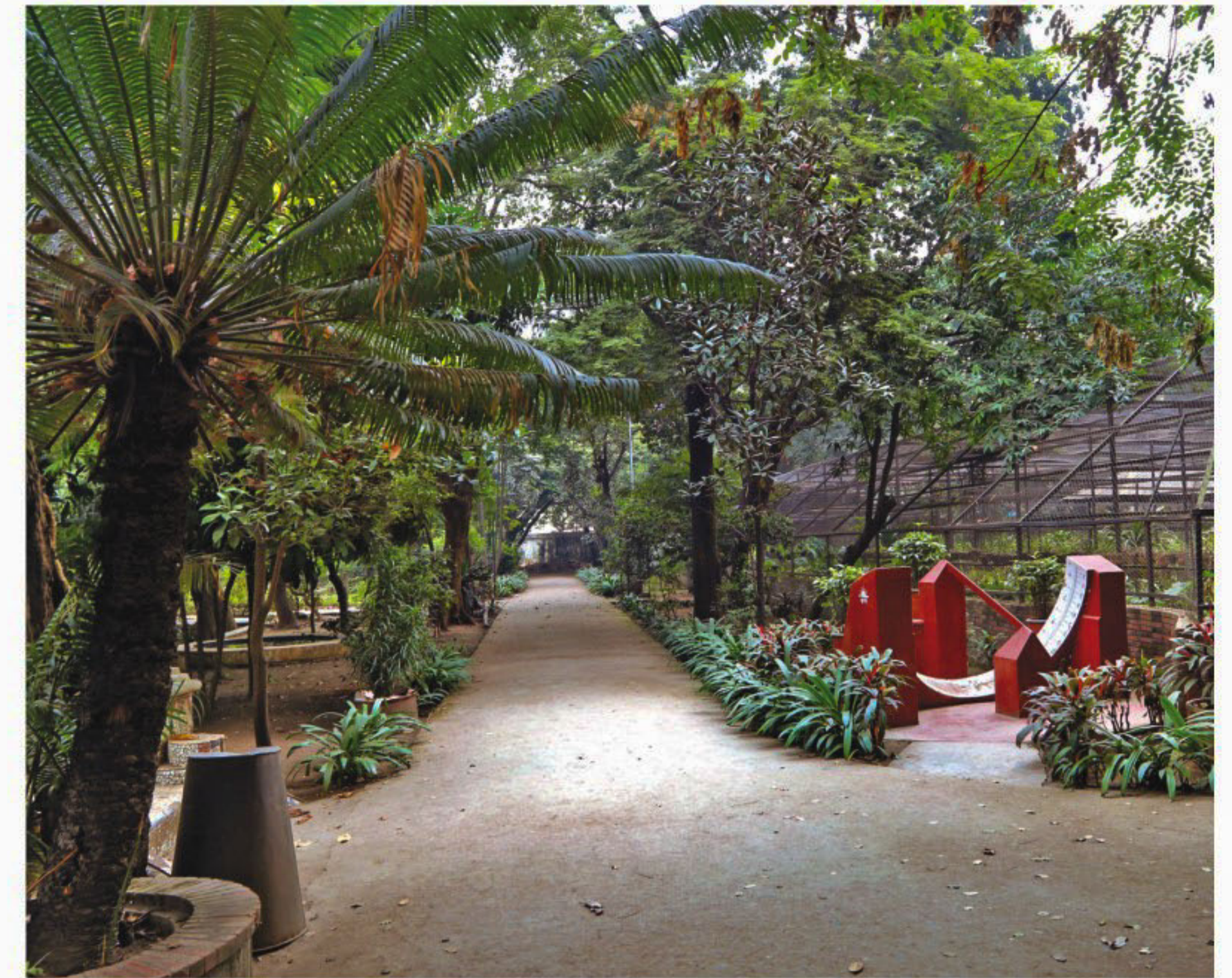
Salman Muqtadir, or more popularly known as Salmon the Brownfish, took to the stage with beat-boxing and stories from his personal life experiences as a YouTube star, emphasising the importance of productive actions. The audience picked his brain on all sorts of things - from AdSense to other famous YouTubers from Asia. The beauty of Mad Koffee was depicted here; we did not focus on a star performing, but on a story in the making and it's inception.

The talks were followed by live music performance by Samir Obaid. He took the crowd by surprise and received an overwhelming response as the crowd sang along with him. Samir is a singer and songwriter; currently working at Radio Foorti at Music Research and Development.

The final performer of the night was Farzana Wahid Shayan, who was welcomed with loud cheers by the crowd. Her performance was welcomed by a mesmerised audience and ended in as loud a cheer as it was welcomed with, thus ending the long, inspirational, exuberating, and mad two-day show.

— MAD KOFFEE CORRESPONDENTS

HERITAGE



DHAKA'S LOST PARADISE

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

While Dhaka was losing its splendour after the fall of Mughal Empire, the local zamindars and nawabs under the British rule tried to revive its past splendour as the city of gardens. Dhaka's Baldha Garden is one of the most magnificent examples of this beautification effort. Still it is one of the richest botanical gardens of this subcontinent that spans 3.15 acres of land and boasts of eighteen thousand plant specimens of eight hundred different species. It has some of the rarest species of plants that can be found nowhere else in Bangladesh or even in this subcontinent.

In 1905, as Dhaka regained its status as the capital of East Bengal after several centuries, various efforts were taken to beautify the new capital. Narendra Narayan Chowdhury, zamindar of Dhaka's Baldha area (now in Gazipur) took the initiative to establish a massive botanical garden in Dhaka's Wari area which, at that time, was the city's richest part. Supervised by the world's best curators from England, the garden was established in 1909.

Besides thousands of terrestrial plants, there are also many beautiful ponds and pools for the preservation of aquatic plants. Baldha Garden is actually composed of two separate gardens: One is called Sibiley which is the name of a nature deity and another is called Psyche which means 'soul'. The Sibiley part of the garden is famous for its beautiful pond called Shankha Nod, rare African tulip, Papyrus, Raj Ashok and many other rare plant species. The famous Joy House and the sundial are also located in this part of the garden.

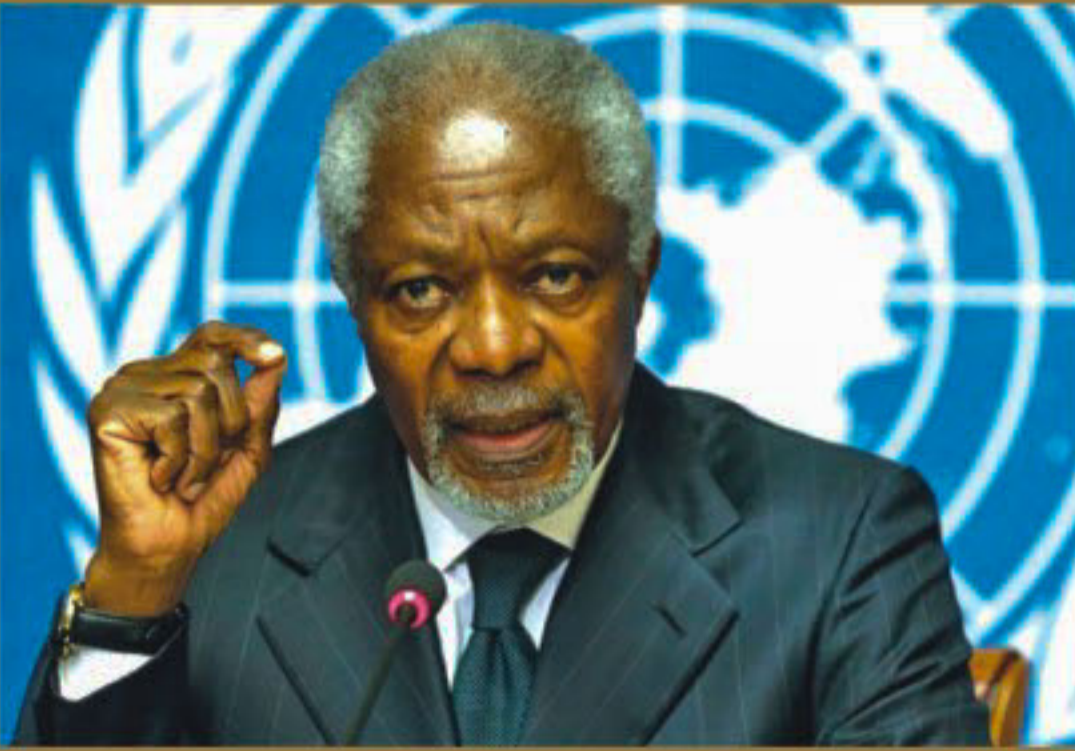


The Psyche part of the garden is famous for its exquisite Shapla House, a pool full of rare water lilies which also includes Amazon Lilly (*Victoria Amazonica*) the world's largest aquatic plant and species of cacti and orchids from all over the world. Once upon a time Baldha Garden was considered as the jewel of Dhaka city. Visitors from home and abroad used to come here to feel the garden's heavenly environment. Famous poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore had

visited this garden and spent sometimes in the bungalow called Joy House. From there Tagore wrote his famous poem titled 'Camellia' upon seeing trees full of beautiful Camellia flowers. However, Baldha Garden is passing days with utter negligence and mismanagement. This heavenly precinct has become a hub of anti social activities. Robbing visitors and drug abuse in the garden have become regular incidents. High rise buildings surrounding the


garden are blocking sunshine resulting in death of many plant species. From 1962, Forest Department has been in charge of the maintenance of the garden and in fact the reality is this rich, exquisite botanical garden receives no maintenance at all. Baldha Garden is not only a magnificent botanical garden but it is also an important part of Dhaka's rich history. It is very unfortunate that our negligence has taken this beautiful garden on the verge of total extinction.

PEARLS OF WISDOM




"THERE IS NO TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN."

KOFI ANNAN
Ghanaian Diplomat and former secretary general of UN



"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE BEAUTY OF THEIR DREAMS."

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
American politician, diplomat, and activist



"I THINK THE KEY IS FOR WOMEN, NOT TO SET ANY LIMITS."

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA
Retired Czech American Tennis Player and Coach