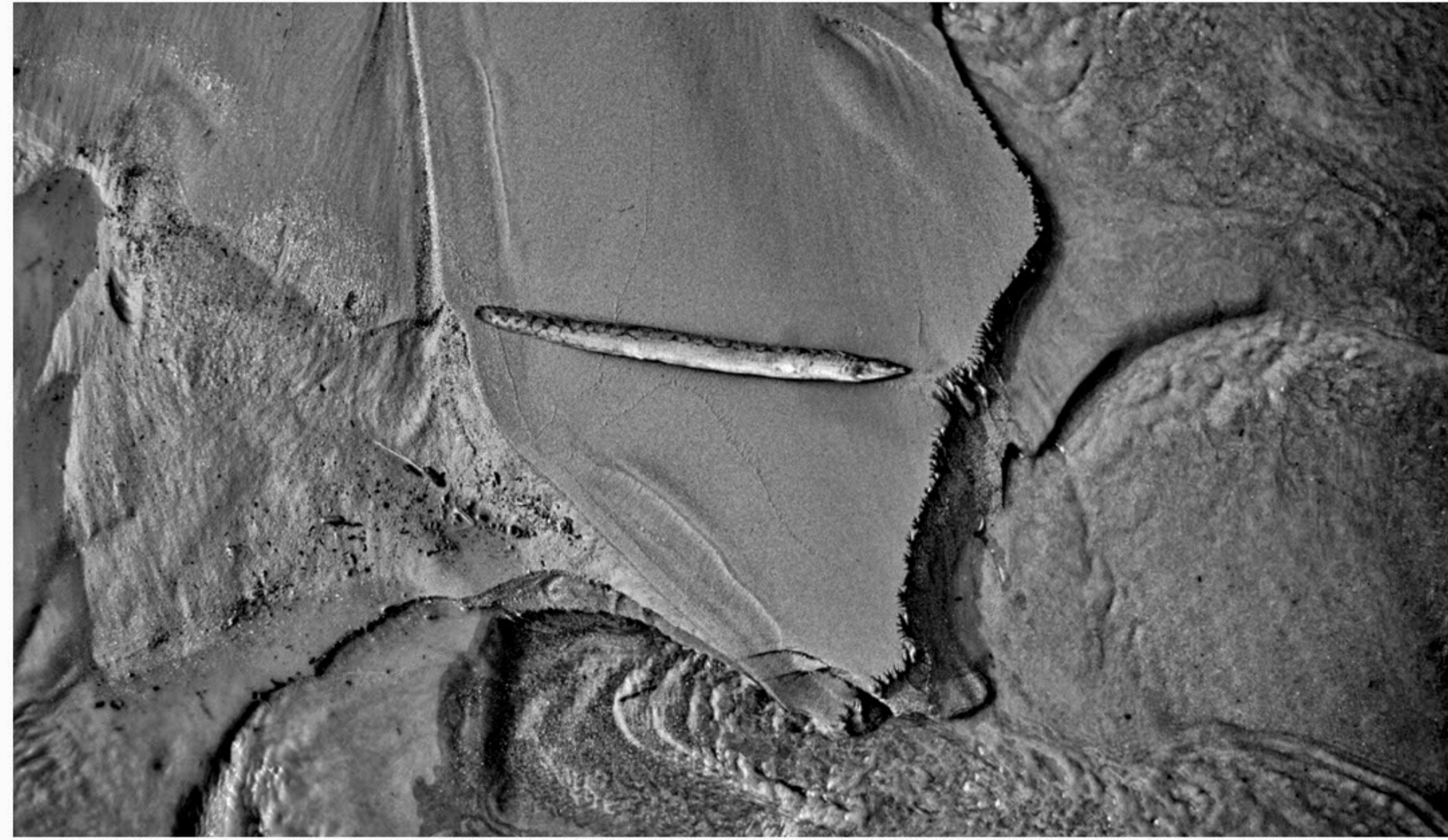


# PASSION FOR PIXELS

NAZIBA BASHER

He started off small. But those who do big things in their lives usually do. That's the great thing about 'star' people- they start off with big dreams and small steps. "I came from a family of a lower socio-economic background. But we always did whatever we were passionate about. My father was a broadcast journalist for as long as I'd known him. I too, was taught to follow my dreams," says Anik Rahman.

And thus began Anik's long-term relationship with his camera. He finally found his true calling. After realising his passion for the art of photography, he quit his job and went on to doing the thing he loved most- taking photos. "I try to document war, politics, turmoil, tragedy. I believe these moments should be recorded as much as possible. These are the proofs we will have of human sufferings throughout the ages."



PHOTOS: ANIK RAHMAN

Anik is a Bangladeshi Photojournalist based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He studied in New Model High School, then Rifles Public College, and eventually earned a Bachelor's Degree in Management Information System from Eastern University. A son of a freedom fighter and broadcast journalist of Bangladesh Betar during 1971, Anik grew up with an interest in war & politics, listening to engrossing stories told by his father, along with the many chilling documentaries they would watch together. But even then, it took Anik, like most of us, a while to find his true calling.

"I thought music was it- my thing. When I was in school and college, I was fascinated with music. I even formed a band, and we would mostly sing on social issues, politics, and taboos. But then when we all had higher education to worry about, we eventually broke up." Still hoping to continue music, Anik went on to join another band- an instrumental one this time. But then, after the untimely death of his father, he had to settle down and get a job. "For the sake of survival, I joined Nokia first, and then People's Radio. But I was still trying to find my true calling."

Anik had a lot of photographer friends. Even the drummer he was in a band with would sometimes take photos using a camera in front of him. A sudden blast of intrigue took over him when he decided he wanted to take a few snaps here and there. He set off with a small camera, and in one single day, Anik ended up taking 2200 photographs. "There was a spark I could not ignore! I felt charged and enthusiastic with that camera in my hands. I knew I wasn't great at taking photos, but it sparked a flame that was definitely not ready to burn out. I decided to keep trying taking photographs, while working at the People's Radio," he says.



Attending the Eddie Adam's workshop, a yearly 4 day October event with 100 hand-picked students along with 100 photojournalism veterans meeting in New York state, and getting the chance to be mentored by photographer Matt Black, Anik's style improved furthermore. "I couldn't have even gotten that far without the help of photographers from my own country who have critiqued me, advised me and given me hope. Some names like GMB Akash, MR Hasan, have really helped me come this far."

At the end of 2013, he started working on the victims of political violence of Bangladesh. He named the photo-story "Puppet Show", which had been published, exhibited and awarded internationally. Besides human rights issues, he has covered environmental conditions

## STAR PEOPLE



Anik Rahman PHOTO: COURTESY

and ferry capsizing in Bangladesh. In 2015, he has worked on the earthquake in Nepal. He also loves covering religious and cultural events. He is currently working on a project called 'The Death of Brahmaputra' which is also an Instagram page. The project highlights the dire situation of the rivers in Bangladesh, holding focus on one of the major rivers of the country- Brahmaputra.

He has worked for many news agencies, magazines, and NGO's including Agence France-Presse, Nur Photo Agency, Zuma Press, Redux Pictures, Vice News, SOS (Nepal & Belgium), Izel, IHS and Asha. His works have been published in Wall Street Journal, The Gurdian, Newsweek, The Sunday Times, Vice News, Wired, National Geographic Magazine, Dodho Magazine, Art Photo Feature, Private Magazine, Documentary Photo Review, The Quiet American, France TV and The Daily Star. His works have been exhibited globally, including Bangladesh, India, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Serbia, Bulgaria, UK and USA.

Anik has also bagged himself more than just a couple of awards and accolades through these 4 years of photography, including 1st Place in Photo Essay, FCCT - Light Rocket Asian Photo Contest in 2015, 2nd Place, Open Border Festival, Netherlands, 3rd Place in General News in 2014, 72nd Pictures of the Year International, USA in 2015, Honourable Mention in Photojournalism - Professional category at 9th International Color Awards, USA in 2016, along with many more.

His turning point, according to him, was the Eddie Adam's workshop. During that time, he allowed himself to learn, to grow, to take criticism and make something beautiful out of it. "And of course, I remember what Matt Black kept telling me, which I would also like to share with everyone who aspires to be a photographer- in a time where there is a war of mega-pixels and everyone is taking photographs, you instead must spend your time and think. You can make photographs out of anything, but you need to first think, think, and think, about how you want to communicate with the world." ■

## MUSINGS

Summer is hot. Even countries with bitingly cold winter can have hot summer. Deserts and arid plains is naturally hot and the heat is like that of a blast furnace. There are agricultural plains where the summer heat can be searing. Summer in Bangladesh is very hot and more than that it is oppressively humid. Norwesters and rainy spell bring relief.

Yet summer is special to the common people of Bangladesh! It comes with a fruit basket bountiful in variety and luscious in its taste. The rich and the poor they all enjoy the taste of fruits that come with summer - *kathal* (jackfruit), *tormuj* (watermelon), *aam* (mango), *lichu* (litchi), *jamrul* (rose apple), *jam* (berry), *gaab* (sharon fruit), *latkan* (longan), *paniphal* (water chestnut) and *bangi*, *footietc*. The basket is full and the love for fruits makes summer a festival that starts from the month of April. Nay! From the end of March. Jackfruit is the passion of the people of Bangladesh and rightly it is the national fruit.

It starts with *bangi*, *gab* and watermelon. Vendors in every corner have piles of watermelons. There was a time when the local variety of watermelon with dark green skin was on the market. It was generally grown in the sandy plains of Patenga and lasted till the early part of the seventies.



SYED MAQSUD JAMIL  
PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

The availability of litchis has a relatively shorter duration of two months in comparison to other summer fruits. They are gone by the onset of monsoon. Generally the best of litchis arrive from Dinajpur.

Jackfruit is Bangladesh's very own fruit. Almost every home must have a taste of *kanthal*. It is grown in the high land of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Comilla, Sylhet and Chittagong. Canned jackfruit pouches are even available in America coming from Thailand. Jackfruit stones are put into curries to make it a delicacy. The left overs are also useful as cattle feed.

The love for mango is all over the region. Mangoes are known by different names. The best mango in Bangladesh comes from Chapainawabganj. The early varieties are mangoes from different parts of Bangladesh not exactly specializing in the fruit. The well-known items are *Himsagar*, *Lengra* and *Fazli*. *Himsagar* and *Lengra* are early arrivals. *Fazli* the largest in size is much awaited and late arrival continues through the month of Ashar and even *Shrabon*. The other varieties are *Gopalbhog*, *Mohonbogh*, *Chausa*, *Farooquibhog*, *Neelambari*, *Sundari*, *Amrapali*, *Mollika*, *Tommy Atkins* etc. Down the ages one of the favourite way of relishing mango is to have it with milk.

Summer in Bangladesh is also special because according to Bengali calendar it starts with *Pohela*



*Baishakh* the Bengali New year. It is the only festival where all communities take part with equal fervour and joy.

One of the finest spectacle of summer is an afternoon mild breeze rustling through the *Krishnachura* tree in full bloom with bountiful bunches of red flowers. The fascinating sight sets the hearts in love to flutter. The other flowers of summer are *Naglingam*, *Kathgolap*, *Lalshonali* and *Jarul* and *beli* (Arabian Jasmine) etc.

The Buddhist community in Bangladesh observes Bouddha Purnima the greatest Buddhist festival on a full moon date of the month of Baisakh. It is known as *Vesākha* derived from Pali. Bouddha Purnima is known as the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha.

Besides the Hindu community has a lesser religious

custom in the month of *Jaistha* called *Jamai Shoshthi*. When the sons-in-laws are given importance and are sumptuously entertained. The Hindu businessmen have an age old custom of opening a new book of accounts known as *Halkhataon* Pohelathe Bengali New Year's day.

Summer in Bangladesh is the season of nor'westers or *Kal Boisakhi*. When the sun is glowering in the sky a clump of cloud starts collecting in the north western or western part of the sky, a *kalboisakhi* is raising its head, it spreads, gradually becoming threateningly dark and on its day it envelops the whole sky before sunset or after dusk and it strikes with wind that makes the earth to cower before it. The children would seize the opportunity to rush out and collect mangoes that fall to the blast of the wind. When the fury subsides the rain lashes. The relief has come! ■

