



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

# CHOBIMELA BEGINS TODAY

WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE:  
A VISITOR'S GUIDE

Chobi Mela, Asia's first and largest photography festival, opens doors to its ninth edition today. The two-week festival is jam-packed with exhibitions and various activities, all connected to this year's theme: "Transition". Finance Minister AMA Muhith will inaugurate the exhibit at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), along with Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, festival director Shahidul Alam and other distinguished guests.

Like every edition, there is a lot to take in at Chobi Mela IX, even just in terms of the exhibits: there are 31 print exhibitions by 27 artists from 16 countries, but thankfully, the majority of them are at one spot – the National Art Gallery of BSA. Three venues in Old Dhaka – Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA), Northbrook Hall and Beauty Boarding will also host exhibitions like its last edition. There will be a curated slideshow presentation at Ahsan Manzil, titled "Bengal Divided" by Sarker Protick and Munem Wasif, at 6pm on February 4.

Exhibitions such as "Kanu's Gandhi" by Kanu Gandhi, Donald Weber's "Interrogations", Bruno Boudjelal's "Algeria, Scrapbooks", Boris Eldagsen's "How to Disappear Completely: THE POEMS", Nasir Ali Maun's "The Poet With The Camera", "United Red Army" by Naeem Mohaiemen and "Open Wound" by Stanley Greene are some of the top exhibits to check out at the BSA space.

"Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs" by Pushpamala N, another major exhibit, will be up at BAFA, along with Gohar Dashti's "Iran, Untitled". The exhibitions at Beauty Boarding are "Dear Chris (2010-2013)" by Katrin Koenning, and Nasir Ali Maun's "The Poet with the Camera". At Northbrook Hall auditorium, visitors can experience Debashish Chakrabarty's "Stardust" and Igor Pisuk's "Deceitful Reverence".

Like the past editions, this festival is also seeing a number of workshops, artist talks, panel discussions and presentations taking place. The workshops include Swiss photographer Anders



Petersen's workshop "Instincts" (Feb 5-8), Boris Elgadsen's "Hijacking Reality" (Feb 8-11), "Do Make Say Think" by Donald Weber (Feb 4-7) and "Exploring Space" by Rishi Singhal (Feb 8-11), all at Pathshala South Asian Media Institute. Among talks and panel discussions, Liz Wells' Talk "Manufactured Landscapes" is at 3pm on February 5 at BSA and "The Archive as

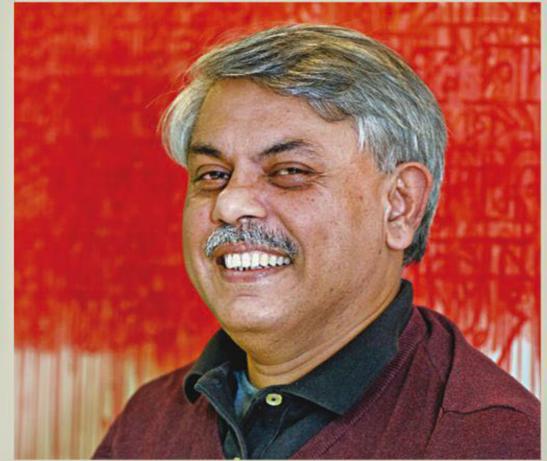
Conversation" by Gwen Lee at 4pm; Panel Discussion "Overlaps and Confluences: South Asian Photography" at 3pm on February 6 at BSA and Pushpamala N's Artist Talk on the same day and venue at 7pm. "Exhibition as political work: interplay, overlap, friction" is a panel discussion at 3pm on February 8, also at BSA, where later in the day, Paola Paleari will present a Talk on "The blended age". Other Artist Talks will also be held every day from Feb 5-8 at 6pm and 7pm at BSA.

A mobile exhibition of selected photographs on rickshaw vans – another signature aspect of Chobi Mela – will also take the festival to various areas of Dhaka, particularly those which does not draw a lot of audience to the galleries.

This year, 10 Bangladeshi artists working in various media have been selected as fellows, to whom Chobi Mela has commissioned to produce site-specific artworks for the festival. Artists from different backgrounds of painting, drawing, animation, sculpture, photography, video, sound and installations will expand the possibilities of the medium and test the language of manifestations. Their works are -- Abir Shome's "Capital – Equal"; "Memories" by Najmun Nahar Keya; "Origin" by Srker Protick; "A Bird of Stone" by Reetu Sattar; "Translucence" by Salma abedin Prithi; "Titas – The River" by Molla Sagar; "To Write A Letter" by Arfun Ahmed; "Obsolete" by Minhaz Marzu; "Loop of Crave" by Golam Moshir Rahman Choudhury and "Ubiquity" by Suvra Kanti Das. All the exhibits/performances will be at the BSA Art Gallery.

# "I still get calls and mail about 'Maa'"

In conversation with author Anisul Hoque



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Anisul Hoque is a poet, litterateur, playwright and journalist. He started his writing career with a poetry book. His bestselling book "Maa" has been translated into four languages. The noted writer has won several awards, including Bangla Academy Sahitya Purashkar. Like every year, February is a busy month for the writer, with a number of new books coming at this year's Ekushey Boi Mela.

In a conversation with The Daily Star, the ever-smiling Hoque talked about his upcoming books and more. Excerpts:

**You write on both serious issues and more popular material too. What's your philosophy as a writer?**  
Anisul Hoque: Based on my experience, it's not necessary that you will become popular if you pen light-hearted books. For example, one of my light-hearted books, named "Bhalobasa Ami Tomar Jonno Kadchhi" was critically acclaimed. But, at the same time, I wrote a serious type of novel "Maa" which also could grab readers' attention. It was the bestselling book. I don't ever write 'light reading' books to gain popularity. It depends on what I want to write.

**What subjects do you most enjoy writing on?**  
Anisul Hoque: I love writing on a wide range of subjects. In my book "General O Narira", I chose an uncommon topic. Then, I wrote a novel on some Bangladeshi who died while trying to get to Spain on a boat. I like to mix up the subject material of my books, so they don't all become the same type.

**What do you think today's readers like to read most?**  
Anisul Hoque: Speaking from experience, the new generation of readers don't relate to complex stories. They are always looking for simplicity.

**Tell us about your novel "Maa"?**  
Anisul Hoque: The book has gone into its 69th edition, which is a record for any novel in the country. It has been translated into four languages -- Bangla, Spanish, Oriya and English. Even today I get calls, mail and Facebook messages with feedback about the novel, which is a great honour for me.

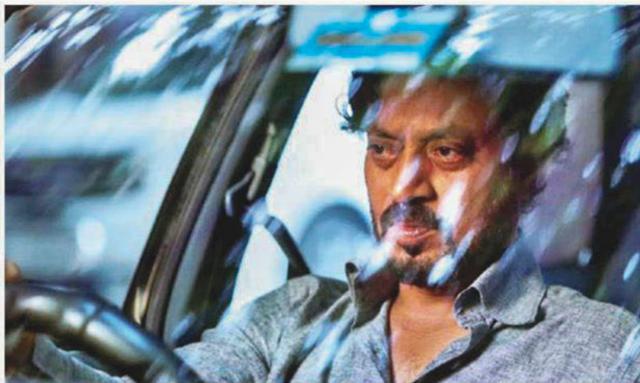
**What's your expectation from this year's book fair?**  
Anisul Hoque: I hope it will have a good vibe this year. Last year's fair was quite buzzing, and I hope this year is only better. Like readers, we authors also eagerly wait for this time of year.

**Any current plans to write anything on a grand scale?**  
Anisul Hoque: Yes. Two of my novels, "Jara Bhor Enechhilo" and "Usha'r Duare" have gained critical and popular acclaim. I want to write the next part, but I am waiting for the publication of Bangabandhu's Diary. I want to source some material from there, and it will be a big one. It will probably take some time, but I will write it for sure.

# Production of "Doob" complete Farooki's film to be submitted to Censor Board this month

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's magnum opus, the Irrfan Khan-starrer "Doob", has just completed production and will be submitted to the Censor Board soon. The filmmaker made the disclosure in a Facebook post on Wednesday.



"Stories and characters come to us like a debilitating fever. That fever leaves us when all the work is done, and then it is transferred to the viewers when they watch it. You can call

it the fever cycle of cinema," Farooki said. He also thanked everyone involved with the film: "What a wonderful family we have", he said about the producers, cast, and crew.

The acclaimed helmer made big waves internationally with the announcement of "Doob", when he announced Irrfan Khan -- one of the most high-profile Indian actors in

world cinema today -- will not just star in his project, but will also co-produce it. Then, the film under a whirlpool of discussion when an Indian newspaper reported that the film is actually based on the life of Humayun Ahmed -- the most popular Bangladeshi novelists of the past century. Humayun Ahmed's widow Meher Afroz Shaon reacted strongly to the news, saying Farooki was wrong for not taking the family's permission to make a film on the worksmith. Farooki, however, has repeatedly denied that the film is any kind of biopic.

"Doob" also stars Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Rokeya Prachi and Kolkata's Parno Mitra in the central roles. Farooki had revealed late last year that the film's work was almost done, and they were looking for a suitable time window to release it internationally.

# Yoko Ono producing JOHN LENNON love story film

Yoko Ono is producing a film that will explore her complex relationship with John Lennon, documenting the couple's love story and anti-war causes. Anthony McCarten (whose credits include "Theory of Everything") will write the as-yet-untitled movie, and Michael De Luca ("The Social Network", "Moneyball", "Captain Phillips") and Immersive Pictures' Josh Bratman will co-produce, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

In a statement, De Luca said the plot will "focus on ripe and relevant themes of love, courage and activism in the US -- with the intention of inspiring today's youth to stand up for and have a clear vision for the world they want."

Lennon and Japanese artist-activist Ono first met in November 1966 as the latter prepared to open an art exhibit, "Unfinished Paintings and Objects", in the basement of London's Indica

Bookshop. At that point, the Beatle was still married to his first wife, Cynthia; they filed for divorce in August 1968, and Lennon married Ono the following March.

During their 11-year marriage, the couple collaborated on multiple creative projects, including Lennon's solo musical swan song, 1980's "Double Fantasy". Throughout their relationship, Lennon felt they had a responsibility "to produce peace", as he told Rolling Stone in 1971.

McCarten also wrote the Winston Churchill biopic "Darkest Hour", which stars Gary Oldman and hits theatres November 24th. He also authored "Bohemian Rhapsody", the long-in-the-works Freddie Mercury biopic starring Rami Malek as the Queen front-man.

Source: Rolling Stone

