

Korean Film and Tourism Festival 2021 held in Dhaka

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea organised a three-day film and tourism festival at Bangladesh National Museum last month, which encompassed the screening of five movies — including the global sensation, *Parasite* — and a number of interactive games and activities.

With K-pop, K-drama, web series, etc., the Korean entertainment industry has taken the whole world by storm, and the huge crowds this festival attracted was a testament to that.

During the opening ceremony, LEE Jang-keun, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, spoke of this popularity in his speech, mentioning not only the Oscar-winning film, *Parasite* but also the monumental success enjoyed by *Squid Game* and *Hellbound*.

In fact, *Parasite* won a number of awards in the Oscars held in 2020 and became the first non-English language film to win in the 'Best Picture' category, hence making history!



All this success did not come overnight. As the Asian cinema expert Dr Zakir Hossain Raju — professor and head of the Department of Media and Communication



in Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) — said in his speech, the South Korean government has made a conscious effort and planned how the country could best be promoted to the world, placing immense importance on films and the overall culture industry at large in order to achieve that.

K M Khalid, the state minister for cultural affairs, attended the opening ceremony as the chief guest.

Alongside the films, the festival also featured dalgona candy, traditional folk games, and virtual reality tours. And the opening ceremony also presented the audience with K-pop performances, by the

group Rebels' Groove.

In an interview with *Star Lifestyle*, the ambassador said that the festival had aimed to give a rather holistic experience to the visitors, not just with a diverse selection of movies but also with the various interactive activities such as the VR tours and folk games. "It is not just about particular places, but the overall experience of culture that tourism should provide, and we tried to bring that to an extent to the visitors with the films and the activities," he said.

And the Korea-experience is indeed very unique. It is a country everyone should have on their bucket list or travel plan.



The ambassador opined, "The very uniqueness of Korea is what that makes it a unique tourist destination. There are many beautiful and historical places in the world, as there are in Korea. But what makes Korea truly different? It is the Korean uniqueness itself, and people have an interest in that — with K-pop, K-drama, the food — and they want to visit Korea and experience it. So, we urge people to come and see for themselves how and why Korea is so remarkably unique!"

By M H Haider
Photo: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea

Celebrating Bangladeshi cuisine at the 17th British Curry Awards in London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson looked elated as he welcomed all to this year's British Curry Awards, known as the Oscars for the global curry industry, held at the Battersea Evolution Center, London. On this star-studded event organised by the British-Bangladeshi entrepreneur Enam Ali MBE in association with Just Eat, Boris Johnson in a video message said, "The global recognition of those talented people of the curry industry is truly mind-blowing. Even more gratifying is the fact that in the last two years, in the midst of the most difficult days of the nation, these people selflessly and persistently provided foods to our NHS and to people from door to doors saving millions of invaluable lives".

Welcoming all corners to the gala event that two decades back actually began in the hands of some notable British-Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, who do control the best part of the British curry industry, and has today become one of the national festivals in Britain, the British Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt thanks and felicitations to all the restaurateurs, chefs and waiters working for the industry.



Nominated by people, best of the restaurateurs from all over Britain flocked to the capital city with a dream for winning the 'Curry Oscar' a jewel in the crown at the most rousing festival of the year. To add to

the splendour of the event, celebrities from sports, entertainment, culture, and politics made their presence.

The organisers of the festival dedicated the entire festival to the memory of the

pioneers, businessmen and workers of the British curry industry who lost their lives during the difficult COVID-19 pandemic in the last one and a half years. Notably, more than 90 per cent of the British curry industry, else known as the Asian and Indian curry industry spread across the UK, was created by the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs. Although Bangladeshi restaurants won most of the awards in the previous year, this year out of 12 categories, they bagged four, while two went to Pakistani and the rest to Indian restaurants.

British Curry Awards 2021 Winners are — Best Restaurant Scotland: Dishoom, North East: Mumtaz Restaurant, North West: Asha's, East Midlands: Montaz Newmarket, West Midlands: Pushkar Restaurant, Wales: Purple Poppadom, South East: Chez Mumtaz, South West: Prithvi Restaurant, London Central and City: Benares, London-Outer & Suburbs: Shampam Bromley, Best Newcomer: Mathura Restaurant, Best Delivery Restaurant/Takeaway: Maliks Express Kitchen and Most Innovative Restaurant Concept: Khai Khai Indian Restaurant.