



(L) Filmmakers Mika Sasaki (Japan), Supriya Suri (India), Iwona Siekierzynska (Poland) and costume designer Izabela Stronias (Poland) at the DIFF. (R) Even though few people visited throughout the day, the crowds increased in the evening.
PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

DIFF 2022: Surprisingly solid, disappointingly under-appreciated

Stepping inside the Public Library, a vivid blend of vibrant cultures was a treat to my eyes, as filmmakers, producers, and film academics from different parts of the world were enjoying each other's company while they talked about the passion that united them, films.

ASHLEY SHOFTORSHI SAMADDAR

English in many different accents: Indian, Polish, European, Egyptian, Iranian, Russian, and many more, started echoing like a drum roll in my ears when I entered the director's lounge at the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF).

Echoing the theme, 'Better Film, Better Audience, and Better Society', the festival this year has opened its doors in various categories, including the Asian Competition section, Retrospective, Tribute, Wide Angle, Bangladesh Panorama, Cinema of the World, Children's Film, Short and Independent Film, Women Filmmakers Section, and Spiritual Films section. Around 225 films from 70 different nations are being screened at DIFF this year.

The submitted films are being screened at multiple venues across Dhaka – Sufia Kamal Auditorium and Main Auditorium at National Museum in Shahbagh, Alliance Francaise de Dhaka in Dhanmondi, National Art Gallery Auditorium and Auditorium of National Music and Dance at Bangladesh



The entrance of DIFF's venue at the Public Library.

Shilpakala Academy (BSA), and at the Public Library Auditorium in Shahbagh.

Stepping inside the Public Library, a vivid blend of vibrant cultures was a treat to my eyes, as filmmakers, producers, and film academics from different parts of the world were enjoying each other's company while they talked about the passion that united them, films.

The festival, which opened on Jan 15 and will run till Jan 23, has also become

an educational hub of young Bangladeshi students, aspiring filmmakers, and prominent directors and producers, indulging in the wide array of themes displayed onto the screens of the Main Auditorium at the Library.

As the sun started to dim and the evening winds blew in, the DIFF screening theatres started to breathe new air as more stumping feet started entering the halls.

Ranging from smaller budget projects to well-financed productions, DIFF paid equal heed to all comers. While some are worth avoiding, many are also substantial enough to deserve walk-ins as they hit the screens.

Through DIFF, I was able to live 70 cultures, some similar and others completely different. I became witness to an amazing cultural harmony that inclines one to be accepting and even enjoying each other's differences.

DIFF 2022, in my opinion, is a wonderfully carnivalesque experience, which few people bought the tickets to. That is a shame, as it has a lot to offer for all visitors.

READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE

I revealed the untold stories of my life in this book: Kumar Bishwajit

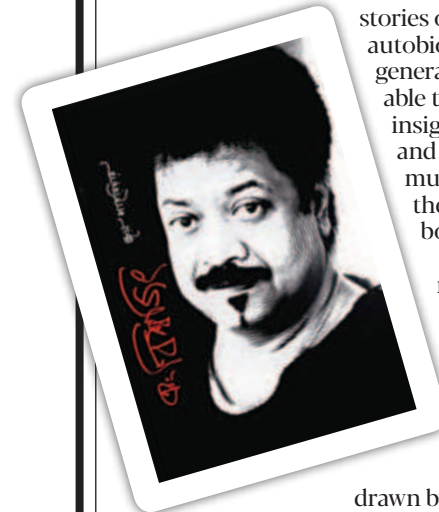
SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Kumar Bishwajit, a man born for music, has inspired many upcoming singers in his long career.

The legendary singer will depict stories of his life through his autobiography "Ebong Bishwajit" in the upcoming Ekushey Book Fair.

"I have revealed the untold stories of my life in the autobiography. New generation artists will be able to get an in-depth insight into my childhood and also learn about my musical journey through the chapters of this book," said the singer.

Kumar Bishwajit narrated the story while musician Joy Shahriar transcribed the book. Published under the banner of Aajob Prokashoni, the cover illustration has been drawn by Sohail Anam.



Britney Spears wishes she 'slapped' her mom and sister after Justin Timberlake split

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Pop sensation Britney Spears has been posting lengthy notes to counter her sister Jamie Lynn's recent quotes about their life as the latter promotes her new memoir.

In an Instagram post, the "Toxic" singer called out her sister and her mother as she recalled their behaviour from the time after she had broken up with Justin Timberlake and wished she had slapped them.

"I'm sorry Jamie Lynn, I wasn't strong enough to do what should have been done. I should have slapped you and Mamma right across your faces," the post read.

Justin and Britney dated from 1999 to 2002. After the breakup, Spears had a hard time moving on.

COUNTRYWIDE



A waterlogged Boro field in Jashore's Monirampur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

WATERLOGGING

Boro cultivation on 4,000 hectares uncertain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Cultivation of Boro on about 4,000 hectares of land in the current season seems uncertain due to permanent waterlogging along the Bhabadaha region in Jashore's Monirampur upazila.

Alongside loss of seedbeds, increased prices of fertilizers, electricity and diesel are the other reasons behind the setback.

Local farmers are currently in utter frustration as Boro has been cultivated in only 55 hectares of land so far this season.

Locals said about 15 beels (waterbodies) around Monirampur upazila remain waterlogged for nearly half of the year. They said most of the houses, educational institutions and other infrastructures in the low land area are still submerged in water.

Farmer Abdur Rahim of Bhabdahapar said Boro cultivation on his five bighas land still uncertain as most of the seedlings and seedbed got damaged due to stagnant water.

Farmers' leader Paritosh Biswas said farmers in the region can grow only one crop a year, but it too looks uncertain due to waterlogging.

Monirampur Upazila Deputy Assistant Plant Protection Officer Pradeep Kumar Biswas said current Boro season has started from December last year and will continue till the first week of February this year.

But, persistent water logging may affect Boro cultivation on 4,000 hectares of land under the upazila this season, he said, adding that they have a target to bring 27,500 hectares under Boro cultivation this season.

Most of iron bridges in a shambles

Movement through the ramshackle bridges on Charkhali-Mathbaria road poses risk of accidents

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Pirojpur has hanged signboards on both two sides of each iron bridge on Charkhali-Mathbaria road in the district saying that it is risky.

But there has no system to monitor it. Though the longevity of an iron bridge is ten years, they have been in use for around 35 years.

Of the 20 iron bridges, four were replaced with RCC girder bridges last year. But the rest are now in a sorry state. As the 38-kilometre-long road is very busy, the repair work does not last long.

Mohammad Ibrahim, a bus driver, said they have to cross the old iron bridges through serious difficulty.

"When we get onto the bridge it begins to swing," Ibrahim said adding that they have to wait at one end of the bridge until another vehicle comes from the other side as two vehicles cannot simultaneously cross an iron bridge.

Another bus driver of the road Mohammad Kalu said that they have to cross the iron bridges amidst fear of collapse as four to five iron bridges on the road collapsed in the past failing to bear heavy loads.

"But while crossing a concrete bridge,

we do not have to face such a problem," he said.

On the other hand, drivers of small vehicles also have to face untold sufferings while crossing the iron bridges.

"As there are big holes on the iron plates of the bridge, sometimes wheels of our vehicles get stuck," said a motorcyclist, Imam Hossain Masud who most often goes to Mathbaria traversing the road.

Locals said that every day huge trucks loaded with wooden logs, stones, bricks and other materials move along the road. As there is nobody to check the load of the vehicles, they (truckers) cross

the iron bridges easily risking their lives and others.

Ali Akber, a sub-assistant engineer of RHD in Pirojpur, has admitted the fact that the iron bridges on Charkhali-Mathbaria road are in shambles.

"We have included 17 bridges and 29 culverts in the development project proposal (DPP) to be constructed from Bhandaria upazila's Charkhali to C & B Bazaar of Mathbaria upazila in the district," he said adding it will cost around TK 350 crore.

"We hope that the project will be passed by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) soon," he added.



The RHD in Pirojpur erects cautionary signboards at both ends of each iron bridge on Charkhali-Mathbaria road asking vehicles not to pass through it carrying more than five tonnes of load as the condition of the bridges is precarious. The photo was taken near Ikri bus stop in Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila.

PHOTO: STAR