



(L) An art performance at the exhibition. (R) (From left) Prof Anu Muhammad, Shahidul Alam, Habibul Haque, Rani Yan Yan and Sanjeeb Drong.



PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

‘Trunk Call’ portrays Habibul Haque’s mindful voyage through nature

“Those who have seen Habibul Haque’s work know that he likes to tell human-centric stories. By creating this project, he unlearned this creative practice,” added the curator of the show, ASM Rezaur Rahman.

MONON MUNTAKA

Drik Gallery has organised a photographic exhibition titled “Trunk Call” by eminent photographer, Habibul Haque to commemorate World Environment Day 2022.

Habibul Haque, who has been working with Drik for around 25 years, has been avidly journeying amidst nature since his youth and researching the interaction between humans and the environment.

The inauguration for the exhibition took place on June 5, 2022, around 6 PM at Drik Gallery, Panthapath. Professor Anu Muhammad, Rani Yan Yan, Sanjeeb Drong, Shahidul Alam, along with ASM Rezaur Rahman, the curator of the exhibition, graced the inaugural ceremony with their opening remarks. The event also included live songs and art performances by artists Amal Akash and Bithi Ghosh.

“Trunk Call” is a very different visual representation of trees, where Haque tried to build a relationship with the trees to understand their silence, pain, and moods. Habibul Haque has been working on this project since 2005.

“I started photography back in 2002. Like other photographers, I started my journey



by taking images of nature. Among all the elements of nature, trees always fascinated me. But I do not want to portray them generically. I always tried to explore trees in such a way where I can interact with them, express their language, spirit, tone, vibe and impression through my photographs,” shared Haque.

“Those who have seen Habibul Haque’s work know that he likes to tell human-centric stories. By creating this project, he unlearned

this creative practice,” added the curator of the show, ASM Rezaur Rahman.

The exhibition’s story is told in two parts. The first section’s images depict the photographer’s in-depth observation of trees. The photographs in the second section depict the suffering of nature and trees, with the tale concluding with a little green leaf that represents hope.

“Trunk Call” will remain open every day till June 14, 2022, between 3 PM and 9 PM.

“It’s a thrilling new challenge”: BTS’s J-Hope on headlining Lollapalooza

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

J-Hope, of BTS fame, will be headlining

Lollapalooza, an annual music festival that takes place in Chicago. J-Hope will be closing out the show on July 31, making it the first time a Korean artist has headlined the main stage of a major US music festival.

The four-day festival will also host a wide range of bands and musicians such as Metallica, Green Day, Dua Lipa, Glass Animals, J. Cole and so on. The festival will take place at Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois.

An excited J-Hope shared the announcement on his Instagram profile saying, “This is going to be my first performance at @lollapalooza. It’s a thrilling new challenge that I think will become a really memorable chapter in my musical history! I’m gonna give you guys a great show. Get ready to



Prachyanat to stage ‘Khawabnama’ in BSA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Popular theatre troupe, Prachyanat is ready to stage their popular play “Khawabnama” at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on Saturday.

Directed by Kazi Toufiqueul Islam Emon, the screenplay has been written by Md Shawkat Hossain Sajib. The production features Sanjida Preeti, Sakawat Hossain Rezvi, Saim Bin Mujib, and M S Rana, among others.

The play is based on Akhteruzzaman Elias’s novel of the same name. It revolves around the socio-political scene in Bengal before the partition of 1947.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Nothing to make up for learning loss

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has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for underprivileged learners, mainly for a lack of devices and poor access to the internet.

Economists and educationists expressed dissatisfaction over the proposed budget providing no way out for addressing the important issue of learning loss.

They quoted a study of October 2021 saying that nearly eight million students across the country were at risk of learning loss due to the prolonged school closure caused by the pandemic.

But the government still appears to be in the dark about the situation on the ground, said the joint study by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

State-run Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) is assessing the Covid-induced academic loss for secondary-level students and it is at the final stage, said BEDU Chief Robiul Kabir Chowdhury.

Published on October 19, the study said 3.96

million primary and 3.9 million secondary students – a total of 7.86 million students – were at risk of learning loss.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the PPRC, told The Daily Star that it seemed the government’s main focus was the reopening of schools.

“Unfortunately learning loss challenge has not been well understood by the government and therefore we don’t see the proper reflection in the budget,” he said.

“We were hoping for a big initiative,” he said, adding that there should be a mega national dialogue exclusively on learning loss recovery.

“I think you cannot give the load of learning loss to schools, they are already loaded with resuming classes. We need a community level solution,” he added.

Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed of Brac University said the long school closure created an extraordinarily difficult challenge of learning loss.

For instance, children who were in class five at the beginning of the pandemic

in March 2020 are in class seven now, skipping two school years and largely unprepared for their new lessons.

He suggested taking up a remedial plan for them to catch up alongside technical and financial support to teachers and schools to implement the remedial plan and others.

“The authorities may not have proposed specific budget lines for these activities,” he said.

Prof Mohammad Tariq Ahsan of the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka said normally the education budget of Bangladesh was lower than many other South Asian countries.

He said the country’s education system does not have the resistance capacity to face the hit generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. A new arrangement of the education system is needed following the hit already suffered, he said.

There is no alternative to increasing investment in education for enhancing the quality of teachers and education and increasing facilities at schools, he said.

“Increasing the capacity of teachers is a very

important matter, so that they can improve their classroom delivery for implementation of the new curriculum,” he added.

The new curriculum, which is set to be implemented in phases from January 2023, will be fully implemented by 2025.

Campaign for Popular Education Deputy Director KM Enamul Hoque said a huge investment was needed for building the capacity of teachers.

They will need to take innovative approaches and spread motivation for the recovery from the huge learning loss stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

He said the government should increase coverage of social safety net programmes such as stipends and their amount as out of pocket education expenditure has been increasing due to a hike in the price of education materials.

He proposed for the introduction of special stipends for female students who were victims of child marriage during the pandemic so that they can continue their education.

Suspect

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College student Prity, 22, who happened to be in a rickshaw next to the vehicle, also got shot. The two were declared dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Musa entered Oman from the UAE on May 8, said a top official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Services

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of applying for a loan exceeding Tk 5 lakh from a bank or financial institution, becoming a director or a sponsor shareholder of a company, and obtaining or continuing an import or export registration certificate.

It will also be needed to secure or renew a trade licence in city corporations or municipalities and get the registration of a co-operative society.

The move comes as only 24 lakh out of 75 lakh TIN-holders in the country submit tax returns.

According to the Finance Bill 2022, the taxpayers will have to show the proof in order to obtain or maintain a credit card, the membership of the professional body as a doctor, dentist, lawyer, chartered accountant, cost and management accountant, engineer, and architect.

In order to open postal savings accounts exceeding Tk 5 lakh, maintain bank accounts with a credit balance exceeding Tk 10 lakh, and purchase savings instruments of Tk 5 lakh, the individual will have to show the proof.

It will be applicable for an employee who draws a basic monthly salary of Tk 16,000.

Similarly, obtaining or continuing commercial, industrial and residential connection of gas and getting the admission of a child or a dependent in an English medium school will require providing the proof of the tax return submission.

Job creation

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cent respectively.

The government usually sets lofty goals for job creation in its annual national plan but the proposals almost never translate into real allocations or projects, said Professor Sayema Haque Bidisha, research director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling.

She suggested the government boost employment by providing incentives and rebates to large, labour-intensive industries.

“But there should be a tracking system to see whether the steps taken actually contribute towards job creation,” she added.

Bidisha, also a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, went on to say that the government could announce some specific projects and allocations with a view to creating market access for rural women entrepreneurs.

She also proposed forming a fund for lending to startups.

“Some projects and allocations should have been made available to reduce the skill mismatch of educated unemployed youths by equipping them with the skills industries need,” Bidisha said.

Rizwanul Islam, a

former special adviser for the employment sector of the International Labour Organization in Geneva, said that while the country’s economic growth accelerated in pre-pandemic years, employment growth slowed down and resulted in inadequate job creation.

On the supply side, there is sometimes a mismatch between educational qualifications and the requirements of the labour market.

“A comprehensive employment strategy is needed with a particular focus on youth employment,” Islam said.

According to Labour Force Survey 2016-17 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the national unemployment rate is 4.2 per cent while the youth unemployment rate stands at 10.6 per cent.

The unemployment rate seems to be high among youths with higher educational qualifications. For instance, the unemployment rate is 13.4 per cent among youths having a tertiary level of education while it is 28 per cent among youths with secondary level education.

“Macroeconomic and sector-level policies need to be geared towards the growth of more labour-intensive industries in addition to the garment

industry,” Islam said.

“The government can provide support to potential migrants and returning migrant workers in their efforts to find jobs or be self-employed,” he added.

For boosting startups, the government proposed exempting the businesses from the bindings of all other types of financial reporting aside from income tax returns.

It also recommended fixing the turnover tax rate at 0.1 per cent in place of the current 0.6 per cent.

As per the proposed national budget, the government has taken up a plan to raise employment in the information and communication technology sector up to 30 lakh by 2025.

For the purpose of job creation and establishing a central database for employment generation with education and training, steps are being taken to create a “Directorate of Employment”.

In last year’s budget proposal, the government planned to set up an “employment bank” and internship programmes in the private and public sectors for new graduates.

However, no updates in this regard were seen in the proposed budget for 2022-23.

Edible oil price shock continues

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It came a week after the Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers’ Association, a platform of refiners and marketing companies, sent a letter to the commerce ministry and the tariff commission, saying the prices need to be adjusted in 15 days.

Yesterday’s upward price revision was the third this year. On May 5, the price of bottled soybean oil had increased by Tk 38 to Tk 198, the sharpest increase in the country.

Refiners blamed the stronger dollar for the price hike of soybean oil.

The taka has fallen

against the American greenback in recent months amid dollar shortages, making imports expensive.

The global commodity market volatility, which was caused by the supply disruptions, pent-up demand, and the Russia-Ukraine war, has hit Bangladesh hard as the country depends on the international markets to meet at least 80 per cent of its edible oil demand.

Biswajit Saha, director for corporate and regulatory affairs of City Group, admits that the price of soybean oil is low in the international market at the moment.

“But when the edible oil was imported, the price was high.”

The spike, which surprised many, will pile more pressure on the consumers struggling to make ends meet owing to higher costs of basic essentials.

“A week ago, the commerce minister said the price would come down. Now, we see the opposite,” said SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

Noor Mohammad, a private job-holder who lives in the capital’s Adabar, said the price of every essential has gone up.

“I can’t tell you exactly

what a hard reality I am facing now.”

Abul Hashem, general secretary of the Bangladesh Edible oil Wholesalers Association, said they didn’t know about the latest price increase.

At present, edible oil is being sold at Tk 2-3 lower than the government’s fixed price.

Soybean oil is being sold at Tk 176 per litre in the wholesale market in Dhaka and palm oil at Tk 155.

According to the National Board of Revenue, six large refiners imported more than 15.11 lakh tonnes of palm oil and soybean oil worth Tk 18,182 crore in the five months to May.