



PHOTOS: COURTESY

EXPANDED Transcending physical boundaries through photographs

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MALIHA HUQ

On the occasion of World Photography Day, August 19, Pathshala South Asian Media Institute held the inauguration ceremony for the exhibition “Expanded” at DrikPath Bhubon.

The week-long exhibition has been curated by Samsul Alam Helal and Sarker Protick, and it showcases the work of eight emerging photographers from South Asia. The work featured in the exhibition was produced by the artists during a year-long mentorship programme in collaboration with VII Academy and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr Shahidul Alam, the Chairperson of Pathshala; Kha Ma Harun Al Rashid, the Head of Department of Film and Television at Pathshala; the exhibition’s curators and the eight photographers from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Sarker Protick, one half of the curators, expressed, “We started this nine-month long mentorship programme in 2021, just before the second wave of COVID-19. It was an online programme and we trained our students over Zoom. While we were limited by time, the works of our artists display expansion, transcending limits. Thus, ‘Expanded’ became the name of this project.”

The artists Hadi Uddin and Mehbuba Mahzabeen Hasan are from Bangladesh, Mayank Makhija, Riti Sengupta and Vamika

Jain from India, Nad-E-Ali from Pakistan, Tavish Gunasena from Sri Lanka, and Uma Bista from Nepal.

“We have an equal level of male and female representation in the exhibition,” said Protick, adding, “Our theme covers personal stories, community and family-based stories, and the contemporary environmental issues facing India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh,” he added.

The participants worked with their mentors to diversify their craft, by extending personal boundaries, exploring intimate spaces and creating new approaches to their work. In a short interview, Mehbuba Mahzabeen Hasan said, “Staying at home was hard during the pandemic. At that time, as it happens, my mom

wanted me to become more ‘pretty’. She was doing the Keto diet and forced me to participate with her. For months, I could not eat properly, and it haunted me. So, I decided to showcase all of this trauma into my work. That was the inspiration behind this initiative for me.” Mehbuba is an alumnus of the Pathshala South Asian Media Institute. The title of her work is, “The F Word”.

The exhibition is open to the public from 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm every day, until August 27. Apart from the exhibition, Pathshala is also hosting their ‘Pathshala Photo Week’, which features artist talks, gallery walks, education seminars, exchanges and meet-ups to commemorate World Photography Day.



Fakhrul Arefeen Khan’s ‘JK 1971’ wins Best Historic Film award at MIFF

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

National Film Award-winning filmmaker, Fakhrul Arefeen Khan’s upcoming silver screen venture, “JK 1971”, has won the Best Historic Film award at the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF).

“JK 1971” is the first English language film in the country, which is based on the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The film follows a historic incident that occurred in France during Bangladesh’s Liberation War.

The film casts US actor Francisco Raymond and Russian artistes Derya Guvrosenko and Nikolai Novominski, alongside Subhra Sourav Das and Sabyasachi Chakrabarty in pivotal roles.



BLACKPINK drops first single in two years



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

On Friday, BLACKPINK dropped a new song titled “Pink Venom”, along with its music video on YouTube. They dropped the single ahead of their full-length album “Born Pink”, which is set for release in September. “Pink Venom” is their first single in almost two years, and was released ahead of their nine-month world tour. The music video for the song has already crossed 100 million views on YouTube as of August 20.

The new album, “Born Pink”, is set to be released on September 16. The album has already presold over 1.5 million copies in just a week.

NEWS

Reveal the proposed

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“When the president [of the Parishad] requested to see the draft, the Press Council refused to provide him with a copy,” said the statement.

“The Parishad believes that as stakeholders it has a right to get details about the draft amendment,” it added.

Also present at the meeting were the Parishad’s Vice-President Shyamol Dutta, editor of daily Bhorer Kagoj, and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor of daily Bonik Barta, as well as the Press Council’s board member Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Secretary Md Shah Alam.

“At the meeting, the Parishad expressed concern about the proposed changes,” said the statement.

Pilots fall asleep

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maneuvering for another approach. The concerned crew have been removed from operation pending further investigation.

Aviation analyst Alex Macheras has since taken to Twitter to express his shock at the “deeply concerning incident,” which he suggests may have been the result of pilot exhaustion.

“Pilot fatigue is nothing new, and continues to pose one of the most significant threats to air safety – internationally,” he tweeted on Thursday.

DIG caught

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range police.

Contacted, DIG Anwar said, “People were suffering there for traffic jam. It was a time when school and office goers were on the road.

“No policeman, neither the OC nor someone else, was there to ease the traffic jam. Some local transport workers made way for my car, but who would do that for other vehicles?” he asked.

“It is an important highway. As the situation came to my notice, the OC was ordered to be relieved of his duties immediately.”

A departmental enquiry will be conducted against him. Higher authorities, such as SPs and additional SPs, cannot escape responsibilities either, the DIG said.

Partisan govt obstacle

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impartially, during the election period, only then it can successfully fulfill its mandate to hold a fair election, he added.

Shujan said that amendment proposal that the EC sent to the Law Ministry “is incomplete as the recommendations raised by political parties during their talks with the commission were not “taken into consideration”.

Badiul said they were confused about several proposals of the EC regarding empowering it with power to cancel election before publishing of gazette notification, cancel the

Strike ends with Tk 25 hike

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and will hear from tea workers,” he added.

The DC shared the information with journalists after the meeting yesterday afternoon.

Bangladesh Tea Workers’ Union’s acting general secretary Nipen Paul, who was present at the meeting, said, “We have accepted the wage hike rate for the time being. We have said that we want to talk to the Prime Minister. We want to let her know about our sufferings, problems and demands. They [government officials] have said that a zoom meeting will be arranged shortly.

“We call upon all the tea workers across the country to join work tomorrow (Sunday).”

However, rejecting the call several hundred workers staged a demonstration at different points of Moulvibazar, Sylhet and Habiganj and cited that they would continue the movement until their demand of a daily wage of Tk 300 is fulfilled.

Till wiring the report last evening around 7:30pm, workers were demonstrating at Lakkatora tea estate in Sylhet, Bhurbaria tea estate

election results and empower the presiding officer to immediately stop the voting in a particular center.

The EC has inherent power to do these works in line with an appellate division verdict, said Badiul.

Local governance expert Prof Tofail Ahmed, proposed to bring the changes in the RPO to introduce postal ballot for expatriate Bangladeshis.

Lawyer Shahdeen Malik said that the amendment should have been prepared and published on the basis of the views of the political parties and the EC should publish a report on the proposals of the political parties.

in Moulvibazar’s Sreemangal upazila, and Begum Khan-Champur tea estate in Habiganj’s Chunarughat upazila.

“Only Tk 25 hike is not sufficient in such a situation when the price of daily essentials is soaring continuously. We respect the prime minister’s directives. But we want more hike in our wage,” said Mina Robidas, a tea worker in Bhurbaria area.

“We will not join work until our demand of rising daily wage to Tk 300 is fulfilled,” said Mangri Ghatawal, a female tea worker of Moulvibazar’s Rajnagar upazila.

Earlier, yesterday noon, workers blockaded Sylhet Airport Road for two hours from 12:00pm to press home.

Workers of 166 tea estates across the country, including those in Chattogram and Sylhet, enforced have been enforcing work abstention since August 13 demanding their wage hike.

Earlier, they enforced a two-hour work abstention from 9:00am to 11:00am daily for four consecutive days from August 9 to 12.

According to government statistics, around 1.40 lakh people work in 166 tea gardens across the country.

Trawlers go down in Bay

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who were caught in cyclonic weather in the Bay of Bengal.

The ICG ship Anmol spotted the Bangladeshi fishermen near the Bhangaduni Island in the morning.

After rescuing them, the fishermen were given first aid and provided food and water, the Coast Guard tweeted.

The rescued fishermen told ICG that they had left Mongla on August 16 and were caught in cyclonic

weather. Their boat with 12 fishermen on it capsized on August 19 due to gusty winds prevailing in the area.

The search for the remaining two missing Bangladeshi fishermen was underway by ICG.

The rescued fishermen were being sent to Haldia for further formalities to send them back to Bangladesh.

Our correspondents in Cox’s Bazar and Patuakhali contributed to this report.

Living itself is now an ordeal

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“I know my days are numbered as doctors have told me I am unable to fight off diseases due to the hundreds of splinters still inside my body.”

The former MP still has around 1,500 splinters, including in the head and lungs, causing her unbearable pain regularly.

She said she was able to walk properly after five years of treatment.

“All we want now is to see justice and capital punishment to the attackers.”

Rashida Akhtar Ruma, assistant secretary of Dhaka City Awami Mohila League, was only 24 when the attack took place.

With over 1,000 splinters still stuck inside her body, she said, “I’m 42 now and my health complications are increasing every day.”

“All I want is the punishment to the attackers and the mastermind before I take my last breath.”

Bazlur Rahman, president of Dhaka North city AL, who is carrying 58 splinters in his body, said he has accepted the unavoidable truth – that he will die from the pain caused by the grenade attack.

“I have accepted that I will never return to a normal life... But all I want is justice. If the culprits are punished, we will get some relief.”

According to Kazi Shahanara Yeasmin, vice president of Swachhchasebok League, 17 survivors have already died without seeing justice.

With 134 splinters still in her body, she underwent 12 surgeries so far. Due to her deteriorating health, doctors have said her body cannot bear more.

“I don’t know how many days I have left. My only wish is to see the execution of the verdict,” Shahanara, also a deputy attorney general, said.

According to the verdict, delivered by a special court in Dhaka on October 10, 2018, BNP’s acting chairman Tarique Rahman and 18 others were sentenced to life in prison.

Meanwhile, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and 18 others were given the death penalty on charges of murder through criminal conspiracy.

All 38 accused were also sentenced to life in prison for causing grievous injuries.

WB to give \$6.05b

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In IDA19, Bangladesh got 5.5 percent of the pot of \$82 billion.

The reason Bangladesh is getting a bigger share of the pie this time is because of the country’s improved project selection sense and capacity to utilise funds, said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank’s Dhaka office.

In the last year of the three-year IDA cycle, unused allocations are redistributed to other countries.

“Previously, African countries would be looking at Bangladesh’s way for unutilised allocations. After 2015-16, the situation reversed. Bangladesh now hopes that the African nations and the Middle East countries would have unutilised allocations.”

Bangladesh’s demand for loans has increased in line with its aspirations of becoming a middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2041, which would necessitate vast swathes of public investment.

Subsequently, the country’s production line of bankable projects, particularly in the environment, social sector, health, education and energy sectors, has expanded, Hussain said.

Of the \$6.05 billion that Bangladesh would be getting over the three-year cycle, \$2.45 billion would be coming from the \$54 billion pot for Performance-Based Allocations (PBA), which are based on countries’ performance and needs.

In IDA19, Bangladesh got \$3.4 billion from PBA, which is on concessional terms.

The interest rate for loans in this category for Bangladesh, a lower middle-income country since 2015, is 2 percent and the repayment period is 30 years with a grace period of five years.

When Bangladesh was a low-income country, the interest rate for PBA loans was 0.75 percent and the repayment period was 40 years with a grace period of eight years.

Other than the PBA, countries can access additional resources through the five IDA windows, with one of them coming at IBRD terms.

And it is for the non-concessional window that Bangladesh’s allocation has increased by more than three times, raising the exigency for the country to improve its project implantation capacity markedly.

Bangladesh would be receiving \$2.6 billion from the \$14.1 billion Scale-up Window (SUW), which

aims to increase financing in eligible IDA countries for high-quality, transformational, country and/or regional operations with strong development impact and help meet heightened external financing needs in the aftermath of COVID-19.

In IDA20, the SUW will have two different portions: the regular SUW at IBRD terms and concessional shorter-term maturity loans (SUW-SML).

Bangladesh would be getting \$2 billion under the regular SUW, up from \$620 million in the previous cycle.

The interest rate for loans under the regular SUW is based on LIBOR but capped at 2.5 percent. The repayment period is 25-30 years with a grace period of five to six years.

Another \$600 million will come from SUW-SML, which will allow countries to scale up investments needed in the short- and medium-term as part of COVID-19 response.

There is no service charge or interest rate for this loan and the repayment period is 12 years with a six-year grace period.

Bangladesh will get \$1 billion from the \$7.9 billion Regional Window (RW), which supports IDA countries in collaborating to find solutions to shared regional challenges, address issues of small and fragmented markets, and promote global or regional public goods.

In IDA20, the RW provides more flexibility, as only two countries (instead of three in IDA19), of which at least one should be an IDA-eligible country, will be required to qualify as a regional operation.

Bangladesh got \$495 million from RW in IDA19, the interest rate for which is concessional.

Hussain advised the government to use up the concessional funds before touching the SUW, which is on commercial rates.

The budget support that the government is seeking from the WB could be from the SUW SML as it is on concessional terms and has a shorter repayment period, he said.

With the IDA20, the WB will have provided Bangladesh with about \$43.05 billion.

As of fiscal 2021-22, the multilateral lender has provided about \$37 billion, 59.5 percent of which came after 2012, when the Bangladesh government got into a tussle with the WB over the financing of the Padma Bridge.