

# 'KROMOSHO'

## Munem Wasif tells Dhaka's story

**Munem Wasif's photographs indicate the presence of an alternate, non-temporal belief system. Seeing the range of Wasif's work, most of which revolves around Dhaka, as individual projects in isolation would be a somewhat regressive approach to interpreting it. Instead, one should consider all of these projects as a combined body of work, like different parts of one single conversation.**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

On November 10, Project 88 inaugurated Munem Wasif's second solo exhibition at their gallery in Mumbai, India. The exhibition is titled *Kromosho*—'step by step' in Bengali—and features Wasif's body of work, which the artist has developed over almost two decades.

Munem Wasif's image-based works often mix photographs with moving images, archive documents or collected paraphernalia to reveal notions of impermanence and insecurity. A major theme throughout his work, is the philosophy of leaving things open to interpretation.

The artist's work has been shown in exhibitions across Tokyo, France, England, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Bangladesh, and many more countries.

Wasif's work is closely tied with Dhaka and people that inhabit it. The photographs being showcased at Project 88 tries to rediscover a variety of angles and ideas through which Wasif tries to highlight the city's idiosyncrasies.

*Kromosho* captures the fundamental transformation of both the medium and the subject, all the while we can see the shift in the photographer's view of the city—as it morphs into an increasingly complex and layered subject of its own.

*Belonging 2001-2013*, a black and white series, portrays Dhaka as the sole protagonist, where the public and the private overlap continuously. While fragmented at first, showcasing encounters that seem accidental, the images slowly morph into a coherent idea.

Another collection, *Stereo*, highlights how Wasif shifts his lens to accommodate the architecture of inanimate objects that exist within the cityscape. Teetering on the edge of



PHOTOS: COURTESY



abstraction, these coloured sets of diptychs and triptychs observe various forms of uniformisation.

According to Wasif, *Kheyal* (2015-18) is a project that exists between reality and fiction. The different lives precluded to in his earlier photos of *Puran Dhaka* shifts into the psychological space of the four characters that make up the realm of this film.

Munem Wasif's photographs indicate the presence of an alternate, non-temporal belief system. Seeing the range of Wasif's work, most of which revolves around Dhaka,

as individual projects in isolation would be a somewhat regressive approach to interpreting it. Instead, one should consider all of these projects as a combined body of work, like different parts of one single conversation.

At its core, the entire exhibition is an intimate conversation, that has been ongoing between the artist and Dhaka for almost two decades, growing stronger in bond with each passing year.

*Kromosho* will run at Project 88 till December 31, 2022.



## Jeet set to star in Sanjoy Samaddar directorial 'Manush'

Tollywood superstar Jeet is all set to star in the upcoming film, *Manush*, directed by Bangladeshi filmmaker Sanjoy Samaddar. The film will be produced by Jeet's production house, Jeetz Filmworks.

The announcement for the film came through Jeet's official Facebook page yesterday, along with the official title poster and tagline for the movie—which reads, "Child of Destiny".

This will mark Sanjoy's debut on the big screen. The filmmaker is currently in Kolkata, preparing for the shooting, which is expected to begin next year.

## 'Rickshaw Girl' coming to OTT soon

Amitabh Reza Chowdhury's critically acclaimed film *Rickshaw Girl* will be available on streaming platforms from December 8.

The film will be available on Apple TV, Amazon, Hoopla, Kanopy, and Vudu. Earlier on, the movie was screened in almost every major city in the US including: New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Texas, Massachusetts.



# NEWS

## CAAB issues new policy

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may take time," Mafidur added.

Sources at the CAAB said many MPs had raised their voices against the new rules.

Despite that, the CAAB authorities have informed all MPs that they will only get the privilege as lawmakers in the airport as per the rules.

"We will not provide anything more than what is stipulated. We have asked them not to expect anything else," Mafidur said.

In case of government officials, only secretaries will get entry passes from now.

About the scrapping of 10,000 passes, the CAAB chief said, "Earlier, we had given entry passes to managing directors and CEOs of different companies, apart from ministers and government high officials."

"In many cases, we have noticed that passes were misused. That's why we have formulated the new policy on the usage and issuance of entry passes to stop various kinds of

irregularities."

He also said different instances of smuggling, including that of gold, had earlier taken place in the airport with the use of passes.

"We have had to take various measures, including stopping the misuse of entry passes, to prevent smuggling."

Mafidur further said that instead of permanent passes, MDs and CEOs of different business organisations will now get temporary ones.

About the many office rooms and drawing rooms of different organisations at the airport, he said, "This is intolerable. You will not see such practices in any airport in the world. Offices were set up at will."

"We will close down all these. Only relevant departments and their work stations will remain."

For the media, the CAAB chairman said, "We will establish a one-stop service centre from where journalists will be able to get their required information about the airport operations."

## A grave crisis

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have reached epidemic proportions," said Dr Kamal, also Gonoforum president, according to a press release of the party.

He made the remarks at Gonoforum's membership collection and renewal programme.

"A grave financial crisis will be created in the country if it [the government] fails to take strict legal action against the identified corrupt people and money launderers."

He also said all the political parties and people should unite and forge a national consensus to establish democracy and rule of law, and build a prosperous and progressive Bangladesh.

Gono Forum presidium members Mofizul Islam Khan, SM Altaf Hossain, Moshak Ahmed, Joint General Secretary Shafiur Rahman Khan, Treasurer Shah Nuruzzaman, and Law Affairs Secretary Shariful Islam also spoke at the programme among others.

## 25 years on, full implementation

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The PCJSS maintains that of the 72 clauses of the accord, only 25 have been fully implemented and 18 others were partially implemented.

The clauses that could have brought major changes in the lives of people have not been implemented at all, said leaders of the party, adding that there was a growing frustration among the people of the hill tracts for this reason.

Ushatan Talukder said the people's frustration was partly responsible for creation of organisations like the Kuki Chin National Front (KNF) which was formed to oppose the peace accord but ended up committing anti-state activities.

Over 500 temporary army camps in the hill tracts were supposed to be

withdrawn as per the peace accord, he said. But the process stopped after withdrawing around 130 camps.

Now Armed Police Battalions (APBn) are likely to be deployed to those camps that were supposed to be used for rehabilitation of the displaced indigenous people, he said.

Contacted, CHT Affairs Minister Bir Bahadur Ushwe Singh said the process of implementation of the accord has been slow for different reasons because the implementation requires involvement of different ministries.

About the "non-functional" land commission, he said, "We will sit with the land ministry regarding this." He added that the APBn would be stationed in 30 former army camps

to ensure the safety and security of the people.

Pallab Chakma, executive director of rights organisation Kapaeeng Foundation, said the land commissions formed as per the accord received around 27,000 complaints over the years, but could solve none.

The displaced indigenous people who became refugees have not been rehabilitated, he added.

"A power sharing mechanism between the hills people and government was expected from this accord. But the common people could not elect their representatives," Pallab said.

He added that it was the government's responsibility to properly implement the peace accord.

## SC stays verdict barring cases

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sentenced him to six months in prison and fined him Tk 2.95 lakh.

In 2018, Ali filed an appeal with the HC challenging the trial court's judgement. The HC allowed his appeal and scrapped the trial court verdict on him in the case.

In the full text of the verdict released yesterday, the HC said banks' money is people's money, so they have the right to know who is being given the money as loans by the financial institutions.

Subsequently, the HC also ordered banks to publish loan approval letters such that people can be informed about the parties receiving the credit.

"Unfortunately, it is true that some corrupt directors and officials of the financial institutions give loans arbitrarily and in a dishonest and irregular system and also use the judiciary in recovering those bad loans."

Currently, the judiciary is overloaded with such cases, said Justice Md Ashraf Kamal in the 13-

page full text of the verdict.

The bench directed the Bangladesh Bank to immediately instruct the financial institutions to make insurance coverage mandatory against loans.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and lawyer Minhazul Haque Chowdhury appeared for Brac Bank during the hearing petition today.

The other four judges of the bench are Justice Md Nuruzzaman, Justice Obaidul Hassan, Justice Borhanuddin and Justice M Enayetur Rahim.

## Interest rate cap not coming off soon

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Ahmed suggested adopting a uniform and market-based exchange rate, removing the interest rate cap, accelerating income transfer programs to the poor and vulnerable and raising tax revenues.

The prospective \$4.5 billion loan programme from the International Monetary Fund will play a positive role in restoring macroeconomic stability, he said.

The discipline that the IMF would bring in helping the government implement difficult but required policy reforms is more important than the funds disbursed over a three-year period.

"Without the implementation of the required policy reforms, the IMF programme may not restore macroeconomic stability."

Ahmed also called for a tax commission to raise revenue earnings. At 7.6 percent, Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world—and even lower than Sri Lanka's at 8.6 percent.

Planning Minister Abdul Mannan said he heard the criticism of the low

tax-to-GDP ratio.

"Is it really in such a bad position? If it is, then how did the economy grow by 6 percent on an average for years?"

He went on to state that it is not possible to raise the ratio in the near future though the government will continue to try.

"Our government wants to see higher growth though there might be some corruption and flight of money," Mannan added.

A commission may not be effective in reforming the revenue sector given the past experience in other sectors, said Shamsul Alam, the state minister for planning.

A strong political will is necessary to mobilise the revenue earnings by increasing direct tax, he said, while calling for lifting the interest rate cap.

"The interest cap should change from 6-9 percent to 9-12 percent as the inflation rate is now quite close to the deposit rate. This deposit rate is not logical in the current level of inflation as depositors are being hampered," he added.

Inflation averaged 8.75 percent in the first four months of fiscal 2022-

23—a long way off the target of 5.6 percent set in the budget for the year.

In another session, Wahiduddin Mahmud, chairman of the Economic Research Group, presented a paper on Rethinking Socialism for Democratic Developing Countries, while Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, spoke as session chair.

Bangladesh is a fast-growing and increasingly unequal society, said Rehman Sobhan, also a former director general of BIDS.

"That is the objective reality. Policymakers should be complemented for the fast growth. However, the business class or economic powerhouses are dominating the democratic power here."

From union parishad to parliament, business people dominate the policy-making position, he said.

Subsequently, inequality is higher than the Gini coefficient suggests as the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics cannot reach the affluent class who live in Gulshan, he said.

Binayak Sen, director general of BIDS, also spoke.

## BNP tells IGP it wants to hold rally

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Nayapaltan [where the party office is located] in those two letters. We didn't want an alternate venue," he said.

At the beginning of the meeting, the BNP demanded the withdrawal of "ghost cases" filed against the party's activists across the country.

The party leaders handed a letter from BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir to the IGP on the issue.

The leaders said they attached a list of 169 "ghost cases" with the letter.

"Members of the police and the Awami League are exploding crude bombs but cases are being filed

against the BNP men. They are being arrested in ghost cases," Bulu told reporters after the one-hour meeting with the IGP.

"We have handed over a letter to the IGP on behalf of the Hon'ble secretary general on these issues," he said.

"We wanted a remedy of the ghost cases and he [IGP] said he would look into it," Bulu added.

A senior official of PHQ, who was present at the meeting, said the BNP delegation basically expressed their concern over the "ghost cases" and sought the intervention of the IGP.

According to sources, the IGP told the BNP delegation that he was not aware of such incidents and would

look into them.

The three other members of the delegation were BNP Joint Secretary General Moazzem Hossain Alal, Publicity Secretary Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie and Legal Affairs Secretary Kaiser Kamal.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas said the rally would be held at the Nayapaltan office and not at Suhrawardy Udyan.

"The prime minister said there would be no obstruction in the democratic movement. But we are seeing a different picture. A festivity of repressing the opposition party is going on," he told journalists.