



Winners and jury members of the 23rd DIFF.



Noriko Yuasa receiving the award for Best Scriptwriter for Japanese film "Performing Kaoru's Funeral".



Shankha Dasgupta receiving the FIPRESCI Award for Best Feature Film for "Priyo Maloti".

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN

Curtains down for 23rd DIFF Cultural Adviser promises more investment

Films, masterclasses, and premieres of fantastic Bangladeshi and international films marked the grand conclusion of the 23rd Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF).

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

The festivities culminated with the highly anticipated screening of Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury's *Boli (The Wrestler)*, a celebrated film that won an award at the 2023 Busan Film Festival and was Bangladesh's official submission for the 97th Academy Awards.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki served as the chief guest, with Jalal Ahmed, chairman of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, presiding over the event. The festival concluded with a grand ceremony at the Bangladesh National Museum yesterday.

Ilias Kanchan, a juror in the Asian Film Competition section of DIFF, and Azmeri Haque Badhan, a jury member in the Women Filmmaker Section, attended the event.

While talking at the event, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki recalled participating as a volunteer in order to watch movies at the festival. "About 30 years ago, I was a volunteer at the festival. I became a

volunteer so that I could watch movies for free as I didn't have money."

The adviser emphasised that it's his core responsibility to ensure not only a proper festival but also that our country becomes a natural hub for culture that attracts the youth. However, he has too little time on his hands to achieve all of this.

"One thing I can tell you is that I will be a very good adviser if I become the next elected Cultural Minister. Today, I know where the problems lie and how to address them. As for holding our flagship Bangladeshi film festival, we lack a permanent venue, advanced projection technology, and a proper sound system. Now that I am here, I can at least initiate the process." The adviser also talked about allocating a permanent budget to local festivals.



This year's DIFF featured 220 films from 75 countries across 10 categories. Among them, 44 films from Bangladesh were showcased.

The closing event unveiled the winners in various categories, with the Best Film

Award presented to *Yakshanba (Sunday)*, directed by Shokir Kholikov (Uzbekistan). The Best Director Award in the Asian Film Competition section went to Haofeng Xu and Junfeng Xu for *Men Qian Bao Di (100 Yards)*. Rayan Sarlak received the Best Actor Award for his film *Tabestan-E Haman Saal (Summer time)*, while the Best Actress Award went to Diman Zandi from Iran for *Melody*, directed by Behrouz Sebt Rasoul.

Other notable awards included Best Script Writer to Takato Nishi and Noriko Yuasa for *Performing Kaoru's Funeral*, (Japanese film), and Best Cinematography to Dilsat Canan for the film *Demo Ke Pelé Gozan Beni Zer (When The Walnut Leaves Turn Yellow)* directed by Mehmet Ali Konar (Turkish). A Special Jury Mention for Best Director went to Mahmoud Kalari for *Tabestan-E Haman Saal (Summer time)* (Iran).

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In the Women Filmmakers Section, *Scarlet*, directed by Maria Bobeva (Bulgaria), won the Best Short Film Award, while the Best Feature Film Award went to *Kunva, Ce Qui Vient Du Silence (Kunva, Which Comes from Silence)*, directed by Sarah Mallegol (France). Agustina Sánchez Gavier won Best Director for the film *Nuestra Sombra (Our Own Shadow)* (Argentina, Germany), and a Special Mention went to *Takoi Imennu Den (Not Just Any Day)*, directed by Klavdiva Korshunova (Moldova, Russia).

In the Bangladesh Panorama section, *Priyo Maloti*, directed by Shankha Dasgupta, received the FIPRESCI Award for Best Full-Length Feature Film. In the

Talent Section, *Lazy Noon*, directed by Monon Muntaka, won the FIPRESCI Award for Best Short Film, with *Phulera Poshak Porena*, directed by Aasif U Hamid, as the first runner-up and *Poikibhita (Hereditary Homestead)*, directed by Mobarak Hossain, as the second runner-up.

The Spiritual Film Section awarded *Prishleec (The Alien)*, directed by Ivan Sosnin (Russia), as the Best Feature Film, and *Monte Clerigo*, directed by Luis Campos (Portugal), as the Best Short Film. A Special Mention went to *Swaha (In the Name of Fire)*, directed by Abhilash Sharma (India). The Audience Award went to *Padatik*, directed by Srijiit Mukherjee (India), and a Special Audience Award was given to *Guardia de Honor (The Guardian of Honor)*, directed by Josedito Altarejos (Philippines).

In the Children's Film section, the Best Children Film Badal Rahman Award was given to *Kytalyktaakh kyrdalym (Where the White Cranes Dance)*, directed by Michael Lukachevsky (Russia).

NEWS

HC may hear Chinmoy's bail

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only a government officer can file such a case under the government order.

But there is no government order for lodging the sedition case against his client, he said, adding that an individual has filed the case in violation of the relevant section of the CrPC.

Section 196 of the CrPC says, "No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under chapter VI or IXA of the Penal Code (except section 127), or punishable under section 108A, or section 153A, or section 294A, or section 295A or section 505 of the same Code, unless upon complaint made by order of, or under authority from,

the [government, or some officer empowered in this behalf by the government]."

Lawyer Apurba said the allegation brought against Chinmoy is false as he never disrespected the national flag.

On October 31 last year, Firoz Khan, former general secretary of Chattogram's Mohora ward BNP, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station of Chattogram, accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of disrespecting the national flag during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25 in the port city's New Market area.

On November 26, a Chattogram court sent Chinmoy to jail, rejecting his bail prayer after he was arrested in the capital on January 2 this year.

Following the rejection, supporters of Chinmoy burst into protests and blocked the prison van on its way to jail. They demanded his immediate release.

Later, police charged truncheons to disperse the agitated followers of Chinmoy, triggering a clash between law enforcers, lawyers, and the supporters in the court building area. Lawyer Saiful Islam Alif was beaten and hacked to death during the clash.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Saiful Islam denied bail to Chinmoy, also spokesperson for Sammilita Sanatan Jagaran Jote, in the case on January 2 this year.

Earlier on December 11 last year, the same court rejected his bail petition.

Woman raped on way home

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around 11:00pm on January 15.

The driver later picked up three more passengers and took a detour.

The vehicle stopped in an area of Chunarughat upazila, where the attackers took the victim to an isolated spot and raped her, the mother said in the case statement. They also attempted to rape the cousin, who managed to escape.

The cousin later returned to rescue the victim with the help of locals. The two returned home the next morning.

The victim's mother accused four individuals, including the autorickshaw driver, in the case.

The mother said the perpetrators snatched Tk 1.59 lakh that the bride-to-be had saved while working in Dhaka.

"All our dreams have been shattered by this incident," the mother said.

Nur Alam, officer-in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, said police identified the auto rickshaw driver and were trying to arrest the other suspects.

Arrest warrant

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owned by Shakib, had taken loans from the Banani branch of IFIC Bank for business purposes. The company issued two cheques of Tk 41.5 lakh, which were dishonoured due to insufficient funds.

Trump to take oath

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its founder and former president Ziaur Rahman.

Tarique said over 60 lakh people were repressed, with many others killed.

"Have we endured the repression and persecution to shelter intruders and wrongdoers?"

Many people believe the BNP has the most potential to form the government if a free and fair election is held, he said.

Tarique asked if the party leaders and activists

would be able to stay well if a situation emerges in which someone else forms the government due to the wrongdoings of intruders and some misguided BNP followers.

"We don't know who or what may come [to power]... but it won't be good for all of us."

If anyone else forms the government, every political activist belonging to the BNP should have the sense to recognise that it would not be good for the country, both from a local and international perspective.

"We still have time to stand by the people and behave according to their desires."

At the end of the day, a political party has to go to the voters. "If any of us indulge in wrongdoing before the [election] day, you will have to answer to the people when you go to them for their votes."

access, climate change, the need for better protections against gun violence, and immigrant rights.

The rally was held after Trump's incoming "border czar" Tom Homan told Fox News that a "big raid" would be carried out across the country shortly after Trump takes the oath of office on Monday.

Unlike traditional inaugurations of US presidents, at least seven sitting heads of state and two former leaders have been invited to attend Trump's swearing-in ceremony. According to Reuters, an estimated 500,000 guests are expected in total.

Usually, presidential inaugurations are a domestic affair: the president and vice president take the oath with US officials, past heads of state and other American VIPs present on the steps of the US Capitol building.

The BNP leader reminded his party colleagues of how people can depose autocrats.

"That example still shines before our eyes... if we ultimately need public support, why shouldn't we try to earn it through good deeds? Why should you turn a blind eye to unfairness? If the people turn away, we will have no place to go, no matter what we think of ourselves."

Without mentioning names, Tarique said some political forces were trying to raise their voices against the BNP due to the wrongdoings of intruders and some misguided party activists.

Winning the next election will not be as easy as some BNP leaders and activists think.

"We have our party's organisations even at the village level. But people matter and people are our strength and support. People showed on August 5 what happens if they are not with you. So, if we make any mistake, the people will show something again, and then you will have to face the consequences," he said.

The BNP leader called upon the party rank and file to remain united and stand against unfairness. "We must stand with the people in such a way that they understand we are with them, according to their desires. This should be our oath on this day, the 89th birth anniversary of Ziaur Rahman."

Yunus listens

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by various intelligence and law enforcement agencies between January 1, 2010, and August 5, 2024.

Other members of the commission are Justice Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, rights activists Nur Khan and Sazzad Hossain, and Brac University teacher Nabil Idris.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, and senior police officers Monirul Islam and Md Harun-Or-Rashid were all involved in enforced disappearances, said a preliminary report submitted to the chief adviser on December 14.

The commission found prima facie evidence of their involvement. The commission recommends disbanding Rab because of its inalienable involvement in enforced disappearances.

The commission recorded 1,676 complaints of enforced disappearances.

EC will stick to its role set by law

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On January 14, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said holding the general election would be possible between July and August this year.

Nasir yesterday said that the commission would start updating the voter list soon and the task, involving 65,000 employees, would take no longer than six months.

The finalised voter list will be published on March 1 next year.

The voter growth rate has been estimated at 1.55 percent, he said.

Around 200

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In January 2015, the HC started hearing the appeals of the convicts and pronounced its verdict on November 27, 2017, confirming the death penalty of 139.

It commuted the death penalty of eight convicts to life imprisonment and acquitted five others who were sentenced to death by the trial court.

The HC upheld life imprisonment of 146 and acquitted 14.

Service officials.

On the situation along the Chapainawabganj border, he said that Saturday's incident took place over the harvesting of paddy and cutting of tree branches, resulting in injuries on both sides.

"We did not see it in our media... two BSF members were injured. None of our BGB members were hurt, though one or two civilians were injured."

It was nothing major. The matter has been resolved through talks between the BGB and BSF."

The adviser admitted that there are some issues in the border areas, with occasional trespassing from both sides, but expressed confidence that the problem would be resolved soon.

Meanwhile, the situation along the Chapainawabganj border became normal yesterday, a day after tension flared over an altercation between Indian and Bangladeshi citizens.

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh held a views-exchange meeting with locals in the border areas.

Lt Col Golam Kibria, commander of the BGB's 49 Battalion in Chapainawabganj, told The Daily Star that locals engaged in farming have resumed their regular work.

"We are conducting our regular