

A Struggle for Democracy, Shahidul Alam

List of Works



Airport Goodbye.

At Dhaka International Airport, only passengers were allowed in after the glass doors. It was difficult to hear across the glass wall, except through the gap at the hinge, so people would take turns to speak. One would have to speak and the other turn their head to listen. A woman bids goodbye to her partner, unsure of when they might meet again.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka Airport, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1996.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



'Royal' Wedding.

Guests at the wedding of the daughter of a powerful minister, held while the nation still reels from the effects of a devastating flood. The 'who's who' of Bangladesh was present including leading editors and journalists, but the event was omitted from mainstream media coverage.

Shahidul Alam. Dhaka Airport, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1996.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Bandarban Mother and Child.

'All quiet on the hill tracts,' the official version: the tranquility of a tribal home. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, once the natural habitat of indigenous communities, which despite the signing of a peace treaty is still effectively a military occupied zone.

Shahidul Alam, Bandarban, Bangladesh, 1991.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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Dance Class.

During the peak of the resistance against President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, during a lull in the violence, we had gone to the staff residences of Dhaka University, where our friend Meghna lived. Meghna was teaching her neighbour's daughter to dance.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka University, Bangladesh, 1990.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Orphaned girl by the remains of what was her home in Anwara, the aftermath of a deadly storm.

Shahidul Alam, Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1991.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Hajera (sitting) and her fellow sex workers share a joke beside Crescent Lake at the House of Parliament grounds in Dhaka. They give out condoms to sex workers in an effort to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh. 1996

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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Group at Rupnagar, Mirpur from the series Out of Focus.
Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1994.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Portrait of Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Laureate and former president of South Africa. Prior to his 91st birthday he was visited by Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, who was presenting the 7th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture.
Shahidul Alam, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Bangladeshi migrant workers resting in between shifts in the Maldives.
Shahidul Alam, Maldives, 1994.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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'My image of Mizan watching TV at my mother's house was published in our 1997 Drik calendar. Mizan and my mother received a copy each. From then onwards he watched TV inside our living room. It was a small but important victory for me. It may not have changed the world, but it changed my mother and it certainly changed me.'

Shahidul Alam, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1996.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



The commercial centre of Motijheel is empty as opposition parties unite to oust a dictator on 10 November 1987.

Shahidul Alam, Motijheel, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1987.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Champa was a leader in the Naxalite (a far left militant party dedicated to the liberation of peasants) movement. She used to dress up as a boy to sneak into party meetings as a child. When the party disbanded in the 1980's members were asked to go back to their communities. But they had burnt their bridges and re-integration proved difficult.

Shahidul Alam, Jessore, Bangladesh, 1994.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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Paddy Field, from *Crossfire*, a photo story on extrajudicial killings by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in Bangladesh.
Shahidul Alam, November 17, 2009.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Phalan and Iqbal in Lalmatia from *Out of Focus*.
Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1995.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



People rejoicing at dictator Ershad's fall. Mirpur Road.
Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1990.
Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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On the 10th November 1987, the opposition parties in Bangladesh had tried to stage a siege of Dhaka city in an attempt to oust the autocratic general Hussain Muhammad Ershad. Noor Hossain was a young worker who came out in the streets to join the protest. He had painted on his back "Let democracy be freed" but was killed by police bullets. The mural on the walls of Jahangirnagar University in the outskirts of Dhaka was dedicated to him.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1990.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University is a residence hall for minority students, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and others. The students are generally considered to be pro Awami League, the party in opposition in January 1996 when this photograph was taken. A student who had been picked up in a massive police raid, reaches out for help from the prison van.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1996.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



The burnt out remains of Tazreen Fashion factory. On 24 November 2012, a fatal fire injured over 200 workers and took the lives of at least 112 more, making it the deadliest factory fire in the nation's history.

Shahidul Alam, Ashulia, Bangladesh, 2012.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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For the first time in the history of our nation, a fair and free election. A woman in a makeshift voting booth in Lalmatia, Dhaka, casts her vote after the removal of General Hussain Mohammad Ershad after a sustained people's movement for democracy.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1991.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



A woman wades through the floodwaters, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Shahidul Alam, 1988.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.



Smriti Azad used to attend political rallies with her sister when she was a child. As a singer and a performer, she was involved with the women's movement, the committee demanding the trial of war criminals and the cultural group Charon Shangshkritik Kenro, which led to her joining the cultural group Shommilito Shangshkritik Jote. As part of that group she was active in the movement to bring down general Ershad. Here, Smriti is pictured protesting at a rally at Shahid Minar.

Shahidul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1994.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.

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Women in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, fetch drinking water from afar in the early hours of the morning. Effluent from sugar cane factories have polluted local waterbodies, making the water undrinkable. The workers are migrants from Rajasthan, who work as bonded labourers.

Shahidul Alam, Maharashtra, India, 1997.

Image courtesy of Shahidul Alam and Drik.