



DRIK PICTURE LIBRARY LTD

Images, Communication & Information Technology

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PRESS RELEASE

Launch of Pathshala, South Asian Media Academy and 'Crossfire' exhibition goes on despite police

Drik Picture Library launched Pathshala, South Asian Media Academy and inaugurated photography exhibition 'Crossfire' by Dr. Shahidul Alam despite the police forcibly closing the gallery down yesterday March 22, 2010.

In the light of the lockout, the opening took place in a small impromptu programme held on the road outside Drik. The event was inaugurated by the celebrated Indian writer and human rights activist, Mahasweta Devi. Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age, M Hamid, CEO of RTV and Jorge Villacorta, curator from Peru were present, alongwith many artists and media professionals from abroad, and also, members of the public.

From midday onwards, Drik was pressurised by RAB, police and Special Branch officials to close down the show on grounds that it does not have official permission, and later, on the grounds that it will create anarchy.

The forcible closure of Drik's premises is a blatant violation of our constitutional rights. Drik has organised hundreds of exhibition, and as is apparent by this closure, the government has invoked a prohibitive clause only because state repression was being exposed. It was police intervention that created disorder, not the other way round.

The Media Academy, an extension of Pathshala, South Asian Institute of Photography, regarded to be one of the best photojournalism schools in the world, intends to train other sectors of the media, namely broadcasting, print and multimedia journalism, and to build up a body of honest, courageous, energetic and skilled media professionals.

The exhibition, 'Crossfire,' curated by renowned Peruvian curator Jorge Villacorta, includes photographs and installations relating to the theme of crossfire and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).

In its 20 years of existence, Drik has forged a unique position in the international cultural arena, which has earned Bangladesh a special place in the world of photography. The unfortunate event, which was broadcast worldwide, has tarnished the image of this democratically-elected government. We call upon the government to immediately remove the police encirclement, so that the exhibition can be opened for public viewing, and Bangladesh's image as an independent democratic nation can be reinstated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shahidul Alam'.

Dr Shahidul Alam
Managing Director
Drik Picture Library