

The lobby of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) seemed to be an organised chaos - hundreds of people standing there in a serpentine queue, talking art and waiting impatiently to grab their ticket to get into the magical madness of this place. There was impatience, but no rage.

Located in midtown Manhattan, New York City, MoMA's collection contains almost 200,000 works of modern and contemporary art by over 13,000 artists. Considered the largest museum of modern art, this place owns an extensive permanent exhibit of all the famous artists you could have heard of. Also, you'll find the ever changing special exhibitions being organised in the many galleries of the sprawling art museums. Starting from architecture and design, drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, and books on illustrations, artists, films, and electronic media - it houses art in every possible form. And when you know what is waiting for you in those six floors of the museum, which frustratingly close at 5:30 in the afternoon, it's very normal to feel impatient to get going!

Once I had the ticket and the map of the museum in my hand, I spent another few minutes on planning out my dream tour. "You need my advice? Take the elevator to the top and ride the escalators down," suggested a kind museum employee at the information desk. 'Starting from the top', I said to myself, and held my breath as I entered the elevator. In a blink, everything that I have seen on the pages of books, everything that I read about, the works of people who inspired me, all of it came to life.

Suddenly, I found myself wandering from Pollock's artwork to Picasso's. I was transfixed by the unavoidably large *Reflections of Clouds on the Water-Lily Pond* by Claude Monet. The next moment, I found myself perplexed by Henri Matisse's *Red Studio and Dance*, and amused by the oddity of Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*.

There were Salvador Dali, Henri Rousseau, René Magritte, Frida Kahlo, and many other artists I haven't ever even heard of-- all of this, in one building. I felt excited and blessed. I felt restless to see everything at the same time, willing to take my time and enjoy them slowly. Then there was one spot swarmed by museum visitors taking pictures of themselves in front of a painting. I joined the crowd and had to stand on my toes to see for myself what the fuss was about. My heart



## VINCENT AND I

TEXT AND PHOTOS  
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dropped a beat as I saw the swirls and the dark tip of the cypresses. I wanted to go ahead and feel it all.

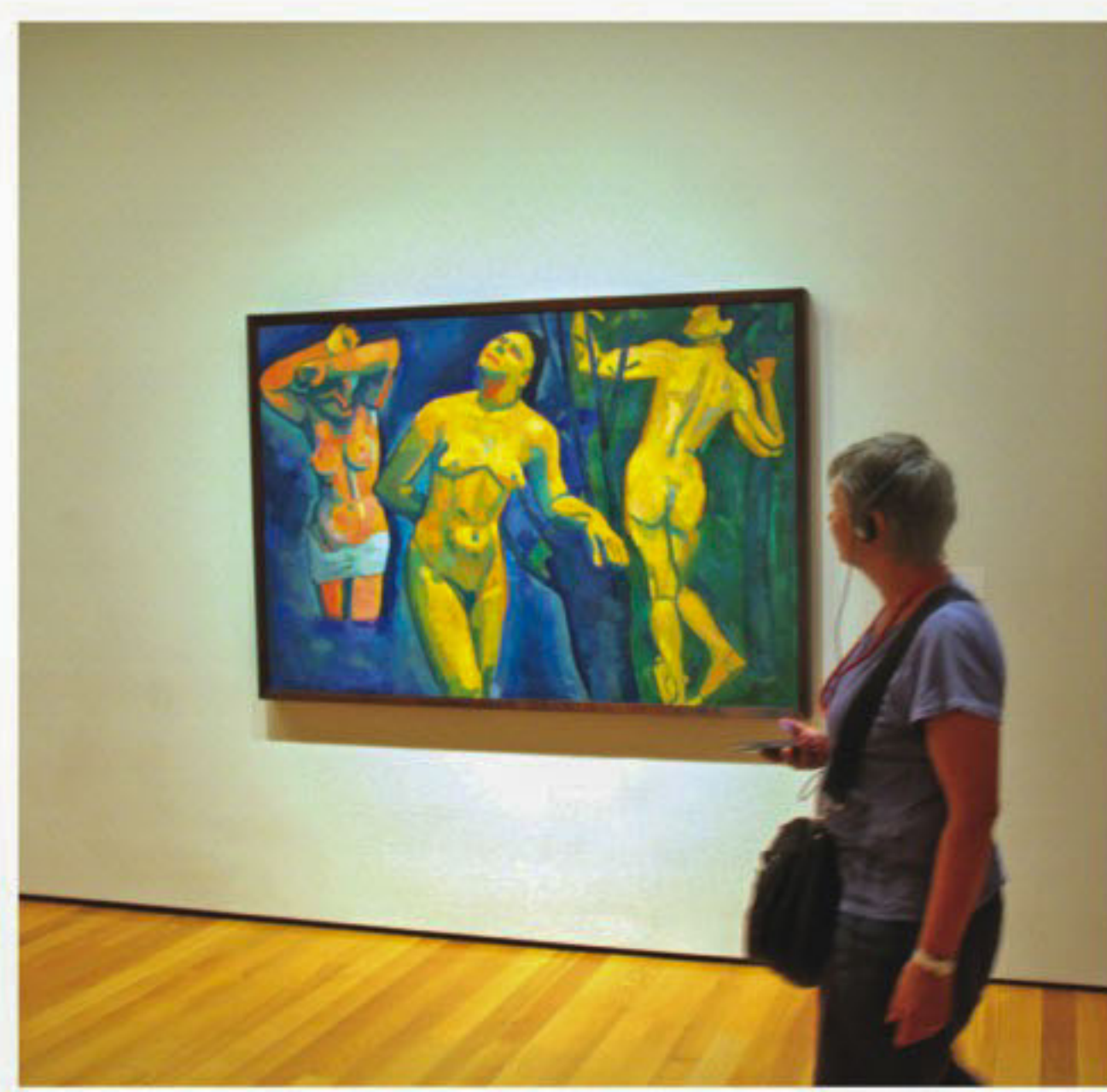
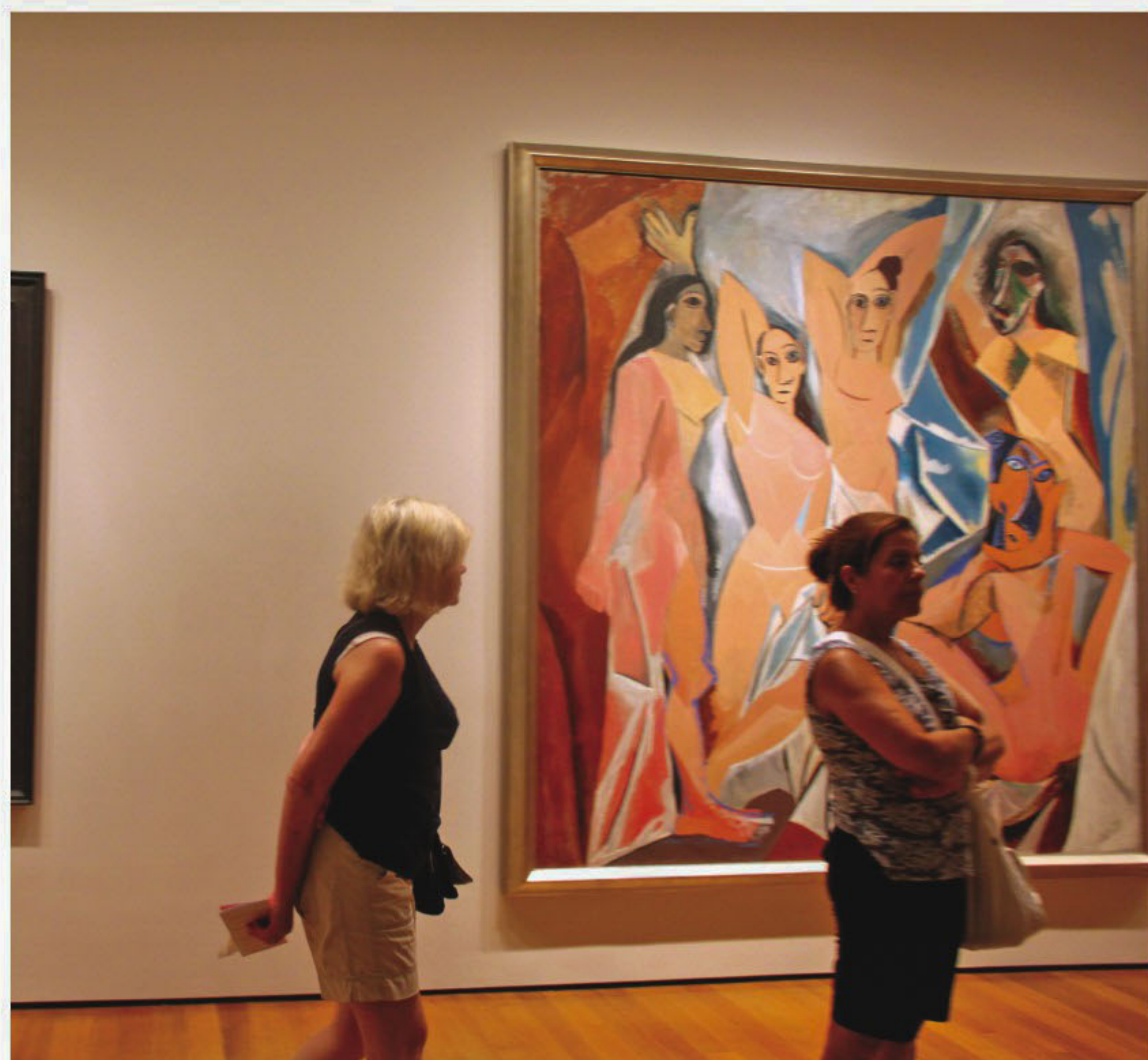
It was Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. In a matter of seconds, I found myself standing in front of it in wonder and disbelief. I almost heard Vincent telling his brother Theo, "I must have a starry night with cypresses." But I could not figure out how to view a Vincent painting up close and do proper justice to it. Do I get really

close to feel the intensity of the colours and the meticulous details of every little stroke? Or do I stand at a distance to take in the sheer spectacle of his magical night sky in its entirety? How could I just give it a single glance and move to the next painting just so that I could finish my tour?

Like every Vincent fanatic, I felt compelled to take a picture with this masterpiece. But I was nervous- I didn't know how to pose with a Vincent artwork without ruining its magnificence. It felt like a dream to say the least - unreal and magical.

You want to live every little inch of MoMA, but you don't want to rush from one artwork to the other and kill the true essence of this life-changing experience. The aesthetic of each of the masterpieces exhibited there was surely mesmerizing, but what made the tour so intriguing for me was the notion of encountering a surprise in every corner of MoMA and feeling the adrenaline rush to see the art come to life.

On my way back, in a cab, I immediately updated my bucket list: Visit MoMA a second time. Because I knew that I would be coming back here again, not just to relive the experience, but to create new ones. ■



### TRAVELOGUE

### HERITAGE

## IN MEMORY OF THE THREE LEADERS

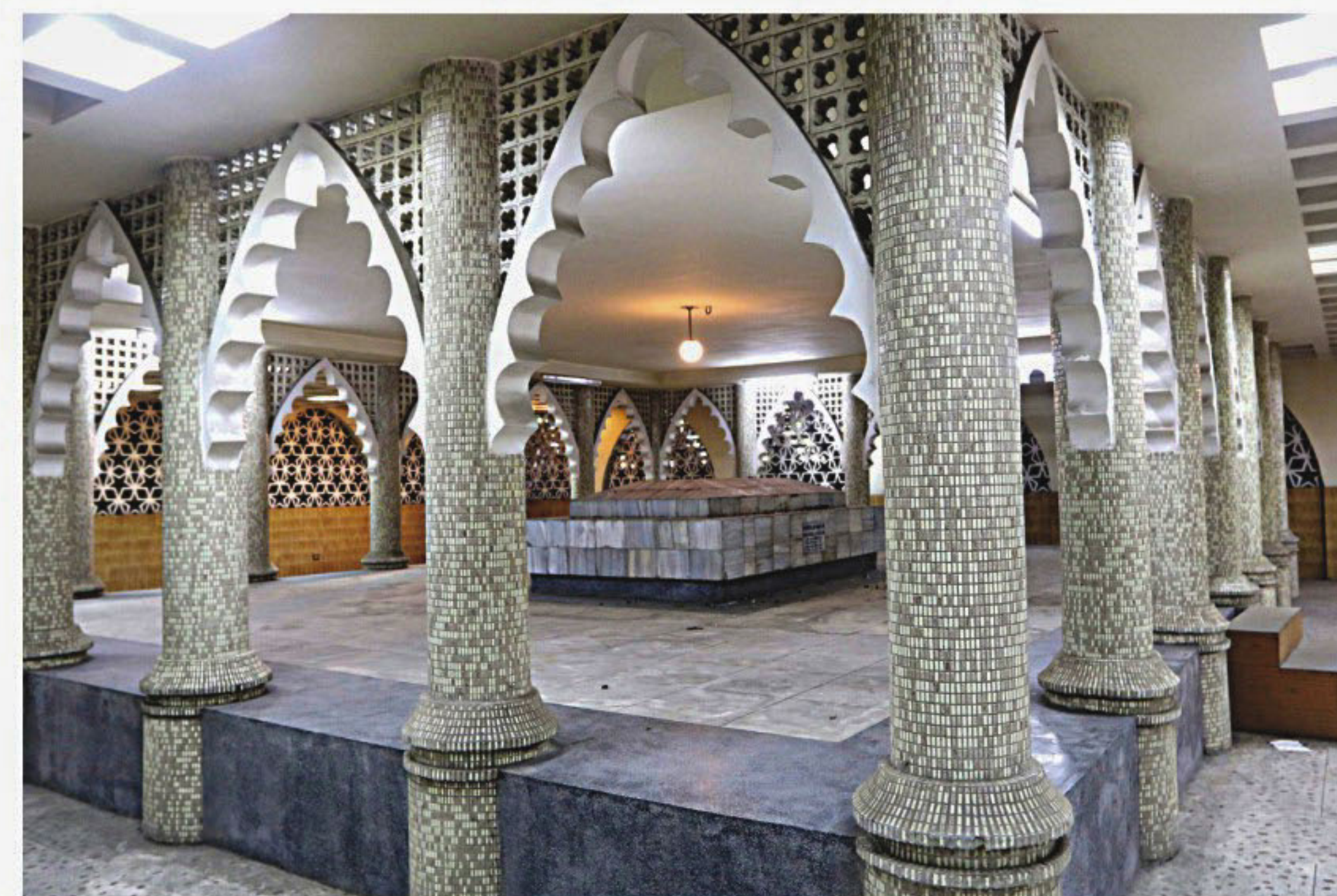
NILIMA JAHAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Do you remember the famous quote by Napoleon Bonaparte? "A leader is a dealer in hope." A.K. Fazlul Huq (1873-1962), Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (1892-1963), and Khwaja Nazimuddin (1894-1964) — were such brave leaders, who had immense contribution to the pre-liberation politics in the 20th century. These three national leaders served as the Prime Minister of Bengal in British India and played legendary roles in the independence of Bangladesh.

Corporation in 1924, Labour and Commerce Minister in AK Fazlul Huq's Praja-League coalition government formed following the 1937 elections, the Prime Minister (chief minister) of undivided Bengal during 1946-1947, Law Minister in Mohammad Ali's Cabinet in Pakistan, during 1954-1955 and the Prime Minister of Pakistan during 1956-1957.

Khawaja Nazimuddin, was the second Governor-General of Pakistan in 1948, following the death of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was the 2nd Prime Minister of



Though, they died on different dates, they were buried under the same roof, which is now known as '*Tin Netar Mazar*', located at Shahbag, near Doyel Chatter.

A.K. Fazlul Huq, popularly known as Sher-e-Bangla (Tiger of Bengal), was a well known politician, famous for his leadership qualities. He was a statesman, public leader and was a holder of many highly regarded political posts. He was the Mayor of Calcutta in 1935, Chief Minister of undivided Bengal from 1937 to 1943 and East Bengal in 1954. Later, in 1955, he became the Home Minister of Pakistan in 1955 and Governor of East Pakistan from 1956 to 1958. Even, Fazlul Huq was the first person to advocate and present the Lahore Resolution, calling for the creation of sovereign Muslim-majority states in eastern and north-western British India in 1940. But he is more notable for his outstanding contributions to the Bengali Language Movement. (Source: Banglapedia)

On the other hand, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a skilful political organiser, was the 5th Prime Minister of Pakistan. According to Banglapedia, Suhrawardy held various important offices including the deputy mayoralty of the Calcutta



Pakistan from 1951 to 1953, after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan. Suhrawardy had even served as the Minister of Labour and also the Minister of Civil Supplies under Nazimuddin's government.

Fazlul Huq had engaged in many political events with Huseyn Suhrawardy, such as forming the United Front in the 1954 elections, controlling the government of East Pakistan and many



architects Masood Ahmed and S. A. Zahiruddin. The gorgeous design of the shrine represents a beautiful interpretation of the Islamic architecture.

There are two entrances to the mausoleum. A giant monument built in memory of the three national leaders can be sighted from far away. Although, you can find the replications of the tombs of the three leaders under the monument, the original graves are underground. The inner environment is quite different from the outside. The tombs, surrounded by the arches and pillars, created a melancholic atmosphere for the visitors.

At present, the overall environment of the great place is quite dissatisfactory. Most often, some vagabonds and drug addicts are seen loitering around, who have made the place a sanctuary for themselves. Sometimes, it is hard to find the only two staff members responsible for its maintenances.

Except some special occasions, the mausoleum is not open to the public. On special days, like the death anniversaries of the three leaders, people come to pay homage. Special prayers are arranged for the occasions. ■

more. Yet, it was said that they had rivalry between them which had caused Fazul Huq to quit politics.

It was rumoured that these three political leaders had a rivalry amongst each other, in terms of success. Despite having such controversy, these three leaders are lying forever in the same spot.

The mausoleum, surrounded by an abundance of greenery, was established in 1963. It was designed by renowned