



PHOTOS: MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

# Representing lost identities through visual culture

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An exhibition titled “The Renaissance of the Rohingya Culture” is presently being showcased at the capital’s EMK Center. Inaugurated on August 1, it is the first exhibition of Rohingya-made paintings created in the refugee camps. This exhibition was created with support from Artolution, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Population Fund, MUKTI, the Public Diplomacy Sector of the US Embassy in Dhaka and the National Geographic Society. The inauguration was graced by the presence of Dr Dipu Moni, Education Minister, People’s Republic of Bangladesh, and Khadija Mohamud, Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer, US Embassy Dhaka. It contains the works of 30 Rohingya refugees and host community teaching artists who developed the art pieces based on their perception of their community through a



locally led participatory approach. It is a result of Artolution’s initiative to help the refugee camp inhabitants cope up with the trauma of dislocation, as it believes in using art as a tool to voice ideas. The New York-based arts education nonprofit is known for working with people from global crisis zones, helping them deal with their trauma. “Artolution has allowed these people to represent their lost identities through visual culture. In these trying times, art is the face of resilience,” asserted Dr Max Frieder, the executive director and co-founder of Artolution. While curating the exhibition, he placed special emphasis on keeping a rich variety of work, with proper women representation.

Through their colourful artworks, the refugee artists portrayed their lives. While most of the works on display were produced on canvas, there were a few pieces painted on plastic sacks, which they received during raw food distribution, and their traditional woven mats. The paintings depicted their culture and identity as a community. A common theme among all of the displayed artworks was the incorporation of small houses in the background, a sign of their dislocation. “Art is quintessential in recovering from trauma and this project has been a great emotional journey for me and my team,” he concluded. The exhibition is open for all from till August 21.

## Prachyanat to stage ‘Bon Manush’ today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Prachyanat’s “Bon Manush” will once again be staged at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy’s Experimental Theatre Hall today, August 9, around 7:00 pm. The play is based on Eugene O’Neill “The Hairy Ape”, and will be directed by Bakar Bokul.

The story of the play revolves around Yank, a brutish fireman aboard a ship, who is constantly bragging to his fellow labourers about his achievements. All of the labourers on the ship are relentlessly overworked by their well-off bosses. Tickets are available at the hall’s counter today.



## SRK, Rajkumar Hirani unhappy with ‘Dunki’ leaks: Taapsee Pannu

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu starrer “Dunki” is still a long way from its release. Recently, pictures from the team’s shooting in the United Kingdom was leaked. Multiple pictures featuring Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu surfaced online during their filming for the Rajkumar Hirani directorial. “As we were shooting at Westminster Bridge (London), there is only so much you can do. Shah Rukh sir also tried a lot. They were not really happy that pictures came out.”



# NEWS

## Overreliance threatening

FROM PAGE 12 ensuring economical use,” said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the eve of the National Energy Security Day. The government has been observing the day since 2010 to mark the decision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s decision on August 9 in 1975 to purchase five gas fields from a multinational oil drilling company, Shell Oil Company, by paying very little. Some 4.5 million pounds (about Tk 17-18 crore then) was paid to purchase Bakhraabad, Titas, Rashidpur, Kailashtila and Habiganj gas fields. The five gas fields are still playing a vital role in economic development and energy security, said President M Abdul Hamid. Bangladesh has a lot of gas reserves that are yet to be discovered,

according to Imam. The authorities have drilled only 28 exploratory wells in the last 20 years. “This is a ridiculously small number for a country with high hydrocarbon potential.” As of 2021, the country has gas reserves for nine to 10 years assuming consumption of about 1 trillion cubic feet every year, according to data from the energy and mineral resources division’s Hydrocarbon Unit. The 28 gas fields discovered so far had a proven reserve of 29.9 trillion cubic feet (tcf), 19.53 tcf of which has already been extracted, Petrobangla data shows. Production at gas fields starts to decline after hitting the peak, according to Imam. Most of the gas fields are producing less gas than before. All the gas fields

## BB orders six banks to transfer treasury

FROM PAGE 1 Seeking anonymity, a BB official said the banks purchased US dollars from exporters at a lower rate but sold them at a much higher rate to importers. For instance, importers are now paying banks up to Tk 112 buy a dollar whereas banks are buying it for Tk 94. “This helped the banks make a hefty profit by taking advantage of the ongoing instability in the forex market,” the central banker said. Recently, exporters, importers and business leaders have publicly accused banks of making excessive profits. Banks in the country have to sell and buy dollars based on the inter-

bank exchange rate of the USD set by the central bank. The USD traded at Tk 95 on the platform yesterday. As per the banking norms, lenders are allowed to offer Tk 1 less from the interbank rate while buying dollars from exporters. They can sell greenback, adding Tk 1 to the interbank rate. The BB move comes as the volatility in the foreign exchange market shows no sign of slowing down though the BB has already taken a set of measures amid fast-depleting international currency reserves. Higher imports, lower-than-expected export receipts and falling remittance have sent the reserves below \$40 billion at present

are now producing 2,300-2,400 mmcfd on an average, down from 2,666 mmcfd in 2016. The drop in gas extraction is a threat to the country’s energy security, experts said, while stressing the need for aggressive exploration for new reserves. Meanwhile, the government maintains it has no option other than to produce above capacity at Bibiyana given the enormity of the gas crisis, Petrobangla officials told The Daily Star on the condition of anonymity. The gas scarcity, prompted in part by last month’s decision to suspend the purchase of liquefied natural gas from the international spot market given the higher prices, has forced the government to start area-wise load shedding and consider area-wise “industrial holidays”.

compared to more than \$48 billion in August last year. The taka has lost value by more than 12 percent against the dollar in the interbank market though the platform does not account for a major portion of US dollar transactions. This is because the interbank exchange rate does not reflect the reality since the BB has maintained an artificially higher rate of the taka. If the platform were free of BB intervention, the exchange rate would have been much higher as it would be determined by demand and supply. Importers are being forced to pay Tk 112 per USD now, up 30 percent from a year ago.

## Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 12 was screened at the programme. The PM also distributed Tk 2,000 to 2,500 each among insolvent women across the country through mobile banking. She gave away some 4,500 sewing machines to the women in need. Hasina unveiled the cover of her book titled “Sheikh Fazilatunnesa: Amar Maa”. The premier opened a women’s hostel named after Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib in the capital.

## Holy Ashura today

FROM PAGE 1 the teachings of Prophet (SM). The day is a public holiday. Shia community members will bring out Tazia processions in the capital marking the day. A Tajia procession, which will be escorted by law enforcers, will be brought out from Hussaini Dalan Imambara in Old Dhaka. Security has been beefed up there to ensure smooth observance of Ashura. Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes highlighting the significance of the day. President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion. In his message, President Hamid said, “Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. No religion supports violence, hatred and conflict. On this holy day of Ashura, I wish for establishment of equality, justice-based and peaceful society as well as unity, solidarity and continuous progress of the Muslim Ummah.” Hasina in her message said, “We all keep upholding the message of the holy Ashura in our hearts and participate in public welfare activities from our respective positions in establishing truth and justice in the national life and build a non-discriminatory, happy, prosperous and peaceful golden Bangladesh as envisioned by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.”

## US finally gets on board

FROM PAGE 1 approximately 14 lakh people, including 9,20,000 Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char, but as of June, only 13 percent of the fund has been disbursed. Momen said Dhaka updated Sison the status of the nearly one million Rohingyas sheltered in the camps in Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char and the various funding and other challenges the country has been facing for their prolonged stay in the country. He said Dhaka also sought US’s assistance in The Gambia’s Rohingya genocide case against Myanmar and also expressed gratitude towards the Biden Administration for determining atrocities against Rohingyas as genocide early this year. Dhaka also spoke about the possibility of third-country resettlement of the Rohingyas, but noted that repatriating them to Myanmar was the best solution. The foreign secretary was asked if there could be any problems when Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed, one of the seven police officials sanctioned by the US in December last year, attends the third UN Chiefs of Police Summit at the UN headquarters in New York from August 31 to September 1. “Let’s see ... if there is no problem, we are hoping he can attend. If there is any problem, we will try to learn it beforehand,” Momen said. There is a “gentleman’s agreement” under UN norms that will allow Benazir to attend the event, he said. “But in my experience, there have

been a few exceptions to this rule. It is difficult to predict until it happens.” Asked if there is any risk that the US immigration will deny Benazir entry, Masud said they have not yet spoken about it but may inquire. “As a government order has been issued, it means he [Benazir] has plans to go.” Sison also talked about food security, climate change and freedom of speech and human rights as well. “We said we are plugging the loopholes of the Digital Security Act. We want the law not to be applied in a manner that [negatively] affects anybody,” Momen said. A German consultant is working on how to improve the application of the act, he added. The foreign secretary sought the US State Department support in withdrawing the sanctions imposed on Rab and seven of its current and former officials. Sison said it was a legal matter and Dhaka should engage accordingly, which Momen said Dhaka was doing. Momen said Bangladesh agreed to work with the US on holding an event on tackling future pandemics on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York next month. It is testimony to Bangladesh’s success in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic. Sison also held a meeting with UN representatives in Dhaka, Bangladesh officials of different ministries and discussed issues around Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Diesel driving up prices of vegetables

FROM PAGE 1 ruhi fish for Tk 300 each kg yesterday. Five days ago it was Tk 270. “I bought a bundle of gourd leaves for Tk 30 and sonali chicken for Tk 300 per kg. I used to spend Tk 20 and Tk 260-270 for those,” he said. Yardlong bean was Tk 40-50 per kg, pointed gourd Tk 35-40, pumpkin Tk 25-30, snake gourd Tk 30-40, ridge gourd Tk 40-50 and green papaya Tk 30 at the kitchen markets in Karwan Bazar, Mirpur, Kalshi Bazar, Rupnagar, and Pallabi extension areas yesterday.

Retailers said prices of these vegetables increased by Tk 1 to Tk 3 a kg mainly due to increased transportation cost. Darul Huda, a shopper, told this newspaper, “My employer will not increase my salary. How will I support my family with the limited monthly income of Tk 30,000?” **HIGH TRUCK FARES** Bachchu Mia, owner of Chandpur Rice Agency at Karwan Bazar, said he purchased rice from Chapainawabganj two days ago and brought it to Dhaka by a truck. Due

to the increase in the fuel price, the truck fare went up to Tk 23,000 from Tk 18,000. “We sold each 50kg sack of BR-28 rice for Tk 2,450 a few days ago. Now we are selling it for Tk 2,750,” he added. Noor Alam, manager of Matri Bhandar Store in the same market, said it used to cost them Tk 22,000 to bring a truckload of Indian onion from Satkhira. Now it is Tk 27,000. Indian onion was selling for Tk 31 a kg at wholesale yesterday, up from Tk 30 five days ago.

## Teen gang-raped twice

FROM PAGE 12 Around 8:00pm, Hasan came with his friend Raju and took the girl to a jungle in Bandrapara village, where the two raped her and fled. When she screamed for help, five other men – Saiful, Sabuj, 30, Aminul Islam alias Dipjal, 25, Nazrul, 40, Amar, 30 – came to the spot. However, instead of helping her, they too raped her. Amar then left her on the roadside and they all fled.

One Abdul Mannan found her there in a bad condition and took her to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital early Sunday. Upon information, her parents came to the hospital and heard from their daughter about what happened in detail, after which the father filed the case. Police said they are looking for Hasan and the four others, who have been on the run since the incident.