

'Self and Others': Rumky's mysterious and magical artistry

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AISHWARYA RAIHAN

The opening ceremony for Hasura Akther Rumky's first solo exhibition, *Self and Others*, took place at Alliance Francaise de Dhaka (AFD) on Friday, January 27.

The exhibition was inaugurated by prominent artist Shahabuddin Ahmed and actress Shomi Kaiser. After giving everyone a warm welcome, the guests opened the event with their individual speeches.

Shomi Kaiser spoke about how Rumky had to go against her parents' wishes to pursue a higher education in fine arts. After this, a short musical performance took place, after which Shahabuddin Ahmed cheered for the artist in a joyous voice. With the inauguration ceremony over, the exhibition was underway.

Hasura Akther Rumky



Legendary artist Shahabuddin Ahmed observes a painting by Rumky

PHOTOS: COURTESY

and bagging numerous awards, she set out to hold her own solo exhibition.

La Galerie of AFD was adorned with Rumky's portrait collection, most of which encapsulates her work over the last three years. She particularly enjoys painting portraits and has shown her skills through mediums of pastel, charcoal, acrylic, and oil.

The curator of the exhibition, Zahangir Alom said, "The mood Rumky has created by the lines and colours is a mysterious and magical combination of buoyancy and sobriety."

Upon asking about her paintings that feature rickshaw-pullers, the artist shares how rickshaws were the only mode of transport on her way to work and back home, becoming something of a constant in her life. So, whatever she observed during

those rickshaw-rides came alive through her art, such as the series 'Rickshaw Puller', 'Napping' and many more.

Due to her love for textures, Rumky has produced acrylic and mixed-media pieces. 'Fancy in the Twilight-1,2', 'Interlude-1,2',



'Pigeons in the Blue' portray the desired freedom of women that is not yet fully accepted by the society. The portrait of her mother, which is eye-soothing to say the least, shows the warmth

of affection in her heart. Rumky has also painted the image of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with much elegance.

Rumky's interest in folk music motivated her to do portraits of Bauls, especially well-known figures like Paban Das Baul and Parvathy Baul. The part and parcel of Bengali culture, Rabindranath Tagore's images are also seen on Rumky's canvas, accompanied by precise strokes and remarkable accuracy. Exploring the concept of duality in human souls, Rumky has created self-portraits where two of her images interlock gracefully.

The best part of this exhibition has been Rumky's brilliant versatility as an artist. AFD will run this open-for-all exhibition till February 1.



'Myself Allen Swapon' to hit Chorki soon

Shihab Shaheen's series *Syndicate* starring Afran Nisho, Nazifa Tushi, Tasnia Farin and Nasir Uddin Khan, was much loved by the audience. One of its characters 'Allen Swapon' and his quirky dialogues became viral all-over social media.

Nasir Uddin Khan, who played the character of 'Allen Swapon' caught people's attention with his catchy punchlines in his native Chittagong-dialect. Due to the craze around Allen's character, Shihab Shaheen has decided to make its spin-off *Myself Allen Swapon* for Chorki.

The spin-off will star Nasir Uddin Khan, Rafiath Rashid Mithila, Sumon Anowar and Abdullah Al Sentu among others.

Nepal International Film Festival to screen three Bangladeshi films

For the sixth time, the Nepal International Film Festival is going to kick-off on March 16. The event is going to take place in Kathmandu.

Three Bangladeshi films that will be featured in the festival are—Jibon Shahadat's *Nameplate* in the 'Short Live Action' category; Noor Imran Mithu's *Patalghar* and Khandaker Sumon's *Saatao*, both of which will be competing in the 'World Panorama' category.

The festival will showcase 95 films, which were selected from a total of 250 submissions. In total, 60 countries across the world, participated by submitting films for the festival. The festival will conclude on March 20.



completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees from the department of Oriental Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. After taking part in several group exhibitions

NEWS

Indian foreign

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"My office will be able to tell you about the Indian Foreign Secretary's visit schedule, but we have various issues of bilateral relationship, including Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and of course G20 summit," Foreign Minister Momen told this correspondent last night.

"India has invited us to attend the G20 summit and we are honoured for this. India wants to be the voice of the global south and wants to take us onboard. We are very happy," he said.

The Group of Twenty or G20 is an economic cooperation which was formed on 26th September 1999. The G20 cooperation has 20 members -- the European Union (EU) and 19 other countries.

The G20 members include Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the US, the UK, the EU and Turkey. They cover more than 75 percent of global trade, 80 percent of the world's GDP and more than 60 percent of the planet's population.

The main agenda of the G20 is to ensure global financial stability and sustain sovereign debt.

Biden names new White House chief of staff

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden on Friday named his former top Covid-19 aide Jeff Zients to White House chief of staff -- one of the most crucial positions in an administration gearing up for a likely re-election campaign.

Zients replaces Ron Klain, who saw Biden through the first two years of his term in the post, arguably the most powerful behind-the-scenes job in any US administration. The swap will take place on February 8, a day after Biden delivers his State of the Union address to Congress.

The departure of Klain, who has worked with Biden throughout his decades-long Washington career -- from senator to vice president, then victor over Donald Trump in 2020 -- will deprive the 80-year-old president of an especially close, trusted aide.

Slum women left to fend for

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complications, nutrition imbalance, and delivery or family planning difficulties. Missing vaccines can lead to other health issues."

Pregnant mothers are also recommended to take iron and folic acid, calcium carbonate, and vitamin B supplements with a diet rich in nutrition-dense foods.

However, six-month-pregnant Rina, from Kalyanpur slum, said, "Sometimes, we have to skip meals. How will we afford milk, fruits or supplements?"

The government's Maternal and Child Health Training Centre provides free ANC and prenatal vitamins for the underprivileged, but most of the women in slums are unaware of this.

An overwhelming majority of the expectant mothers in slums, who were interviewed by The Daily Star, showed preference for home births, unless they experienced earlier pregnancy complications or suffered from any life-threatening conditions.

The BUHS survey also said almost half of all slum mothers prefer to deliver at home, even though facility deliveries has increased by 17 percent in 2021 from 2013.

Only two interviewees said they wish to deliver at hospitals as both of them had faced major complications during previous home births with untrained midwives.

About financial aid from the government or NGOs, they said people come to note down their names and promise money that never comes.

"Earlier, I saw NGO officials come to our slums, but during my pregnancy, there was none," said Sabina.

Health and nutrition experts say slum mothers must get priority in the government's nutrition programmes, especially after the pandemic largely affected their dietary patterns.

The BUHS survey also found that in children of urban slums, the rates of under-5 stunting is 34 percent, wasting is 16 percent and being underweight 28 percent. All three rates are the highest compared to other urban areas.

Slum mothers were even excluded from the women and children affairs ministry's programme titled "Maternity Allowance", initiated in 2010-11, for the poor and underprivileged pregnant women

to meet their increased nutritional demands.

Additionally, another ministry's project -- "Karmajibi Lactating Mother Sohayota Tobbil" -- provided training and a Tk 800 monthly allowance to 2,77,000 underprivileged lactating mothers for three years. However, only 133 women of the Kalyanpur slum received the money.

Both programmes were later merged and renamed as "Ma O Shishu Sohayota Kormosuchi".

In 2022-23 fiscal, 7,740 poor expecting and lactating mothers of Dhaka South and North are supposed to receive Tk 800 per month through this programme.

But this number represents only 0.62 percent of the mothers in the capital's urban areas compared to the total targeted beneficiaries (12,54,000).

"The total allocation for this year is Tk 12,43,000 crore, 98 percent of which will be disbursed as allowances," said Rubina Ghani, director of the new programme.

However, finalising the beneficiaries took time as the women's affairs division faced some delay in paying the Election Commission to verify their NIDs, as per a finance ministry directive.

The money has been paid now, she said.

"Slum mothers can now apply for the allowance but the NID verification and receiving the money will be a month-long process."

Sabalenska breaks

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and change for Sabalenka, who had often appeared to let her emotions halt her progress on the big stage, as she dropped her sports psychologist in pre-season. Sabalenka also worked with a biomechanics trainer to improve her cannonball serve, which tended to fail her in big moments in the past, and the results were evident before the year's first Grand Slam as she won the Adelaide International 1 title.

After finally securing her first Grand Slam on Saturday, she dropped to the floor in delight and then walked up to Rybakina's side of the court to hug her before embracing her emotional entourage in the players' box. Her coach Anton Dubrov was seen crying with joy at one point.

Last two JS polls

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The ongoing crisis about the election-time government is not a constitutional problem, rather a political issue, he added.

Badiul said almost all members of the 104-member special parliamentary committee on constitutional amendment recommended keeping the caretaker government system in the 15th amendment. "But the committee's recommendation changed after a meeting with the prime minister."

The 15th amendment was brought before parliament following the Supreme Court verdict that announced the 13th amendment to the constitution illegal. The 13th amendment incorporated the caretaker government system in the constitution.

The supreme court also ignored the recommendations of amici curiae, Badiul added.

Jurist Shahdeen Malik said the judgement revoking the 13th amendment was the "most damaging verdict" in the last 50 years. He termed it a "predetermined judgement". "The amendment to the constitution was hastened. It destroyed the process of peaceful transfer of power and political settlement," he said.

Shahdeen said whenever a national election was held under a partisan government, the ruling party won it.

The 15th amendment was tabled in parliament so that ruling party can stay in power, he said.

Ridwanul Hoque, senior law officer at Charles Darwin University of Australia, said it is necessary to involve both the ruling and opposition parties in the process of any constitutional amendment. "But in reality, only the ruling party controls everything [in Bangladesh]."

No referendum was held in the country on most of the constitutional amendments, including the 15th, meaning the people were ignored, he said.

Researcher Adeeba Aziz Khan said successive ruling parties brought changes to the constitution in their own interests. Both the Awami League and BNP were against the caretaker government system during their time in power, she added.

It contains oldest

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belt between Mars and Jupiter and contain some of the oldest material in the solar system.

'Big attacks'

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Abdullah Al Mamun, 23, Din Islam, 25, and Abdullah Al Mamun, 46.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed each of the six arrestees on a three-day remand.

Addressing a briefing yesterday, CTC Chief Md Asaduzzaman said Fakhru, an active member of Huji-B, was a security guard at a Gazipur madrasa in 1988.

Later that year, he went to Karachi from Bangladesh and met Mufti Zakir Hossain, a Bangladesh-born madrasa principal in Karachi and also the military commander of the Al-Qaeda.

Under Zakir's guidance, Fakhru received training, travelling between Pakistan and Afghanistan several times, said Asaduzzaman.

He received training on different types of firearms at Shamshad hill of Kandahar. He even worked as security staffer at the hill for four hours daily, armed with an AK-47, said the official.

At the end of the training, Fakhru returned to Pakistan in 1995 and then went to Tehran, where he stayed for three years. In 1998, he returned to Pakistan, got an Indian visa from there, and returned to Bangladesh through India.

CTTC officials said Huji-B became an outfit without leaders due to many top leaders being arrested in drives by law enforcers.

Fakhru started taking part in

Huji-B activities after his return to the country but was arrested in 2005. He, however, managed to secure bail within six months.

Recently, he took charge of the outfit and was working to revive its activities.

He used to communicate with his associates and supporters of the outfit through encrypted apps. Fakhru also maintains connections with other Huji-B members staying abroad and was hatching a plan for big attacks, said investigators.

As part of training the members, he shared a 10-page document to teach them how to make bombs and time-bombs at home, said the CTC chief.

During the press briefing, the CTC showed a bomb-making video tutorial made by the outfit, in which they tried to lure people into the path of militancy.

He claimed that Fakhru and his son Saiful, along with other Huji-B members, donated a huge amount of money to Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar to recruit members from there.

"We have come to know that they have managed to recruit some Rohingyas," he said, without elaborating on the number and the amount Huji-B donated.

"We are now trying to verify the source of funding and conducting drives to arrest the absconding members of the outfit."

Rajshahi all set to welcome PM

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to the city to greet Sheikh Hasina as she has initiated unprecedented development in the region.

"We have nothing to ask for. She is already doing what the people of this region need."

Law enforcement agencies have taken tight security measures. Flying drones in the city have been prohibited since Friday, and there is a ban on carrying weapons or explosives.

Hasina last visited Rajshahi on February 22, 2018, to address an electoral rally at the same venue.

TRAINS HIRED

Apart from buses and trucks, the AL

hired at least seven local trains.

The trains, with a total of 10,306 seats, were hired for Tk 1,290,007, Ashim Kumar Talukhder, general manager of Bangladesh Railway (west zone), told The Daily Star.

"Railway headquarters decided to rent out the trains upon applications from the party," he said.

Two trains were allocated for Chapainawabganj district -- one from Chapainawabganj station and another from Rohonpur station.

The other trains will start from Panchbibi station of Joypurhat, Santahar of Bogura, Natore, Sirajganj, and Arani station of Rajshahi.