

The journey of street art IN BANGLADESH

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In April of this year, the Dhaka North City Corporation embarked on a creative endeavour to enhance the visual landscape of the capital city. Their project involved adorning the pillars of flyovers and the metro rail with vibrant graffiti artwork embellished with important awareness messages. Already underway, a team of Dhaka University artists is at work, using their skills to create visually appealing art, while conveying essential messages. These messages aim to discourage unnecessary car horn usage, promote protection against mosquitoes, and combat issues like waterlogging, contributing to both the city's



PHOTO: COLLECTED

campus walls, including the iconic Madhu's canteen, just last month. Notably, this graffiti spree, led by Anisur Rahman Khandoker, a former general secretary candidate, signifies an interesting shift in the perception of street art. Beyond Madhu's canteen, these artistic expressions have left their mark on locations such as the DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students' Union) Cafeteria and the Arts Building, with over 20 graffiti pieces in total. These urban murals feature slogans like "Save the Country, Save the People" and "Take Back Bangladesh", providing insight into the evolving nature of street art.

This isn't the first time Dhaka has witnessed such graffiti bearing unexplained messages. Earlier in 2016, another kind of graffiti appeared in Bangladesh's capital. Suddenly, people found examples of strange street art in the Agargaon borough depicting a man running with a cage and a sun trapped inside it. Accompanying the images was an ominous warning— "Subodh, run; your luck's run out." Similar graffiti emerged in a number of other areas of Dhaka in the months that followed. It serves as a modern manifestation of a long-standing tradition of political graffiti in Bangladesh.

The country has a history of using street art to voice opinions, dating back to 1952. During the period of the Language Movement, artists created wall art against the Pakistani government, led by Rafiqun Nabi and other renowned artists. Back then, political persons used to create stencils of their party symbols on walls.

Street art's origins can be traced back to graffiti tags appearing on New York City's streets and subways in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These crude signatures were initially seen as rebellious acts of vandalism. However, they soon evolved into something more significant. The pivotal moments in street art's history came with artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring in the 1980s. They introduced sophistication and social commentary to the streets, blurring the lines between graffiti and fine art. While street art was born in New York City, it quickly spread globally, with cities like London, Berlin, and Sao Paulo becoming hubs.

While graffiti art, mainly artworks done on walls, is getting widely popular in developing countries like India, Iran, China, etc, as a culture, in Bangladesh, it remains an individual effort. In Dhaka, a vibrant street art scene has taken root. Artists like Ariful Haque, known as Ink Bandit, and Ashim Halder Sagor have used their art to address pressing social issues, from climate change to women's rights. Despite Bangladesh's lenient laws regarding graffiti, a unique form known as *Chika Mara*, mainly consisting of political slogans and advertisements, dominates the public wall.

Street art, from its rebellious beginnings on the streets of New York City to its current status as a respected and sought-after medium around the world, has become a testament to the power of art to challenge norms and spark change.

However, the emergence of the Subodh series of graffiti in Bangladesh underscores the evolving nature of street art and its intersection with the socio-political landscape of the country. Just as street art has transcended its origins as vandalism to become a respected art form on the global stage, it has also found a unique voice in Bangladesh, addressing critical issues through visual storytelling. In a country with a long and rich tradition of political graffiti, such a series of street art represent a modern manifestation of the art form. It serves as a reminder that street art continues to be a dynamic force in shaping the socio-political discourse, provoking thought, and fostering dialogue.

As artists in Bangladesh continue to embrace street art as a means of creative expression and social change, their work adds a unique and powerful dimension to the global conversation on urban art.

Angelina Jolie returns to screen as iconic opera singer Maria



The wait is finally over! Angelina Jolie's first glimpse as famed opera singer Maria Callas in Pablo Larrain's movie *Maria* has been released.

The film will chronicle the tumultuous, beautiful, and tragic narrative of the world's finest female opera singer, focusing on her final days in the 1970s in Paris.

Jolie's outfits are inspired by authentic Callas ensembles, including antique fur items from Massimo Cantini Parrini's archives collection, on which they collaborated with PETA to avoid using new fur.

Meghdol announces solo concert to celebrate over 20 years together

A voyage of university friends that initially began when casually belting out songs together on their campus transitioned officially in 2002. That year, these friends finally formed their band Meghdol.

The popular rock band has now surpassed 20 years together, so it is gearing up to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The band has organised a solo concert titled *Shorote Meghdol* to mark its journey of over 20 years. The event will be held on October 13 at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in the capital.

Notably, Meghdol has released two studio albums since its debut. The songs of its third album *Aluminum Er Dana*, are now coming out. This album's title track was released on August 18.



COUNTRYWIDE

Risky bamboo bridge their only means



Villagers have to cross this 200-metre-long risky bamboo bridge over a canal in Barguna's Taltali upazila to go to their destinations.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Thousands of people of 21 villages under two upazilas of Barguna have been suffering a lot for years for want of a permanent bridge over a canal.

In absence of a permanent bridge, a 200-metre-long bamboo bridge over Charakgachhia Canal in Taltali upazila has been the only way of road communication for people those village, much to the suffering of local residents.

Villagers have to cross the risky bridge to travel to different areas including Taltali and Amtali upazila headquarters.

Villagers said about 20,000 residents of Pachankodalia, Arpangashia, Chandkhali, Kalarang and Ghopkhali villages under Amtali upazila and several other villages under Taltali upazila use the bamboo bridge to go to their destinations every day.

Local residents built the 200-metre-long bamboo bridge at their own initiative about 25 years ago.

Prior to setting up the makeshift bridge, villagers used to cross the canal by small boats.

Villagers said as there are several primary, secondary and higher secondary

schools on either side of the makeshift bridge, around 500 students of different educational institutions use the bridge, amid risk.

Shahidul Islam, a resident of Charakgachhia village, said they have to face serious difficulties while taking their agricultural products to nearby local markets by crossing the long bamboo bridge.

As a result, they have to travel five-kilometre additional path to carry their agricultural goods through alternative route, which costs them extra time and money, he added.

Alif Raihan, a Class VIII student at Charakgachhia Secondary School, said fear grip them when they cross the risky bridge to go to their school every day.

Pachankodalia Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Abdul Razzak said he has urged the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) authorities to build a permanent bridge over Charakgachhia Canal, but to no avail. Taltali LGED Upazila Engineer Intiaz Hossain Russell said soon a project proposal for construction of a concrete bridge over the canal will sent to the higher authorities for approval.

Police clear ASI who drove seized bus

FROM PAGE 12 professional licence that permits him to drive such buses. He also worked at the traffic division of the DMP as a driver, the SI said in the investigation report.

The IO said Roni had caused an accident, injuring constable Nasir Uddin, and fled the scene along with his assistant abandoning the vehicle. The ASI tried to take the bus to a safer place.

After the incident on December 30, 2021, a correspondent of this paper visited the spot and talked to over two dozen eyewitnesses.

They said ASI Emadul stopped the bus near Kaptan Bazar Complex and forced the driver to get out

of the vehicle. The ASI then sat behind the steering wheel and was driving the bus to the nearby Sergeant Ahad Police Box when he lost control and ran over and killed two people.

IO Jahangir told The Daily Star that while two people were killed, ASI Emadul did not drive the bus recklessly; rather the incident happened when he tried to save a person.

"I submitted what I found during the investigation. I talked to the seniors and submitted a final report in the case," he told The Daily Star on October 2.

Asked whether the victims' families were being deprived of justice,

the IO said, "The victims' families told me they had no objections [to the final report]."

Golam Mostafa, elder brother of Sukur, one of the victims, said, "Nearly two years have passed ... What is the point of demanding justice now? My brother will never return."

When asked what an ordinary citizen's fate would be if he or she did what ASI Emadul did, the IO skirted the question and said Emadul was in jail for seven months only

because he was a police officer.

Ordinary people get bail in one and a half months in cases filed under this act, he said.

Golam Mostafa, elder brother of Sukur, one of the victims, said, "Nearly two years have passed ... What is the point of demanding justice now? My brother will never return."

Asked whether they settled with the accused, he replied in the negative.

Talking to The Daily Star, a police official said law enforcers should never drive a vehicle involved in an accident. "The vehicle should be towed for safety reasons ...," he told The Daily Star preferring anonymity.

Metro to run for 3 hours after opening

FROM PAGE 12 will be operated 8:00am to 8:00pm on the entire line," he said.

After the three months, operations time of metro rail will also be increased further and trains will run every day without days off.

"We came to know that the prime minister will inaugurate the section on October 29. But we are yet to get an official confirmation," he told reporters at a press briefing at the DMTCCL office.

Siddique said the metro rail will remain closed on October 14 and 15 for system integration test. October 13 is Friday. The service is closed on Fridays.

Let the heavy defeat not deflate Tigers

FROM PAGE 1 lost the first three wickets for 26 runs inside six overs, a position from where they never recovered and were eventually bundled out for 227.

Left-arm pacer Reece Topley started the carnage by having young opener Tanzid Hasan and one-down Najmul Hossain off successive deliveries in the

second over before having Shakib with a beautiful delivery that just moved enough to rattle the top of the off-stump.

Bangladesh were reduced to 4-49 when 'impact player' Mehedi Hasan Miraz edged an attempted drive off Chris Woakes to England captain Jos Buttler behind the wicket.

It was good to see

opener Liton Das scoring some runs. The elegant right-handed batter struck a fluent 76 off 66 balls and looked well set to cross the three-figure mark before misreading a slower delivery from Woakes and offering a tame catch behind the wicket.

Experienced campaigner Mushfiqur Rahim, who steadied the rocking boat

by putting on 71 runs for the fifth wicket with Liton, also hit a half-century. But after his departure at 164-6, the remaining batters were left with the task of reducing the margin of defeat.

The defeat was disappointing for the Tigers after a good start against Afghanistan. But it was always on the cards and there is no shame in

losing against a top time like England.

However, going into their next game against New Zealand on October 13 in Chennai, the Tigers need to do something to address the opening headache if they are to be competitive against the big teams in the showpiece event. Otherwise, they will end up as an also-ran like they did in the past.

Is EC capable of holding fair polls?

FROM PAGE 1 Several meeting sources said the US mission enquired how the law and order is maintained during an election.

The CEC in the meeting talked about the commission's activities. He said the commission believes that if an election is held in a participatory manner, a kind of balance can be maintained.

Habibul and other election commissioners presented details of the legal powers the EC has during the election. They said presiding officers are empowered to stop voting if they feel that the situation is not conducive to continuing voting. Election results are announced from the polling centres and votes are counted in front of the candidates or polling

The US delegation wanted to know what actions the EC can take if any official performing election duties does not follow its directives.

agents appointed by them. The US delegation wanted to know what actions the EC can take if any official performing election duties

does not follow its directives. In reply, the CEC said the EC writes to the offices concerned informing them about those officials and the offices can take actions in this regard.

Habibul at the briefing said the US team enquired the roles of the EC and the government during the elections and also how the commission coordinate with the government

during the polls. "We presented before them the whole election process. We have been able to explain everything to them," he said.

The US mission's visit is taking place about three weeks after the European Union announced that it will not send a fully-fledged election observation team for the Bangladesh general election.