



ZAHANGIR ALOM

“In my life of 80 years, I have been in the arts for 65. In that time, I have only learned. I am still learning, and maybe if I live a few more years, I will be worthy enough to be called an artist,” said the legendary Rafiqun Nabi, adoringly known as Ranabi, in the opening ceremony of his retrospective exhibition yesterday, in a moment of pure humility.

The month-long exhibition commemorates the great artist’s 80th birthday (November 28), arranged jointly by Gallery Chitrak, Rafiqun Nabi’s 80th birthday celebratory committee 2023. The exhibition will take place at the Bangladesh National Museum and Gallery Chitrak simultaneously.

“We are out of our depth when it comes to talking about an artist like Rafiqun Nabi, he is one of my most treasured confidantes. Our friendship goes back a long way when we used to secretly mobilize against the Pakistan regime around 1966/67 – Nabi *bhai*, along with his friends, used to help us with posters we needed”, said cultural personality and renowned actor, Asaduzzaman Noor, MP, who

presided over the event.

The chief guest of the programme was Jatiya Sansad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, who noted in her speech, “We can see the painstaking journey of our nation through his paintings over the years. He is one of the rare art ‘historians’ of our nation who curated our history through his paintings. His most commendable artform is perhaps his satirical arts, such as in Tokai. We used to wait for the newspapers only to see his cartoons.”

Many more dignitaries spoke during the event, including the special guest, Dr A A M S Arefin Siddique, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Professor Nisar Hossain, an eminent artist and Dean, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka, Director General of Bangladesh National Museum, MD Kamruzzaman.

Near the end of the event, the dignitaries unveiled a historically important book collection, ***Tokai O Ommano Cartoon***.

Previously On the eve of the opening ceremony of the exclusive exhibition, Rafiqun Nabi, the harbinger of the famous cartoon

character ‘Tokai’, talked to The Daily Star. “Artists are always young. They see the world differently. Age cannot limit their creative thought process and practice,” he said. “I am ceaselessly working with love, passion and socio-political consciousness

my entire life to it. I always kept my creative spirit alive beginning from my school life, till date. I have tried to take essence from my beautiful motherland and portrayed diverse works mingling with my aesthetic lens.”



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Rafiqun Nabi presents one of his artworks to Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, in presence of dignitaries.

and commitment to Bangladesh’s nature and humanity.”

He continued, “I don’t know whether my works will encompass eternity. However, I have dedicated

Unlike many artists, Rafiqun Nabi never indulged in self-centric mundane interests of reputation. Rather, he was involved in many glorious movements, be it: political,



cultural or educational. Our founding father of fine art, Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, together with his contemporaries, established the art institution what is now the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka, which brought forth many legendary artists, critics, designers and many other art professionals in the country.

“Abedin *sir* emphasised on creating a movement, using the weapons of art and education. I feel proud to be a part of that noble initiative. Again, we were involved in many glorious movements ranging from the Language Movement to the Liberation War,” he said. “We took part in those movements and processions with cartoons, posters and caricatures feeling a solemn responsibility for the society, our political identity and above all, humanity. We, the artists, ideated many slogans, posters and

cartoons for many processions and movements. Yet, we worked for nourishing our souls and for a living,” said the artist.

Another initiative has been taken to make the artist’s birthday festive on November 28. Starting from 3pm on the day, the weeklong exhibition will be held at Zainul Gallery-1 and 2, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka. The special exhibition will feature Rafiqun Nabi’s cartoons, book covers and posters. Apart from this, a four-volume book will be officially published on his cartoon collection. Another book, titled ***Unshotturer Chhora*** will be published, where the artist embellished this collection of rhymes published in 1969.

The author is an artist, art critic and a contributor for Arts & Entertainment, The Daily Star.

NEWS

King Kohli

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Sunday’s game was touted as a dress rehearsal for the title clash later this month and it was India who took control early and set up their eighth successive victory.

They elected to bat first after winning the toss and took advantage of some wayward pace bowling by Marco Jansen to make a blazing start but skipper Rohit Sharma fell for a 24-ball 40 as he looked to launch first-change Kagiso Rabada over mid-off.

After reaching 91.1 in the powerplay, the hosts lost opener Shubman Gill (23) to an unplayable delivery from Keshav Maharaj in the 11th over as South Africa brought the run-rate under control with spin.

Elements

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summit level gatherings to address these particular issues.”

There is no institutional entity operating within the region other than a dysfunctional Saarc.

The South Asian countries should re-enact the previous process of regional interaction that led to economic cooperation, he said.

In the past, people could move around the South Asian region with considerable freedom at subaltern levels. They could do so within the common labour market, where everyone could get work opportunities.

The ordinary people could move around for treatment and educational purposes, he said.

“South Asia was certainly an integrated region in the post-colonial world,” Sobhan added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of CPD, presented a summary of the conference.

“I think, the conference’s overall focus is how to move forward the South Asian Regional Partnership and Cooperation despite having changes and challenges in the national and international arena,” he added.

Five hurt

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Selim Mondol, chairman of Birulia Union Parishad, also denied that any locals attacked the students.

SM Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said students vandalised and torched some shops in the Chandgaon area. “We visited the spot and are looking into the matter.”

Cox’s Bazar, 3 more dists to get new trains

ROUTE	FROM	DEPARTURE	TO	ARRIVAL	JOURNEY TIME
Dhaka-Sylhet	Dhaka	9:30 AM	Sylhet	3:00 PM	5 hrs 30 mins
	Sylhet	6:00 PM	Dhaka	11:30 PM	
Dhaka-Noakhali	Dhaka	8:00 AM	Noakhali	1:30 PM	5 hrs 40 mins
	Noakhali	2:30 PM	Dhaka	8:10 PM	
Dhaka-Lalmonirhat	Dhaka	8:30 AM	Lalmonirhat	6:00 PM	9 hrs 30 mins
	Lalmonirhat	9:10 PM	Dhaka	7:00 AM	9 hrs 50 mins
Dhaka-Cox’s Bazar	Dhaka	10:30 PM	Cox’s Bazar	6:40 AM	8 hrs 10 mins
	Cox’s Bazar	1:00 PM	Dhaka	9:10 PM	

SOURCE: BANGLADESH RAILWAY

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rail network, BR sources said.

To fulfil that promise, BR is going to launch an intercity train on the Dhaka-Lalmonirhat route that will make stops at Dhaka airport, Joydebpur, Tangail, Bangabandhu Bridge East, Baral Bridge of Ullapara, Natore, Santahar, Bogura, Sonatala, Bonarpara, Gaibandha, Bamandanga, Pirgacha, and Kaunia.

It will take 9 hours and 30 minutes from Dhaka to Lalmonirhat and 9 hours

and 50 minutes for the return journey.

“We will then operate local and commuter trains to take passengers from Lalmonirhat to Burimari,” a BR official said, wishing not to be named.

Currently, BR operates one intercity train on the route.

BR has built a new rail line between Chattogram’s Dohazari and Cox’s Bazar, and the prime minister is scheduled to inaugurate the line on November 11.

The state-run transport authority

is going to launch a train on the Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox’s Bazar route that will make two stops – Dhaka airport and Chattogram – taking 8 hours and 10 minutes for the journey.

The train service is likely to launch in early December, sources said.

Since 2009, when Awami League took power, the BR has launched 143 new trains and extended routes of 44 other trains, according to official documents.

Shortened travel time

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College Hospital, told The Daily Star at the station.

“I’ve been waiting for this [the opening of the section] for a long time ... My family used to worry about my commute, especially during political unrest. I believe the metro rail is a safe mode of transport and will ease their concerns.”

She now hopes the government would extend the section’s operation hours so that she can return home as fast as she reaches her workplace.

Currently, trains on the route are being operated for four hours daily – 7:30am to 11:30am.

After the opening of the Uttara-Agargaon section in December last year, a train now takes 17 minutes to complete a commute on the route

From Agargaon, it now takes 14 minutes to reach Motijheel.

With three stations operating at the moment, the commute from Uttara to Motijheel now takes 31 minutes.

This correspondent visited the Secretariat and Motijheel stations and saw almost all the trains were overcrowded. Though many had to stand, they were not complaining.

Joya Kundu was overheard talking to another passenger while heading

towards Motijheel – “You can’t imagine how much the metro rail service is benefiting me.”

Every day, she picks up her son, a first-year student, from Notre Dame college and takes him back home in Farmgate.

Speaking to this correspondent, she said, “I’m going to the college to pick him using the train, but we’ll have to return by bus. It’ll get easier when the operation times of the route will be extended.”

For Moinal Islam, who works in Motijheel, and his wife Halima Khatun, a senior assistant secretary at the law ministry, the metro rail not only save time but also money.

Before the section opened yesterday, they would have to spend Tk 280 each every day for rickshaw or CNG-run auto-rickshaw fares to get to their offices from home in North Kafrul.

“Today [yesterday], we reached our offices at the cost of just Tk 140, thanks to the metro rail,” Moinal told this correspondent at the Secretariat station.

Ashiquzzaman Khan, who is usually stuck in traffic for about two hours when he goes to his office in Motijheel from his Kazipara home, said, “I arrived in just 20 minutes! I can’t even express how happy I am.”

Irregularities mar by-polls to B’baria-2

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constituencies and found irregularities at six.

There are 132 polling stations in Brahmanbaria and 115 in Laxmipur.

In Brahmanbaria, Ziaul Haque Mridha, an independent, told reporters around 2:00pm that his agents and supporters were kicked out of the centres.

Ziaul, a two-time lawmaker from the Jatiya Party, also alleged that ballot stuffing by AL men was rampant at seven polling stations in Ashuganj upazila’s Sharifpur, Andidil, Jatrapur, Baratolla, Tekerpar, Char-chartola and Naoghat areas.

He demanded cancellation of polling at those centres.

He said voter lists at the polling centres in Sarail upazila were not updated.

At Borotolla Government Primary School in Ashuganj around 3:15pm,

a correspondent of this paper saw 15-20 boys and girls entering the polling booths after they were taken to the polling stations by local AL leaders.

Several men and women were seen openly stamping ballot papers on the ground floor while most of the polling officers were having lunch on the second floor.

Locals said this was going on since morning at the other six centres in Ashuganj union.

Contacted, MP-elect Sajuj and Returning Officer Shahgir Alam said the allegations were baseless.

“Every centre had strict security arrangements, and there was no room for vote rigging,” said Shahgir, also deputy commissioner of Brahmanbaria.

In Laxmipur, Jatiya Party candidate Rakib Hosen and Zaker Party candidate Shamsul Karim Khokon boycotted the by-poll, citing

vote rigging by AL activists.

They separately made their announcement at Laxmipur Press Club. Rakib said he visited different polling centres and found that none of his agents were able to enter the centres.

“Little boys and girls had cast votes in Boralia Government Primary School in Laxmipur sadar,” he said, adding that he saw no voter in front of the centres, but found that 140-150 votes were already cast at almost every booth.

Zaker Party candidate Shamsul Karim Khokon told reporters that local AL leaders and activists had each cast 10-15 fake votes.

“They kicked out 36 agents of mine,” he said.

However, MP-elect Golam Faruk Pinku and National Peoples’ Party candidate Selim Mahmud said the by-election was fair.

KNF agrees to maintain

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Yesterday’s two-hour-long meeting started at 11:50am amid tight security.

Bandarban Hill District Council Chairman Kyaw Shoi Hla led the eight-member team of the Peace Establishment Committee, while Lal N Lian Bawm, the chief adviser of Nathan Bawm, the KNF founder, led a five-member team.

Mohammad Saiful Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Bandarban, Md Shahalam, additional superintendent of Bandarban police, and other senior government officials were also present.

This was the first such meeting since the Peace Establishment Committee took the initiative for negotiations a few months ago.

“Today [yesterday], we held the meeting in a very cordial and peaceful atmosphere. We will hold another meeting next month. We hope the ongoing problem will be solved

through discussions,” said Kyaw.

In the meeting, KNF leaders demanded the release of their 61 activists, who are in jail, and the withdrawal of restrictions on KNF, said Kanchan.

The KNF delegation also pushed for its previous six-point demand for which they were carrying out their movement.

The demands include establishing Kuki-Chin territorial council covering nine upazilas of Bandarban and Rangamati and the formation of Kuki-Chin Armed Battalion.

The KNF came to light in the middle of last year. Later, it drew attention from security forces as it joined hands with a newly formed militant outfit, Jama’atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya.

At least 22 people, including five security personnel, were killed in several gunfights that took place between KNF and security forces between August last year and February this year, according to media reports.