



Standing up for Palestine through art

Exhibition underway at Drik Gallery

The idea behind the exhibition was a unique one, expressed by Mehedi Haque, who had been contacted by fellow artist Mohammad Sabaaneh to submit cartoons that speak up for Palestine.

MALIHA MASHIAT

On Saturday, during a brief respite amid local political unrest, artists and activists gathered at the Drik Gallery to participate in a cartoon exhibition organised in protest of the brutal Israeli occupation and ongoing genocide in Gaza. The history of violence and displacement against the Palestinians spans 75 years, taking a merciless turn last month.

It is estimated that nearly 11,000 Palestinians have been killed due to the incessant bombing perpetrated by the Israeli government. People in the eastern hemisphere and around the world have raised their voices hoarse with protests, calling for a ceasefire.

Commencing at 5 pm, cartoonists and young artists from Dhaka gathered at Drik Gallery with cartoons and installation art, protesting the Israeli occupation and expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people.



PHOTOS: ARSHADUL HOQUE ROCKY

Present at the event were the Palestinian Ambassador to Bangladesh Yousef SY Ramadan, decorated cartoonist Ahsan Habib, Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Cartoonist's Association and artist Mehedi Haque, Photographer and Drik Managing Director Shahidul Alam, and Documentary

Photographer and ASM Rezaur Rahman, who is also the curator of the exhibition. Comprising collages, graffiti, installation art, and cartoons, the exhibition will run until November 14, from 3 pm to 8 pm.

The exhibition witnessed a steady stream of both young and old cartoonists, all present to show their support for the Palestinian people. What we see or read in the news is vastly different from what is happening on the ground or what is felt when we see someone affected by it. That is what I learned from Yousef SY Ramadan's speech, where, along with expressing his heartfelt gratitude to the audiences, the ambassador also shared that he had recently been informed of the loss of 54 family members.

That is horror beyond comprehension and thus requires recognition to be denounced.

The entire exhibition featured cartoons and representations of the cruelty inflicted by the Zionist state on Palestinians, which began long before. Along with local artists, the gallery walls were graced by legendary Palestinian artist Naji Al Aji and Mohammad Sabaaneh.

"It has long been debated whether artists are activists, where I think art itself is an activism," said Mehedi Haque. "Art carries a personal touch, a human element that leaves a mark. Many things we hear or read can be easily forgotten, but a group of people gathered under the banner of art, in solidarity, in protest, will leave a visual to be remembered." Similar sentiments were echoed by eminent cartoonist Ahsan Habib, who believes that people remember things longer when said humorously.

The idea behind the exhibition was a unique one, expressed by Mehedi Haque, who had been contacted by fellow artist Mohammad Sabaaneh to submit cartoons against the Palestinian genocide. Mehedi, however, decided that instead of sending one, he could send many and compiled works from both senior and young artists.

"When we illustrate the situation, we inspire a lot of people. I believe that many people who visit the exhibition will be inspired to protest and speak out in their own ways," said Mehedi, who hopes that the younger generation visiting will keep the protesting voices for the Palestinian people loud enough to be heard.

Art not only functions as a medium of expression but also as a binder that ties people and revolutions together. One corner of the gallery featured the legendary character Handala, the little boy with his back turned to the world, who became the personification of Palestinian resistance and nationalism, along with multiple displays of cartoons by Naji Al Ali. A prolific cartoonist of the Arab world, Naji Al Ali was brutally assassinated in 1987, allegedly for his political criticism of the Arab regime and Israel.

Amongst the installation arts, the paper-mache watermelon stood proudly among the canvases, bearing testament to the endurance of the Palestinians who used the fruit as a nationalist symbol when waving the Palestinian flag had been outlawed.

Amongst traditional and new media, one thing remains evident: the outspoken criticism of the Zionist state of Israel and the brutality that they inflicted on the Palestinian people. While the whole world is already in rallies and gatherings of millions calling for a ceasefire, the sentiment remains the same among all, regardless of the medium.

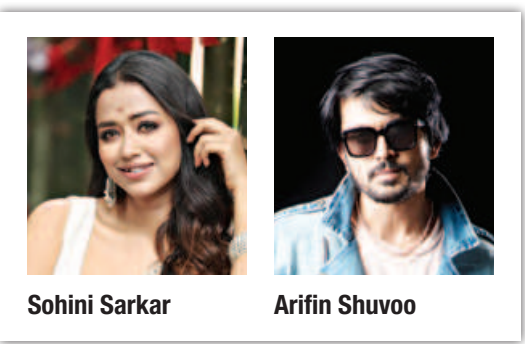
While the question might arise, what can art possibly do? We should also do well to remember that people gather at the sight of posters; it is art that speaks when words cannot.

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Chorki's Kolkata journey begins with Lahu starring Arifin Shuvoo, Sohini Sarkar

One of Bangladesh's leading OTT platforms, Chorki began its journey in Kolkata in October. Now, they have announced their very first project in Kolkata, titled *Lahu*. The web-series will be directed by Indian filmmaker Rahool Mukherjee, starring Bangladesh heartthrob Arifin Shuvoo and Kolkata's OTT 'queen', Sohini Sarkar. The shooting for the project will begin in Dhaka by the end of this month.

Sohini is excited for this series. She has taken



a good chunk of time in preparing for the role. "I am really hopeful for the project," she said. "It is great that Chorki has extended their business in Kolkata, and our space for working in web platform has widened."

This year has been a great one for Arifin Shuvoo, with the release of *Mujib: The Making of a Nation*. Chorki original web film *Unish 20* was also successful this February. "It is an exciting news for all of us, especially for the audience of both sides of the border," shared the actor.

The director, who previously directed films like *Kishmish* and *Dilkhush* shared that the plot of his series is located on a hilly area. "A special team arrives there to integrate an active community. The story is about what happens next."

The web-series also features Rajnandini Paul, Soumya Mukherjee, Shyamal Chakraborty and Anujoy Chattopadhyay.

Jaya Ahsan's Irani film Fereshta will compete at IFFI

Five-time National Award and three-time Filmfare Award-winning actress Jaya Ahsan has appeared in an Irani film titled *Fereshta*. The movie wrapped up filming last year, under the direction of Iranian filmmaker Morteza Atashzamaz.

On the 54th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, *Fereshta* has been selected to compete in the Feature Films category amongst other foreign films. This film festival is organised every November.

"It is a film about humane values and emotions. I believe that the way the director portrays the Bangladeshi community, culture and politics will be surprising for the nation," said Jaya to The Daily Star.



Don't believe everything you read: Xefer

"It is laughable that people are citing a comment on Facebook as their 'source', ridiculous," said Xefer over the phone. Rumours about the popular singer having an affair with anchor and comedian Rafsan Sabab are rampant on social media, following Rafsan's recent divorce announcement with his wife.

Although rumours like these are a daily event in the

showbiz industry, this, according to the singer, has gone too far. "I usually ignore this kind of nonsense, but this has gone too far. Rafsan is a friend of mine, much like many others in the industry," she said. "We did hang out a couple of times, but it was not just the two of us, we had other friends with us as well."

Xefer, whose career skyrocketed after the release of "Jhumka", urged everyone to be more responsible on social media. "Please don't believe everything you read. Just because someone throws an accusation at you, that too in a comment without any kind of proof, doesn't mean that you have to believe it."

Xefer will soon be seen opposite Chanchal Chowdhury as an actor, in Mostafa Sarwar Farooki's web film "The Last Defenders of Monogamy"

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Jungkook's 'Golden' breaks Billboard 200 chart history, sets 6 massive records

Jungkook from BTS is making history with his inaugural album, *Golden*. The initial week following the album's release was a tremendous success, as all 11 tracks claimed top positions on music charts worldwide. The primary track, *Standing Next to You*, quickly ascended to number one on the global YouTube charts in both the songs and music video categories. The list of achievements continues, and here's a detailed overview.

Jungkook's album, *Golden*, has achieved the status of being the top-

selling album by a solo Korean artiste in the sales week history of the Billboard 200. This milestone comes after he matched the success of his fellow BTS members, with V's *Layover*, Jimin's *Face*, and Suga's *D-Day* all standing as the highest-charting albums by Korean soloists in the Billboard 200's history.

As of November 12, *Standing Next to You* from Golden made an impressive debut by securing the top spot on YouTube's Top Songs Global Chart, amassing 41 million streams.