



## 'Jogsutro': Striking a balance between simplicity and detail

**Mohammad Rabin's clean and crisp brushstrokes on PVC boards result in a sensuous series of paintings featuring the female physique. Md Imtiaz Islam's watercolours on tickets portray human beings as passengers on board. He also combines cyanotype and watercolours to create unique portraits.**

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

One winter evening in January, I found myself at the Kala Kendra Gallery in Lalmatia, Dhaka. Currently hosting a group art exhibition, Kala Kendra presents *Jogsutro*, featuring 15 Bangladeshi artists who have returned after completing their studies at Rabindra Bharati University.

The inauguration of *Jogsutro* took place on December 28, last year. The event was graced by the presence of Professor Nisar Hossain, dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Dhaka. The exhibition participants include Amitabh Sarkar, Anika Tasnim Anup, Macraiwong, Faria Khanum Tuly, Jayatu Chakma, Madhabi Rani Nath, Md Imtiaz Islam, Md Sajedul Haque, Mohammad Rabin, Mrinal Banik, Nadiya Hasiba, Nupur Podder, Sudhip Chakma, Sumon Biswas, and Sumon Sutra Dhar.

Displayed at the gallery are 81 pieces of artwork. The first set of paintings that greeted me belonged to Macraiwong. Though smaller in size, the paintings leave a profound impression, depicting displacement and the accompanying misery. Following these are triangular canvases by Jayatu Chakma, illustrating the stories of indigenous communities in hilly regions. Sumon Biswas's *Nightmare* series plays with colours and abstract expressionism, offering a captivating visual experience.



PHOTOS: ARSHADUL HOQUE ROCKY

Mohammad Rabin's clean and crisp brushstrokes on PVC boards result in a sensuous series of paintings featuring the female physique. Md Imtiaz Islam's watercolours on tickets portray human beings as passengers on board. He also combines cyanotype and watercolours to create unique portraits. Nadiya Hasiba's paintings offer a soothing visual experience, while Faria Khanum Tuly

decorates a corner with femininity. Madhabi Rani Nath explores surrealistic pieces with adorable drawings of birds and women. The sculptures that adorn the gallery belong to Md Sajedul Haque.

The entire gallery is filled with captivating art from skilled individuals in our country. All the artworks are available for sale, and the exhibition at Kala Kendra will run until January 15.

## '12th Fail' overtakes 'Three Idiots' and 'Oppenheimer' in IMDb ratings



In a significant development, the Bollywood film *12th Fail* has surged on IMDb, surpassing the Indian classic *Three Idiots* and the globally acclaimed Hollywood film *Oppenheimer*. Currently ranked 67th, *12th Fail* holds an impressive rating of 9.3 with over 630,000 votes from viewers worldwide.

Directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, *12th Fail* has surpassed the film he produced - *Three Idiots*, now at 86th place with an 8.4 rating. *Oppenheimer*, shares the 71st position with the same 8.4 rating.

## Fazlur Rahman Babu joins Shabnur starrer 'Rongona'

Esteemed actress Shabnur is making her cinematic comeback with the movie *Rongona*. The film's initial glimpse has been unveiled through its first-look poster. Excitingly, it has been revealed that the popular actor, Fazlur Rahman Babu, has also joined the cast of the film.

The film *Rongona* is set to be directed by Arafat Hossain. Babu, upon joining the project, expressed his perspective, stating, "I can gauge a movie's potential by reading its story. After going through the script, I wanted to join the project."

Shabnur, who recently returned from Australia, is actively preparing for the film's shooting in Bangladesh. The filmmakers aim to release the movie in theatres during one of the two Eids, as per the initial schedule.



## COUNTRYWIDE

### Commercial ginger cultivation on sacks

**Mazid took the unusual initiative after watching videos on YouTube**

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, Jamalpur

Cultivating ginger in plastic sacks on unused land has turned out to be a boon for farmer Abdul Mazid of Sarishabari upazila.

The unusual idea came to the mind of the sixty-seven-year-old from Rudraboyra village after watching some videos on YouTube.

After learning how to grow ginger in sacks farmer Mazid started ginger cultivation on the fallow land around the courtyard of his house in April last year.

Mazid, who completed his graduation in Philosophy from Rajshahi University nearly four decades ago, never opted for any government or private jobs and completely involved himself in agriculture.

He spent his entire life doing business of various agricultural products and farming different kinds of fruits, vegetables and agricultural items, taking lease of others' land, Mazid said.

During a visit to the village this correspondent saw thousands of ginger plants, raised on plastic sacks, are kept lined on an unused land around Mazid's homestead.

While talking, Mazid said he planted

14,000 ginger plants in as many sacks on the three bigha fallow land around his house.

Due to severe heatwave some of the plants died at the beginning, but growths of rest of the plants are quite well as he preferred to use vermicompost, prepared at his house yard, he said, adding that according to advise of the upazila agriculture officer, he is cultivating 'BARI-1' variety of ginger in all the sacks.

He has already spent a total of over Tk 4 lakh as it cost him about Tk 29 to prepare the ginger plants in each sack, Mazid said.

If the weather remains favourable, he would get over two kilogrammes of ginger from each sack, he said.

Mahmudul Hassan, senior scientist at Bogura Spice Research Centre, said cultivating ginger in sacks is very profitable business.

They are encouraging farmers to cultivate gingers by applying the unusual method because if a farmer invests Tk 1, he would get Tk 5 in return, he added.

Sarishabari Upazila Agriculture Officer Anup Singh said they are encouraging Mazid as he is growing the spice item, using such an unusual method, for the first time in the upazila.



Cultivation of ginger in thousands of plastic sacks. The photo was taken from Rudraboyra village in Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

### Hasan Mahmud must tread lightly

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Over the last several years, these issues dominated the West's conversation when it came to Bangladesh.

The government definitely needs to improve on these aspects to improve the relations with the West, Kabir said, adding that given Bangladesh's current economic challenges, the relations are even more important as the US and European Union are the country's major export markets.

As Bangladesh will be losing the GSP facility with the EU after 2029 because of its graduation from LDC in 2026, it is imperative that the government take all measures to ensure that the country avails itself of GSP Plus facility from the EU after 2029, he said.

"Bangladesh will have to make different trade relations with the foreign countries once

the duty-free regime expires, and the foreign ministry, apart from the commerce ministry, has a pertinent role to play in the negotiations."

Prof Obaidul Haque, of the international relations department at Dhaka University, said there was much talk about the unprecedented collaboration between India and China leading up to the Bangladesh elections, given their historically confrontational interests.

"However, post-elections, it appears unlikely that they will maintain this unified stance," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The upcoming challenge for the new government lies in navigating these shifting dynamics. While the government has been lauded for its adept balancing act, categorising

India as a strategic partner and China as merely a developmental one, potential complications arise as China seeks returns for its steadfast support during the election, such as pushing for the Teesta [river management] deal."

Haque said that as a less influential actor, Bangladesh's foreign policy is often crafted under duress.

"The developments surrounding the polls and their aftermath may exacerbate the difficulties in navigating this complex terrain."

"The rapidly evolving situation in the Myanmar civil war and the potential escalation following the Israeli aggression in Gaza further complicate the landscape of the new government's foreign relations."

Haque also said that while it seems the US policy regarding the

election has faltered, the true repercussions are yet to unfold.

"In light of these uncertainties, my inclination is that our foreign policy in the coming days will be more reactive than proactive."

Humayun Kabir further said Bangladesh diplomats have a big role to play in maintaining the balance with the global powers, adding that it is crucial for the government to address the domestic political issues; improve governance, especially financial management; and improve the business climate both for domestic and foreign investors.

"As Bangladesh faces a shortage of foreign currency, migrant remittance can be significantly increased by improving migration governance."

Analysts said Hasan Mahmud, the new foreign

minister, will need to bolster coordination with all the relevant ministries -- law, home, commerce, expatriates' welfare -- so that the government can work with a "whole-government approach", rather than the ministries working in an isolated manner when it comes to foreign relations.

"If we can improve our economy, much of the challenges will be addressed. We will have a strong voice," Kabir said.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said he would work to further strengthen Bangladesh's relations with both the east and west.

"The prime minister entrusted me with the foreign ministry's responsibilities. We'll move the country forward and brighten its image, while improving relations with the east and the west."

### No deputies for ministers

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rural development and cooperatives and the ministry of posts, telecommunications and information technology had to issue separate notifications to distribute the responsibilities of the state ministers and the ministers.

Another deviation in Hasina's fifth cabinet is the exclusion of several ministers and state ministers who performed well in the last term.

Take the cases of Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, who had served as the land minister, and Abdur Razzaque, who was the agriculture minister.

"Saifuzzaman has made a stagnant ministry like land, dynamic. His integrity in ministry-related work

is almost unquestionable," said a former secretary to the land ministry on condition of anonymity.

He served in Hasina's last two cabinets, so maybe she felt like giving others a shot, the ex-civil servant said.

"Awami League is a large party. The prime minister has to look at everything," said the former bureaucrat, adding that Hasina might give him a more important post later on.

A top agronomist who works closely with the agriculture ministry said the country's agriculture sector is at a new juncture now and Razzaque had a role in it.

The mechanisation of agriculture, coming up with new seed varieties

and bringing the farmers on board with these developments require a competent coordinator of multidisciplinary work.

"In this case, Razzaque worked efficiently. I was a bit surprised by his exclusion from the new cabinet," he added.

Another surprise shuffle was Dipu Moni's shift from the ministry of education to the lesser important ministry of social welfare. Her previous post as the education minister was taken up by her former deputy, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury.

Other than Mohibul's elevation to the post of education minister, none of the state ministers in the previous cabinet were promoted to ministers, in

what was viewed as another departure from the past.

Many in the party and the government believe that those who were left out might be brought on board later as this is the smallest cabinet in Hasina's five terms in power.

However, a former cabinet secretary who has worked with Hasina for a long time ruled out the possibility.

"She is very conservative when it comes to reshuffling the cabinet. She used to receive complaints about many ministers and state ministers. She would get annoyed but she did not drop them [from the cabinet]," he added.

The first meeting of the new cabinet is scheduled for tomorrow at the Prime Minister's Office.

### PM to visit Germany

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a unique opportunity for high-level debates on the world's most pressing security challenges.

Additionally, the conference will celebrate its 60th anniversary up to and during the next main conference, which will be an assembly of senior decision-makers and thought leaders from around the world for discussions on the most pressing international security concerns in February 2024.

The conference takes place at a time when there are a number of crises affecting the global economy, including the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel's offensive in Palestine.