



PHOTO: NAZIR HOSSAIN

Tiger Nazir and his 'POTCHITRO'

RBR

A popular figure in Dhaka's art circuits, Nazir Hossain, better known as Tiger Nazir, is a self-taught scroll painter or "potua". Seen at almost all fairs and folk exhibitions in the city, he flaunts a patriotic, green and red bandana with brushes stuck in his unkempt hair.

"Potchitro", traditional Bangla scroll paintings, relate the larger-than-life stories of religious or mythical figures and their escapades. It is one of the oldest surviving folk art forms in Bangladesh. The practice of this art form by potuas is a skill passed down through generations.

"It is said, in the olden days, snake charmers would relate stories to a potua and he would use his imagination to draw the images on a scroll. The snake charmers would go house to house to tell the story by

singing and showing the drawing in exchange for food," said Tiger Nazir.

The protagonist of Nazir Hossain's potchitro is a Bangladeshi man who befriends a tiger. He paints from his imagination and always depicts the Bengal tiger as a sign of victory in his heroes' struggle.

"Tigers, to me, symbolise victory and positivity, which is much needed in the lives of our people. To show my heroes as powerful men, I draw tigers as their companions. Tigers are in actuality my plot's heroes," shared Tiger Nazir.

Nazir also takes inspiration from

the epics of Gazi Kalu—folktales like Champavati—and stories of Behula-Lakhindor.

Inspired by the tale of Gazi Kalu, his feats and battles across the country in the guise of a fakir, Nazir's potchitro are also stories of victory and positive representation of this country's people. The figures in his paintings of Gazi Kalu and Manik Pir make no attempt at realism; the rustic strokes and bright colours make his style of potchitro sought-after artworks among connoisseurs.

This self-taught artist has already participated in around 400 exhibitions, both at home and abroad,

and has had 59 solo art exhibitions.

His reputation as an accomplished potua is a result of dedication and an outcome of years of struggle. He shot to fame internationally in 2015 when his animal figure—Bantora Kun the tiger—was chosen as a mascot in Bangladesh-Japan business circles. It represented Bangladesh in Japan, and helped realise his dream of putting Bangladeshi art on a global platform.

Nazir also helped in drawing Tuki the Tiger, a book by authors Alexis Krasilovsky and Shameem Akhtar. Tuki the Tiger is an exuberant character from a novel and is the story of a Bengali tiger who organises the Animal Brigades that help win democracy for Bangladesh.

In a time when traditions are rapidly vanishing, Tiger Nazir's potchitro is an attempt to preserve heritage and revive the lost treasures of our pastoral lives in 2024 Dhaka.



Hungarian president resigns over abuse case pardon

REUTERS, Budapest

Hungarian President Katalin Novak resigned on Saturday after coming under mounting pressure for pardoning a man convicted of helping to cover up sexual abuse in a children's home.

Novak, a close ally of conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban, resigned a week after her presidential pardon was first reported by local news site 444.hu.

The revelation caused a public uproar and demands from the opposition for her and former Justice Minister Judit Varga to quit. Varga, who has been a rising star in Orban's ruling Fidesz party, resigned as a lawmaker on Saturday.

The scandal was a rare setback for Orban, who has been in power since 2010, and who faces European parliament elections just as the country emerges from an inflation crisis.

9 lakh in south

FROM PAGE 1
rainfall could increase peak river flow by 16 percent relative to 1971-2000.

In the last few decades, the number of people who have died during cyclones has fallen from six digits (300,000) from Cyclone Bhola in 1970) to double digits (35 from Cyclone Sitrang in 2022), largely due to the success of the country's Cyclone Preparedness Programme.

In the last few decades, the government has invested in saline-tolerant rice varieties, floating agriculture in regions that suffer flooding, and water-saving technologies in drought-prone areas to help safeguard food security in the face of increasingly extreme weather.

Coalition talks gather pace in Pakistan Ensure important products

FROM PAGE 1
Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P)—the two most seat-getters in the polls after Sharif's party and independents.

The PML-N and PPP meeting came after Nawaz Sharif, just a day after the election, on Friday, hinted at the formation of a national unity government and tasked his brother former PM Shehbaz Sharif with reaching out to other parties to begin consultations on government formation.

That night, Shehbaz Sharif had met with PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari and his son, Bilawal, sources had told Dawn. The outcome of the meeting was positive, it added.

The meeting had come after a heated campaign trail that saw Bilawal taking frequent digs at Nawaz.

Yesterday, the two parties held a meeting at Bilawal House in Lahore, which was attended by Shehbaz, Bilawal and Zardari and important leaders from both sides.

A joint statement issued after the meeting said the two parties had agreed "in principle" on political cooperation to bring political stability.

According to the statement, the PPP said it would place the PML-N's proposals before its Central Executive Committee today. The leaders present in the meeting said that a majority had given the two parties the mandate and they would not be left disappointed.

Meanwhile, a separate statement issued by the PPP referred to the meeting as the "first official contact" of the PML-N with the PPP for the formation of the government.

Earlier yesterday, a spokeswoman for Sharif's party said that he had met with representatives of the minority regional MQM party and they had agreed to "in principle work jointly in the larger interest of the country."

However, an MQM leader confirmed the meeting but said no formal coalition agreement had been made. He also said the party will play its role in steering the country out of

crisis. Meanwhile, Pakistani media reports yesterday said at least nine independents may join the PML-N.

A prime ministerial candidate has to show a simple majority of 169 seats in the 336-seat National Assembly when the house is called in the coming days.

Of these, 266 are filled by direct elections. Besides, the Pakistan constitution reserves 10 seats for religious minorities and 60 seats for women.

However, under Pakistan's electoral laws, independent candidates are not eligible for reserved seats, which are allotted according to the strength of each party in the house. Sharif's party could get up to 20 of these seats.

Khan backed independents will only be able to claim the reserved seats if they can join a smaller party in parliament to form a single bloc.

On Saturday, PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan claimed that the party won 170 seats and should not be prevented from forming its government.

He said PTI would make a political alliance soon to get its due share of the reserved seats and added that the final decision in this regard would be made soon.

Police yesterday fired tear gas to disperse supporters of jailed Imran Khan who gathered there to protest alleged vote rigging in the polls.

Clashes were reported in Rawalpindi city, south of the capital, and Lahore, in the east, while dozens of other protests were held across the country without any untoward incidents.

PTI yesterday claimed that the results of at least 18 National Assembly seats were "falsely changed" by election officers, according to a report in Dawn.

Despite the PTI claims, a coalition between the PML-N and the PPP—who formed the last government after ousting Imran Khan with a no-confidence vote in April 2022—still seems the most likely outcome.

Imran Khan's independents can also form the government by aligning with other parties. However, the difficulty in the process makes it a more unlikely scenario. With the PPP in a kingmaker position, the party's claim to head the next government may foil any coalition talks.

And lastly, if all options fail and no deal is reached among parties, the powerful army that has directly ruled for nearly three decades in Pakistan's 76-year history may step in to fill the void, experts say.

UN's IMO working 'tirelessly' to solve Red Sea crisis: head

AFP, London

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is working "tirelessly" to solve the Red Sea crisis, which is severely disrupting the global transport of goods, its head Arsenio Dominguez told AFP.

Yemen's Huthi rebels, supported by Iran, have launched dozens of attacks against ships in the Red Sea since November, targeting boats headed for Israel in an act of "solidarity" with inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, which is in the grip of the war between Israel and Hamas.

Despite retaliatory strikes by the US and UK, the rebels are still launching attacks, firing at US ship "Star Nasia" and UK vessel "Morning Tide" on Tuesday.

The IMO, the United Nations agency responsible for security at sea, is working to ensure that "parties continue to talk so that the situation does not degenerate any further, and we can return to a safe maritime environment," Panama-born Secretary General Dominguez told AFP on Thursday.

"We are working tirelessly to coordinate action that will lead to a resolution," Dominguez added from the IMO's London headquarters.

Ex-cop gets death penalty for killing wife, step-son

UNB, Kushtia

A Kushtia court yesterday convicted a former police officer and sentenced him to death for killing his wife, step-son, and wife's lover in 2021.

Soumen Roy, 34, suspended assistant sub-inspector of Phultala Police Station in Khulna, was also fined Tk 1 lakh.

Kushtia District and Session Judge Ruhul Amin handed down the punishment with Soumen absconding after securing bail in 2022.

According to the prosecution, Soumen, son of Sunil Roy of Magura's sadar upazila, shot his wife Asma Khatun, 25, step-son Robin, 5, and Shakil, 28, in front of Naz Mansion Market in Kushtia district town over an extramarital affair between Asma and Shakil on June 13, 2021.

Police arrested him with his service revolver, bullets and a magazine from the spot.

Asma's mother Hasina Begum filed a case in this connection.

The case investigating officer, Nishikanta Sarkar, submitted a chargesheet against Soumen. On November 6, 2022, Soumen secured bail from the High Court in the case. Since then he has been absconding.

On February 2, 2023, the court issued a warrant for the arrest of Soumen as he did not surrender before the court.

Soumen met Asma while serving as an assistant sub-inspector at Kumarkhali Police Station. Later, they got married. She was Soumen's third wife. Asma too was married twice before.

After their marriage, they used to live in a rented house in Aruapara in Kushtia. Soumen was later transferred to Khulna and in his absence, Asma developed an affair with Shakil.

Robin was Asma's son from her second marriage.

Rape accused found hanging in jail cell

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

The body of a man accused in a rape case was found hanging in his cell at Bogura District Jail Saturday evening, said prison authorities yesterday afternoon.

The deceased is Iqbal Hossain, 22, of Mukundapur village in Gaibandha's Gobindganj upazila.

Prison authorities claimed Iqbal committed suicide using his lungi to hang himself from the toilet window in his cell.

His body was sent to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College, where doctors pronounced him dead.

The time of his death was estimated at around 5:00pm on Saturday.

After an autopsy, Iqbal's body was handed over to his family yesterday afternoon.

On February 3, a case was filed against Iqbal over the rape of a seventh-grade schoolgirl in Sonatala upazila.

He was arrested that night and sent to court the following day. The court ordered he be sent to jail.

Iqbal was accused in another rape case in October 2023. He was also previously accused of child murder. He was on bail in those cases.

Ensure important products

FROM PAGE 1
Rosogolla and Narsingdi's Amrita Sagar Banana to the PM at the meeting.

The issue has come to the fore after the Indian government granted the GI recognition to Tangail sari, claiming that the products originated from West Bengal.

Meanwhile, the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, in a letter signed by its acting director general Shamimul Haque yesterday, issued instructions on GI products to all 64 deputy commissioners and eight divisional commissioners.

A total of 21 products including hilsa have been granted GI registration in Bangladesh. Applications for GI registration of several other products are under consideration.

There is a directive from the Prime Minister's Office to have at least one product from each district registered as a geographical indication product.

Meanwhile, the cabinet gave the final approval to the draft 'Village Court (Amendment) Act, 2024' that allows the village courts to fine Tk 3 lakh instead of the existing Tk 75,000.

Gunfire in Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1
Army opposite his union, some Myanmar citizens, mainly people from the Rakhine community, might have entered Bangladesh for shelter, said Gafur Chowdhury, chairman of Palangkhali union in Ukhiya.

Meanwhile, another body wearing a helmet and gloves was found floating in the Telipara canal of Balukhali in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday afternoon.

Police recovered the body around 1:30 pm, said Shamim Hossain, the officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station.

Though police could not ascertain

the body, locals believed the body may belong to a member of the Myanmar security forces or a rebel group.

The locals saw the body floating in the tidal water of the Telipara canal, which is connected to the Naf river, Shamim said, adding that the identification of the body is underway.

The body, which was decomposed, had a helmet and gloves on, according to the police.

Earlier on Saturday, the police recovered an unidentified body from Rahmat Beel in the border area of Ukhiya. The identity of the body has not been ascertained yet.