



CARTOON EY BIDROHO

Drik celebrates revival of political cartoons

History has its own grim sense of humour. When power betrays the very people from whom it arose, it ignites like a furious blaze, consuming anyone who dares to threaten its inherent drive for freedom.



CARTOON: MAHATAB RASHID

Cartoonist Mehedi Haque used his art to strike the authorities directly. "An artist's job is to do what's right at the right time. We paid a debt to the countless deaths and assaults suffered by cartoonists like Ahmed Kabir Kishore," Haque stated.

DOWEL BISWAS

The history of revolution is almost always shaped by artistic resistance. While some fought in the streets, artists wielded pens and pencils as weapons, inspiring and mobilising the masses with their creations. Political cartoons played a pivotal role in the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, transforming the revolution with artistic brilliance and courage.

Acerbic political cartoons—hundreds of them—flooded social media. Drik honored this tradition through their exhibition *Cartoon Ey Bidroho* (Rebellion in Cartoons), held at their photo gallery in the capital's Panthapath. The exhibition brought together distinguished cartoonists, showcasing the incredible artistic contributions of these revolutionary figures. The initiative is timely, serving artists, spectators, and the cultural 'renaissance' currently being witnessed.

"There was a time when political cartoons, caricatures, satires, graffiti, and other artistic forms of vigilante justice were deeply rooted in our culture to critique and question authority. Cartoons and caricatures used to grace the front pages of every newspaper, delivering potent messages against malpractice and corruption," said ASM Rezaur Rahman, general manager of Drik and curator of the exhibition. "However, due to undue censorship and the culture of fear perpetuated by the former government, this artform was stifled, threatening to become nearly obsolete."

Rahman also emphasised the shift in power dynamics with the rise of social media and citizen journalism, particularly during the youth protest movement. Authorities, shaken by the power of this movement, found the usual rules of political engagement upended. Ordinary people, through their phones and personal devices, risked their lives on the front lines to reveal ground realities often beyond the reach of traditional journalists.

Drik's exhibit showcased the unprecedented draughtsmanship and satirical verve of 82 cartoonists, featuring a well-curated collection of 175 artworks in the Drik Picture Library. One cartoon published on July 15 captured the spirit of the movement perfectly: it depicted the figure of Shontrash Birodhi Raju Sharokh Bhashkorjo, with a red sun at its apex, covered in blood while a black boat floated gloriously amidst the red waves. Another work from the same day portrayed a grotesque red creature, battered with hockey sticks, being blessed by a hand adorned with blue bangles—a vivid critique of authority.

Mahatab Rashid, a cartoonist at The Business Standard, whose work took centre stage at the exhibition, explained his motivation: "I, along with my friends, was involved in the protests. As a

air, clinging to a rope with only one sandal on her feet. She flew above a wooden throne placed atop countless corpses. This character, seen repeatedly in Rashid's work, became symbolic of the oppressive forces within the movement.

Cartoonist Mehedi Haque used his art to strike directly at the authorities. "An artist's job is to do what's right at the right time. We paid a debt to the countless deaths and assaults suffered by cartoonists like Ahmed Kabir Kishore," Haque stated. In one of his artworks, a woman is shown fleeing with only one sandal on her feet, as

take to the streets, the government cannot subjugate their spirit." Simu Naser, Founder and Editor of Earki and a curator of the exhibition, praised the unity and determination of the artists. "The first works of art came from cartoonists. Newcomers joined in, posting their works on social media and filling the pages of newspapers. Some were drawn anonymously, others bore signatures, but all of them spread across the internet and took their place in history," Naser said.

This exhibition, while only featuring a fraction of the political cartoons created during the movement, remains a tribute to the power of art in shaping resistance.

All the cartoonists featured in the exhibition, including Abdullah Al Zunayed Shadat Mahub, Mehedi Hasan, Echa Nawar, Natasha Jahan, Purnota Sondhi, Raeid Hossen, Miskatun Jinat Tonni, Tuba Tanjum and many others only asked for one thing and that is the end of censorship in their art.

Political cartoons have long served as powerful tools for challenging authority, exposing injustice, and mobilizing the masses. The exhibition highlights the essential role that these satirical artworks play in moments of resistance and revolution. However, censorship threatens to stifle this artistic form, as history shows that oppressive regimes often seek to silence the voices that challenge their power. The freedom to create and express without fear is fundamental to both art and society. When censorship prevails, it not only undermines artistic expression but also stifles the spirit of revolution, muting the voices that dare to speak truth to power.



PHOTO: ARSHADUL HOQUE ROCKY

cartoonist, I felt bound to create something that spoke to the tyranny we were witnessing. When the Chhatra League brutally attacked my friends and fellow protesters, I felt an unstoppable urge to create. When they killed Abu Sayed the next day (July 16), I had no choice but to resist through my art."

Another of Rashid's cartoons, which became iconic, depicted a stout woman flying through the

hands throw trophies named "Muktijuddho" after her. His work captured the inevitable collapse of an oppressive regime, inspiring hope among the protesters.

Reflecting on his work, Haque explained, "As political observers, we know from history that nothing beats the mobilization of middle-class urban people who have nothing to lose. When they

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DGHS issues

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muscle aches, backache, lack of energy, swollen lymph nodes and skin rash or lesions. Swelling of the lymph nodes is a distinctive feature of Mpx, according to the DGHS guideline.

According to the guideline, mpx spreads mostly in direct physical contact, liquid of vesicle and pustule, body fluid, sneezing, coughing and physical intercourse.

Those who have previously been vaccinated against smallpox are

significantly protected from mpx infection. The mpx vaccine is not available, however, the smallpox vaccine is largely effective in combating mpx.

The last time the smallpox vaccine was administered in the country was in 1980, according to DGHS.

"If someone has the symptoms of mpx or comes into contact with an infected person, or develops any symptoms within 21 days of travelling to a country where the

disease has been reported, please contact 16263 or 10655," said the DGHS in a press release yesterday.

About the treatment of mpx, DGHS said that in most cases, the symptoms of mpx are relieved on their own, so specific treatment is not required for it.

The DGHS asked people to eat nutritious food and drink enough water if anyone is infected with mpx.

"Consult a doctor and take medicine if the mpx-related complications get worse," said the guideline.

5 secretaries appointed on contract

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service. The was made to retire while being on special duty (OSD), which is seen in the civil service as a punishment.

Meanwhile, Dr Abdur Rashid was appointed secretary to the education ministry. He stood first in the 1982 Bangladesh Civil Service exams, Public administration ministry sources said.

A former additional home secretary, he had been OSD for nearly seven years.

Meanwhile, Ehsanul Karim was

made the secretary to the Road Transport and Highways Division.

Ehsanul was private secretary to Fakhruddin Ahmed, former chief adviser to the 2007-'08 caretaker government.

Ajmol Hossain Azad has been appointed as the secretary to the railways ministry while Nasimul Gani has been given the responsibility of the President's Office (Public Division).

Nasimul, a former private secretary to former Speaker and BNP leader Jamiruddin Sircar, was forced to

retire on May 29, 2013. Before that, he had been OSD since the AL government came to power.

Meanwhile, the contractual appointment of Wahidul Islam Khan, secretary, (Public Division), President's Office, Bangabhaban, has been terminated.

The directors general of the Bangla Academy and the Shilpakala Academy also lost their contractual appointments.

The government also scrapped the contractual appointments of at least four officials at the foreign ministry.

Indian doctors go on strike

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their daughter was gang-raped.

One man, who worked at the hospital helping people navigate busy queues, has been detained.

However, Kolkata's police were accused by an angry public of mishandling the case and the city's High Court transferred the investigation to India's top Central Bureau of Investigation to "inspire public confidence".

Those in government hospitals across several states on Monday halted elective services "indefinitely", with multiple medical unions in both government and private systems backing the strikes.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) escalated protests on Saturday morning with a 24-hour "nationwide withdrawal of services", and the suspension of all non-essential procedures.

"We ask for the understanding and support of the nation in this struggle for justice for its doctors and daughters," IMA chief R.V. Asokan said in a statement ahead of the strike.

The IMA called the killing "barbaric".

"The 36-hour duty shift that the victim was in and the lack of safe spaces to rest... warrant a thorough overhaul of the working and living conditions of the resident doctors," the IMA said in a statement.

Doctors are demanding the implementation of the Central Protection Act, a bill to protect healthcare workers from violence.

"There is a lack of proper infrastructure," said 29-year-old Akanksha Tyagi, a resident at the Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi who took part in one of the multiple protests around the country.

"After working for 24-36 hours at a stretch, there's no proper place for us to rest," she said.

The strike disrupted outpatient services.

At Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia public hospital, one of the city's busiest, many who had turned up for their scheduled appointments were turned away.

Shivdev Kumar, 50, had travelled over 20 kilometres (12 miles) with the tuberculosis reports of his daughter, only to find the doctor's room locked. "I had no idea, otherwise I would

not have such a long way," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanded on Thursday swift punishment for those who commit "monstrous" deeds against women.

Sexual violence against women is a widespread problem in India — an average of nearly 90 rapes a day were reported in 2022 in the country of 1.4 billion people.

For many, the gruesome nature of the hospital attack has invoked comparisons with the horrific 2012 gang rape and murder of a young woman on a Delhi bus.

That woman became a symbol of socially conservative India's failure to tackle sexual violence against women.

Her death sparked huge, and at times violent, demonstrations in Delhi and elsewhere.

Under pressure, the government introduced harsher penalties for rapists and the death penalty for repeat offenders.

Several new sexual offences were also introduced — including for stalking — and officials who refuse to register rape complaints can now be jailed.

Public univs 'reopen' today

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"As far as we know, students of different universities raised some demands. These have to be resolved," he added.

Prof Tarikul Islam, acting registrar at Rajshahi University, said, "The order to reopen was issued to the VCs. But we have no VC here. We have not decided how to resume academic activities. We will decide once a VC is appointed."

Azizur Rahman Mukul, deputy registrar at Jahangirnagar University, said, "We are facing numerous challenges as several key administrative positions are vacant."

The government on July 16, closed all educational institutions amid student protests. Hasina resigned and fled the country on August 5 in the face of a mass upsurge.

But classes at public universities have been suspended since July 1 when teachers went on strike in protest of a new pension scheme.

Prof Akhtarul Islam, president of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association, said, "We called off the strike and are ready to take classes."

President Mohammed Shahabuddin, also the chancellor of the public universities, on August 14

accepted the resignations of 16 VCs, five pro-VCs, and three treasurers.

The VCs who resigned are from Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh Agriculture University, Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University, Islamic University, Begum Rokeya University, Chittagong University, Sheikh

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Hasina University, National University, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna University of Engineering

and Technology, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Islamic University and Islamic Arabic University.

"For smooth operation, VCs will be needed first. The government can temporarily give the responsibility to someone. The decision has to be prompt," said Prof Alamgir.

Others who resigned at different universities are six dormitory provosts and the entire proctorial body at DU; the proctor, 11 assistant proctors, the student adviser, and 62 others at RU; pro-VC, treasurer, entire proctorial body, all provosts and assistant provosts at SUST; pro-VC, registrar, a provost, the proctor, 13 assistant proctors, and two house tutors at JNU; pro-VC and treasurer at Islamic University; pro-VC and registrar at JU.

Former DU VC Prof SMA Faiz said, "Many people will be needed to fill the vacancies. But one needs the right and qualified individual. Unqualified persons should not be appointed."

All secondary schools and colleges are also set to reopen today after almost a month. Primary schools reopened on August 14.

Make all probe reports public

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Noor Taposh, and Sheikh Selim were directly involved in the Palkhana massacre. Others were also involved behind the scenes. If an independent investigation commission is formed, their names will also come up," Rakin alleged.

He further said that he was unaware of any historical precedent where a country's prime minister (Sheikh Hasina) conspired with a foreign nation to orchestrate the killing of 57 army officers in the capital.

Advocate Saquib Rahman, son of slain Col Quadrat Elahi Rahman Shafigue, said two investigative committees were formed at that time. Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, who is currently serving

as the Home Affairs Advisor to the interim government, headed one of the probe committees.

Saquiub said that the report that was released to the media had been revised three times before its publication.

He called for the release of the entire report.

The killings at the Palkhana headquarters of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on February 25-26, 2009, which resulted in the deaths of 74 people, including 57 army officials, left the nation in shock.

The families of the victims requested that everyone refer to the event not as the "BDR Mutiny" but as the "BDR Massacre." Among other demands, the

families proposed that February 25 be officially recognised as "Shaheed Shena Dibosh" through an official gazette, with all fallen officers acknowledged as "Shaheed" (martyrs).

They also called for the national flag to be flown at half-mast every year on this day and for the inclusion of a chapter on the BDR Palkhana tragedy in school textbooks, ensuring that future generations learn about the sacrifices made.

Furthermore, the families appealed to the interim government to ensure that no innocent former BDR soldiers remain imprisoned and to reinstate or compensate Bangladesh Army officers who lost their jobs for advocating for justice.