



PHOTOS: RATUL CHOWDHURY

‘GUM JAAN O JOBAN’ A glimpse into the grief of the forcibly disappeared

At the heart of the exhibition are Johan’s photographs, which depict the everyday lives of families of the forcibly disappeared. Each image tells a story of loss and endurance—whether it’s a mother holding a photograph of her missing child, or a child gazing out of a window, waiting for the father’s return.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Gum Jaan o Joban is a powerful tribute to the families affected by enforced disappearances, brought to life through the lens of artist Mosliqur Rahman Johan. Over the course of three years, Johan immersed himself in the lives of these families, documenting their grief, resilience, and the haunting absence of their loved ones. His work captures the essence of their experiences, offering a deeply intimate portrayal of their ongoing struggles.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Friday, marking the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, and is underway at the Nalinikanta Bhattasali Gallery at the National Museum in Dhaka. It revolves around 16 victim families and captures the heart-wrenching realities faced by those left behind, offering a rare and moving glimpse into the lives of the families of the disappeared. “We never thought that we would ever be able to share these stories with the public. But in this new reality, in this new Bangladesh, we now have the opportunity to exhibit this work. We hope that



through our efforts, others will be inspired to share their stories as well,” mentioned Sarkar Pratik, the curator.

“Enforced disappearances are inherently unjust, and there is no justification for them. Every effort will be made to find those who have disappeared and to bring those responsible to justice. This is not too much to ask in a civilised society, and we will strive to ensure no government ever uses such tactics to hold onto power again,” said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Adviser on Forest, Environment, and Climate Change. Photographer Shahidul Alam, Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua,

and the Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, among others, also spoke at the event.

At the heart of the exhibition are Johan’s photographs, which depict the everyday lives of these families. Each image tells a story of loss and endurance—whether it’s a mother holding a photograph of her missing child, or a child gazing out of a window, waiting for a father who may never return. These images are windows into the profound impact that these disappearances have had on the families left behind. In addition to the photographs, the exhibition also includes diary entries and news archives that

Johan collected during his time with these families. These records provide a deeper understanding of the emotional toll that enforced disappearances have taken. It also features news clippings and records of the protests that these families have led in their quest for justice. The protest images highlight the collective strength and determination of these families, as they stand united in their demand for accountability and truth. An audio-visual recording accompanies the visual elements, adding another layer to the exhibition’s narrative.

Johan’s work captures the transformation of grief into activism, as these families refuse to let the memories of their loved ones be erased. “I spent years living with these families which helped me gain an unparalleled understanding of their emotions. In this exhibition, I have tried to reflect on the depth and sensitivity of this understanding. It is a long project and I hope I can do some justice to these victims,” he shared.

The ongoing exhibition, organised by Mayer Daak, will run until September 6 from 10:30am to 5:00pm.

Abul Hayat’s autobiography to be unveiled on his birthday



Abul Hayat’s autobiography, titled *Robi Poth*, which took him a decade to write, is finally complete. The 300-page book features a cover illustrated by his elder daughter, actress and artist Bipasha Hayat. It is set to be published by Suborno Prakashani. The veteran actor candidly admitted, “I’m quite lazy by nature. I’d write a bit, then set it aside. It was Bipasha’s constant reminders that became impossible to ignore and ultimately led me to finish it.” The book is expected to be revealed on the actor’s 80th birthday on September 7.

The incredible stories of his long and vibrant journey are coming together in one compelling volume. “I’ve written about the moments from my birth that I felt needed to be shared. I hope that together, these stories will give readers a complete picture of my journey,” he shared.

Political series on ‘Gen Z’ underway

Gen Z has been at the forefront of the transformative change in Bangladesh. Their movement has played a pivotal role in reshaping the nation’s political landscape. A heightened sense of political awareness among people also led to a profound shift in perspectives.

Inspired by these developments, director Abu Hayat Mahmud is gearing up to direct a political satire, titled *Gen-Z Ami Ke? Tumi Ke?*

Penned by Mezbah Uddin Sumon, the filming of the series is set to begin on September 10.

The story is built around the idea of a family representing a country. The narrative will move forward with the genre political satire blending humour, laughter, love, and tension, all centred around this family dynamic.



NEWS

Bowlers put Tigers on top

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Pakistan in to bat first.

Taskin Ahmed, who came into the playing XI in place of injured Shoriful Islam, got things going for the visitors with a sizzling opening spell which started a spearing in-swing that sniped through the defences of opener Abdullah Shafique.

Pakistan took control of proceedings after that initial jitter as skipper Shan Masood (57) and Saim Ayub put together a 107-run stand before Miraz dismissed the former soon after lunch, trapping the left-handed batter lbw with one that gripped the surface. Having maintained strict lines through the

day, Miraz used variations of length intelligently. That is how he dismissed Ayub, who scored 58, as he enticed the lefty with a flighted one outside off which ripped past the bat and found the gloves of Liton Das, who whipped the bails off, leaving Ayub stranded outside the crease.

Once the tail was exposed, Miraz came back in the last session to take three more, courtesy of a cat-and-mouse game of lengths he used to great effect throughout the day.

Miraz and Taskin were aptly supported by Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana. It seemed like a regular day at work for Hasan, who vigilantly flirted along the corridor outside off-

stump and maintained strict lines and lengths.

But it was far more impressive to see Rana’s discipline. The 21-year-old was expensive in the previous Test and has a tendency to lose his bearings at times but he showed up, totally sorted with the task at hand, and picked up the prized wicket of Mohammad Rizwan (29) which exposed Pakistan’s tail and helped the Tigers bowl the hosts out faster.

While a few chances went begging, courtesy of missed catches, spirits remained high due to the disciplined efforts of the bowlers and it is up to the batters to pull their weight from the start of Day 3.

155 people still missing

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In addition, there is no trace of 29 businesspeople, contractors, and traders who were picked up.

The pre-election year of 2013 was the worst year for enforced disappearance, with 33 victims picked up that year still remaining missing, shows data.

The election year of 2017 logged 17 such victims about whom there is still no trace.

The year 2021 was the last year when a victim was picked up and forcibly disappeared. In December that year, the US imposed sanctions

on the Rab. All those people picked up and arbitrarily detained after that year returned.

Out of the 155 victims, 70 were picked up by the Rab, 42 by the police’s Detective Branch, and three other jointly by the Rab and the DB. In addition, 22 were picked up by agencies who could not be identified.

“No perpetrator, including law enforcement agencies and especially those with command responsibilities, should be exempt from the rule of law,” Odhikar said in a joint statement in commemoration

of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2024.

The other signatories of the statement include Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Capital Punishment Justice Project, the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances, the International Federation for Human Rights, Mayer Daak, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, and the World Organisation Against Torture.

Ghosh, Manzurul Islam, Mozammel Babu, Munni Saha and Nobonita Chowdhury.

The others are Naem Nizam, Pranab Saha, Probash Amin, Saiful Alam, Shyamal Dutta, Shyamal Sarkar, Soma Islam, Subhash Singh Roy, Swadesh Roy, Tushar Abdullah and Zayadul Ahsan Pintu.

In addition, on August 28, three other journalists were named in another case concerning the murder of a protester in Bogura. Police had not yet issued any arrest warrants at the time of this writing.

The accused are local correspondents Mahmudul Alam Noyon of the daily Janakantha,

Hasibur Rahman Bilu of Independent Television, and J M Rauf of the daily Kaler Kantho. They are charged with playing a role in the death of a protester named Mohammad Shimul.

The murder charges against the three journalists came on the heels of three cases already underway against media professionals.

“The current targeting of media professionals appears to be a continuation of the anti-journalist sentiment that marked Hasina’s reign,” Bernard said.

During Hasina’s last months in power, Bangladesh ranked 165th out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

Yunus to place reforms outline

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parties, including the Jatiya Party, Gono Forum, Jasad (Ambia), Islami Andolon Bangladesh, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and six other Islami parties at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital.

Mahfuj said during these discussions, the political leaders presented numerous reform proposals.

Some leaders suggested constitutional amendments, while

others proposed a complete rewrite of the constitution.

“The chief adviser assured them that their proposals would be taken into account,” Mahfuj added, according to BSS.

He said Prof Yunus’s primary goal is to form a broad national consensus, building on the successes of the recent student-led movement.

He also said the issue of “transition of power” will be included in the reform outline, the BSS reports.

Policemen seen piling up bodies

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front of the police station. According to them, the footage may have been captured from a three-storey building just in front of the police station.

They suspect the bodies belonged to the victims who were killed in police firing on August 5, the day Hasina resigned and left the country amid an unprecedented student-led movement.

In the video, Dhaka District North Detective Police (DB) inspector (investigation) Arafat Hossain was seen walking unarmed. Masudur Rahman, officer-in-charge (investigations) of Ashulia Police Station, was also seen in the video.

Riaz Uddin Ahmed Biplab, OC of Dhaka North (DB) police, confirmed the presence of DB inspector Arafat in the video to The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, said detectives did not open fire as they did not have the weapons required.

One police member who was present at the scene said that several detectives as well as OC Masudur was present there.

Dhaka District Superintendent of Police Ahmad Mueed said they have seen the footage.

“We have sent the video to the Cybercrime team for identification.

4 of a family die in road crash

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head-on with a lorry. All the four died on the spot.

The victims were returning home from a relative’s house in Dhaka.

A fire service team reached the scene around 10:00pm and rescued the injured and recovered the bodies.

We are working to confirm this. If the matter is confirmed, we will take necessary legal actions,” he said.

The first 20 seconds of the video shows a body of a young man lying on the road. After around 20 seconds, more bodies were seen stacked on a van with a bloodstained face and hands of two men, likely dead, spread out. The bodies are covered with bedsheets, as two armed policemen stood nearby. At around 35 seconds into the footage, two cops wearing police flak jackets were seen shaking the body of a man lying on the road.

At one point of the video, two men were seen putting a banner over the bodies, apparently to cover them, with six to seven cops standing close by.

During a visit to the area, locals told this correspondent that the video was of the area adjacent to the police station. This correspondent matched the location to the footage.

Fahima Begum, a shopkeeper, identified the place to be just in front of her shop. Billal Hossain, who sells vegetables in a van close by, also confirmed the location.

At least 46 people were killed in violence in Savar on August 5. Many bullet-hit are still receiving treatment in different hospitals.

The bodies were sent to Narsingdi 100-bed Zilla Hospital, said Md Mizanur Rahman Khan, director of the hospital.

The four injured, including the microbus driver, were referred to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital after they were given primary treatment at the sadar hospital.

As floodwater

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morning. But no doctor came to visit me until now,” Ayesha Akhter, 25, of Herangirpore area under Noakhali Sadar Upazila, told this newspaper on Friday evening.

The hospital’s Registrar Md Emran Hossain, however, denied the allegation and said a doctor served the patients throughout the day on Friday.

As many as 519 medical teams were working in the 11 flood-hit districts, according to the disaster management and relief ministry.

The ministry said yesterday that the death toll from the floods increased by five to 59, including six women and 12 children, in nine districts while the number of people affected by the flooding in 11 districts was over 54.57 lakh.

Of the deceased, 23 people died in Feni, 14 in Cumilla, nine in Noakhla, six in Chattogram, three in Cox’s Bazar, and one each in Moulvibazar, Lakshmipur, Brahmanbaria and Khagrachhari, according to the ministry’s report.

Around 7 lakh people were still marooned, the report said.

The government’s Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre yesterday forecast that all the major rivers of the country were flowing below the danger level.

Unicef on Friday said over 20 lakh children in eastern Bangladesh were at risk as floods swept through homes, schools and villages.

[Our correspondents from Chattogram and Noakhali contributed to the report]

Fuel prices drop

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notification, the prices of all petroleum fuels – petrol, diesel, octane, kerosene, furnace oil, jet fuel, and marine fuels – will be set automatically based on the international market price.

In the first adjustment of March, diesel and kerosene prices decreased by Tk 0.75, octane dropped by Tk 4 and petrol by Tk 3. In April, the price of diesel and kerosene was reduced by Tk 2.25 per litre but the petrol and octane remained unchanged.

In May, the government hiked diesel price by Tk 1 per litre, and petrol and octane prices by Tk 2.50 per litre.

During the unstable situation in the first of July, the prices were unchanged for August. In July, the prices of diesel and kerosene was cut by Tk 1 per litre while petrol and octane prices were unchanged at Tk 127 and Tk 131, respectively.