

MY DHAKA

VISUALLY BIMURTO

an exhibition of contrasts, connections

REHNUMA SHAHREEN

"It's a wonderful experience to see the works of two artists from different mediums in the same exhibition — works that seem to express their inner thoughts in two different ways, yet woven together by a single thread," these words from a visitor, Nuzhat Jahan, perfectly encapsulates the exhibition Visually Bimurto by Habibur Rahman and Shamsad Rahman.

Held at Gallery Chitruk in Dhanmondi, Dhaka, this exhibition (running till January 15) marks the first collaborative showcase of the Rahmans in Bangladesh.

There is an immediate sense of immersion for those visiting the gallery, a quiet pull into the layered and shared space the Rahmans have constructed.



PHOTO: COURTESY



Here, the tangible and the abstract converged, forming a narrative that is as much about space as it is about the emotion and distinct identity of the artists.

Habibur Rahman's work carries

the imprint of his architectural training, transformed into complex compositions that challenge perceptions of depth and dimension through mediums as simple as graphite or colour pencils on paper. And, in contrast, Shamsad Rahman's works on silk imbued in vibrant colour, echoes the textures and patterns of nature, with a warm celebration of femininity.

Curator Efat Razowana Reza shed light on the artists' journey and her experience of curating for this exhibition. She mentioned, "In my year plus journey working with the artists, I noticed a palpable synergy between them, which reflects their shared foundation in architecture, while allowing their distinct voices to

shine through, and it resulted in a duo exhibition like this."

"You can notice here; I have placed the work of Shamsad at the centre space of this exhibition hall, and the works of Habibur surrounding them throughout the rest. It actually reflects their lives and journeys as artists. They practiced art together wherever they went."

Habibur Rahman's art is bold and directly communicative with the viewer, often catching them off guard as if struck by a bolt from the blue upon entering the exhibition space. His use of simple mediums like graphite, charcoal, or ink on paper, with a basic flow of lines and shapes, feels surprisingly profound because of his

ability to communicate so much.

One intriguing feature about most of his works exhibited was that each piece employs a distinct type of lines, shape, or style which either glide naturally across the canvas, filling the spaces with effortless flow, or are placed in a way throughout the canvas that clearly reflects his mastery on architectural drawing and his profound understanding of space, form and composition.

On the other hand, Shamsad Rahman's works reflect the elegance of femininity through her silk painting skills, enhanced by her technical expertise and deep understanding of the natural world.

Silk, as a medium, has its own agenda, hence it demands a collaborative effort to paint on silk. The dye flows and bleeds in its natural course, creating an aesthetic that feels organic yet intentional. Rahman's love for silk developed during her stay in the Middle East, where she was captivated by the vibrant nature of the Moghul and Persian artworks. Her works on silk distinctively feature the use of photographs and microelements from nature through skillful painting and photo manipulation techniques.

This exhibition is a milestone not only for the Rahmans, but also for the local art enthusiasts. By bringing their collaborative vision to Dhaka, this exhibition offers a fresh lens, through which to view the confluence of visions shaped by architectural precision and the boundless creativity of visual elements.

BNP won't form govt alone: Khasru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will not form a unilateral government even if the party wins 200 seats in the next parliamentary election, said BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday.

"The 31 point proposal was formulated collectively by 42 parties, including the BNP. Even if the BNP wins 200 seats, it will not form a government alone, as implementing the 31 points must be achieved through a national government," he said.

He made these remarks while addressing a discussion as chief guest on the 31-point state reform proposal held in the capital's Banani.

Khasru said the BNP and 42 other parties jointly carried out the movement that toppled the Awami League-led government.

The BNP leader acknowledged that students played the biggest role in the movement. However, the contributions of other stakeholders should not be underestimated, he added.

He warned against divisions over taking credit for the movement and urged everyone to remain united to secure people's rights in the future.

The BNP leader said, "We have been working to fix the state structures for several years. Bangladesh will not become a communal country."

"Ziaur Rahman emphasised merit-based politics, and the BNP continues to follow that path. However, the participation of the youth [in politics] will be the most critical aspect of Bangladesh's future," he said.

Around 250 students from private universities across Dhaka and other parts of the country attended the discussion.

DHANMONDI GOLD HEIST

3 arrested, 50 tola gold recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested three individuals for their alleged involvement in a heist at a jewellery shop in Dhanmondi's Shimanto Sambhar Shopping Complex.

Md Rubel, 28, Shafik alias Sohel, 35, and Saddam Hossain, 31, were arrested in drives conducted in Cumilla's Companyganj and Muradnagar areas between January 9 and January 11.

Gold ornaments weighing around 50 tola were also recovered from their possession, said Mohammad Nasirul Islam, DMP's joint police commissioner (DB South), at a press briefing held at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

On January 3, a gang of criminals looted the shop, Crown Diamond and Jewellers, on the ground floor of the shopping complex.

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India's fencing along border 'unauthorised'

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which have now led to the disputes over barbed wire fencing at 160 locations.

He stressed that these challenges stemmed from written permissions granted by the previous government. "These permissions should not have been issued."

He also said, "A major problem arises from the written assurances that allowed India to carry out certain activities. One of the significant issues pertains to the Tin Bigha Corridor."

Under the 1974 agreement, he said, Bangladesh handed over Berubari to India after parliamentary ratification. In return, India was supposed to provide Bangladesh with access to the Tin Bigha Corridor, but it failed to fulfil this

commitment.

"They would open the corridor for an hour and then close it for another hour. Later, in 2010, a new agreement was signed to keep the corridor open for 24 hours. However, this [2010] agreement also allowed India to construct a border fence on the zero line at Angarpota.

"Now we face challenges in opposing this construction as Bangladesh signed this agreement."

At the meeting with Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma, Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin expressed serious concerns over BSF's recent activities along the border.

He called upon the Indian government to advise all authorities concerned there to refrain from any provocative activities that could

stoke tensions along the shared border.

He hoped the matter would be discussed at length in the upcoming BGB-BSF DG-level talks.

After the meeting, Pranay Verma told journalists they discussed New Delhi's commitment to ensuring a crime-free border, effectively addressing the challenges of smuggling, movements of criminals and trafficking.

"We have an understanding with regard to fencing the border for security, the two border forces — BSF and BGB — have been in communication.

"We expect that the understanding will be implemented and there would be a cooperative approach to combatting crimes along the border."

Next polls

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and to invest more in the country.

"Use Bangladesh as a base for distributing Norwegian products in Asia so that you don't need to bring your people from Norway and can use our young people," he said.

Highlighting the success of Gramcenphone, the first overseas venture of Norwegian telecom giant Telenor, Yunus emphasised its transformation into the most profitable entity within the Telenor group.

Gulbrandsen presented a letter from Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, which expressed strong support for Bangladesh's interim government.

"The prime minister has strong support for your efforts to initiate much-needed reforms and conduct free and fair democratic elections," the ambassador said.

The Norwegian envoy also conveyed his country's appreciation for Bangladesh's commitment to protecting human rights and promoting environmental sustainability.

He added that Norway is keen to collaborate with Bangladesh in the ship recycling industry and in advancing the green energy transition.

The chief adviser sought Norway's assistance in resolving the Rohingya crisis amid the changing political situation in Myanmar.

"Norway played a big role in peacekeeping. So, we need your help in resolving the Rohingya crisis," Yunus said.

The ambassador expressed Norway's eagerness to work closely with Bangladesh in international forums on issues including the Palestinian conflict, international tax regulations, and plastic pollution.

Marianne Rabe Knaevsruud, Norway's deputy head of mission in Dhaka, expressed gratitude for Bangladesh's support of the Norwegian-led UN resolution on humanitarian access in Palestine.

Top criminals on extortion spree

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The release of some top criminals after the political changeover last year fuelled the concerns, said police officers and victims.

Names of criminals like Subrata, who was among 23 people listed by the police as "top terror" in 2001, have emerged in connection with incidents of extortion. The others include Abbas Ali alias Killer Abbas, Sanjidul Hassan Emon, and Imamul Hasan Helal alias Pichchi Helal.

Subrata's gang has reportedly been active in Moghbazar, Malibagh, Eskaton and surrounding areas; Abbas in Mirpur, Kafrul and Bhashantek; Emon in Dhanmondi, New Market and Mohammadpur Beribandh; and Helal in Mohammadpur and Agargaon.

Of them, Helal was even named in a murder case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station on September 21 last year.

Hafizur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of the police station, said, "We have filed several extortion cases in recent months. We act on complaints regardless of who is involved."

Regarding Helal, Hafizur said, "We are conducting drives to arrest him, but his whereabouts remain unknown."

Then a Chhatra Dal leader, Helal was arrested on January 12, 2000. He was released on bail on August 16 last year.

In the latest incident, Helal's brother Wahedul Hasan Dipu was among two computer traders who were hacked allegedly by Emon's gang on Elephant Road on Friday night. A case has been filed against Emon and nine of his associates with New Market Police Station in connection with the attack.

Along with Wahedul, president of Elephant Road Computer Baboshayee Kallyan Samity (ECS), Ehteshamul Haque, joint general secretary of Multiplan Shop Owners Association, was hacked by a group of around 20

armed with machetes in front of the Multiplan Centre.

Wahedul, who was elected ECS president on December 28, told The Daily Star he had received a phone call from someone identifying himself as Chanchal a few days before the election.

"During the conversation, another man, who introduced himself as Emon, joined the call and demanded a monthly payment from me but I refused to pay," he said, adding that he hung up the call without engaging further.

Last year, while Emon was in jail, his name cropped up when an anonymous caller claiming to be a member of his gang demanded a meeting with a businessman in the capital's Mohammadpur after the latter purchased a six decimal piece of land in Dhanmondi.

When the businessman went there, he was allegedly blindfolded and taken to a building where a man demanded Tk 10 lakh from him and gave him a three-day deadline.

Fearing for his safety, he paid the amount. After Emon walked out of jail on bail on August 15 last year, his gang allegedly demanded an additional Tk 10 lakh from the businessman in December.

"I don't know how to continue my business under constant threats," the businessman said.

The gang of another top criminal, Abbas, allegedly demanded Tk 3 lakh from a contractor, subsequently blocking the demolition of two buildings of a government primary school in Bhashantek in December.

An associate of the contractor who won the Tk 15 lakh work said, "We barely make a profit from selling scrap materials like rods and bricks. We offered Tk 1.5 lakh, but the gang refused to let us work. We cannot even file a complaint because of death threats."

Several employees of the school, requesting not to be named,

At the meeting, Jashim Uddin also referred to the recent killing of a Bangladesh citizen by BSF in Sunamganj and expressed concern and disappointment over such persistent border killings despite repeated commitments from the Indian authorities to pursue a non-lethal strategy to stop killings.

He strongly called for urgent action by India to stop recurrence of such incidents; conduct enquiries into all the border killings; and take action against those responsible.

Jashim Uddin added that Bangladesh believes such issues should be resolved through constructive dialogues, in accordance with existing bilateral agreements, and in a way that upholds peace and tranquility along the border.

ACC sues Hasina

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of housing and public works ministry; RAJUK officials, including Anisur Rahman Mia, former chairman, Md Khurshid Alam, member (estate and land), Kabir Al Asad, member (administration and finance), Tanmoy Das, member (development and control), Md Nasir Uddin, former member (planning), Major (enr.) Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury (ret'd), former member (development), Hafizur Rahman, deputy director (estate and land-3), Habibur Rahman, deputy director (estate and land-3), Sheikh Shahinul Islam, director (estate and land-2), and Md Nurul Islam, member (estate and land).

According to the ACC documents, Hasina, in collusion with senior RAJUK officials, had six plots of land allotted to herself, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed, younger sister Sheikh Rehana, her

son Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, and her daughter Azmina Siddiq, in violation of existing regulation.

The six plots, each measuring 10 kathas, are in the diplomatic zone of Sector-27 in the Purbachal New Town project.

This is the fourth probe by the ACC against Hasina, after her fall on August 5. While Saima, Radwan, and Azmina are facing corruption probes for the first time.

On December 17, 2024, the ACC launched a probe into allegations of embezzlement totalling Tk 80,000 crore against Hasina and her family members from nine projects, including the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

On December 22, 2024, the commission also launched an investigation against Hasina and Joy over allegations of laundering \$300 million to the United States.

First HMPV case

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winter and spring, and symptoms range from mild cold-like illness to severe respiratory conditions, such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia, according to IEDCR.

Halimur said the infected woman is a homemaker, who has no history of travelling abroad. Her husband lives abroad, but he has not visited the country recently.

He said the woman resides in Narsingdi, where she contracted the virus. HMPV and a bacterial infection has made her condition somewhat complicated.

Addressing concerns about the HMPV virus, Halimur told The Daily Star that there is no need to panic

washing hands, maintaining hygiene, and staying hydrated.

Halimur also mentioned that individuals with two or three underlying health conditions, as well as those under the age of five and above 65, are at greater risk of being infected with this virus.

There is currently no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for HMPV. Management focuses on supportive care, including hydration, fever reduction, and in severe cases, oxygen therapy or mechanical ventilation. Most people recover on their own within seven to 10 days, according to IEDCR.

Meanwhile, the DGHS yesterday issued a seven-point directive, including wearing masks and washing hands with soap and water, to prevent the spread of HMPV.

Earlier on January 8, Prof Tahmina Shirin, director of IEDCR, said HMPV was first detected in Bangladesh in 2017. Since then, it has been identified almost every year to some extent. However, no casualty has so far been reported.

Although the virus has been detected in many individuals so far, there is no record of significant complications, she said, adding that there is currently no reason to panic about the HMPV virus.

In a statement on that day, Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW), civil society advocacy and monitoring network dedicated to improving the health system in Bangladesh, called on the health authorities to strengthen surveillance, enhance diagnostic capacity, and ensure the availability of medical resources before the disease enters the country.

On January 6, India confirmed its first three cases of HMPV in the southern state of Karnataka and Gujarat, officials and media reports said.

News of the current outbreak of the disease followed an announcement by China's National Administration of Disease Control and Prevention that it was testing a new reporting protocol in response to pneumonia cases, reports Deutsche Welle.

WHAT TO DO?

- Use masks
- Cover your nose, mouth while sneezing, coughing
- Dispose of used tissues immediately in a covered trash bin
- Wash hands with soap or use a hand sanitiser
- Avoid contact with infected individuals
- Maintain three-feet distance from the infected
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth
- Stay home if there is a fever, cough, or breathing difficulties

about this virus. It has been detected in the country before, and the mortality rate from this virus is very low.

He emphasised that we need to be more cautious by wearing masks,