



BRIHATTA PAAL

# Moving through memories, myths and motion

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Art studios and exhibitions are great storytellers. We often say that a picture is worth a thousand words. In that sense, any sort of visual art has a lot to say. Brihatta Art Foundation's exhibition, called "Paal", has that same essence.

**Paal and Gangaburi**

Gangaburi is a river heritage-focused art project that exhibits the rich heritage of the river Buriganga through artistic expressions. This project, named after Kafil Ahmed's song "Gangaburi", is curated and directed by Shehzad Chowdhury and Bishwajit Goswami, respectively. The landmark cultural initiative "Gangaburi" is reaching its conclusion after two years.

The British Council and the EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) Bangladesh Cluster jointly celebrate the completion of the project, and the project's culmination is being celebrated through a public exhibition at Brihatta Art Space, Hazaribagh, that was exhibited from April 25 to May 2.

"This journey has led me to reflect on the collectiveness amongst us -- where 'us' extends beyond people -- it encompasses the nature, the unseen forces, and elements shaping our existence," said Bishwajit Goswami, project director of Gangaburi.



**The exhibition**

Goswami said, "it is a symbol of movement, of journeys taken..."

Land, water, and air -- three fundamental elements of existence -- come together through collaboration on creating the sails, reflecting the delicate balance between survival and spirituality, between nature and human intervention."

And the exhibition is an artistic expression of these words. There are three pieces, but intertwined within each of the pieces there are so many untold stories, and the way they represent our people's relationship with rivers, as well as the fundamental elements of existence, really implores one to look through the art. It's as if watching the pieces lend you a magical

pair of glasses, through which you can visualise the untold stories.

The first sail conceptualises Bhumi (Land). Patches of fabrics sewn together, while forming a visual and tactile representation of Ail (ridges) and furrows of lands, where verses from Khona has been inscribed. Khona-r Bochon as they are known, has been part of our culture for as long as we can remember. The artwork reminds one of our farmlands from a bird's eye view. Perhaps, a more accurate description would be poet Jasimuddin's Nakshi Kantha Math.

A parallel narrative on Jol (Water) unfurled on the second sail. Verses from folk poetry and music, and verses of the boatmen inscribed by urban traditional artists who reside near the Buriganga, became a part of the composition. Much like the "Gamchha",

Maa, Mati, Manush, Bhasha, Swadesh, Prokriti -- these six words are inscribed on wall of the garden. That's right, Brihatta welcomes you with a rooftop garden. To pay tribute to the name of the locality -- Hazaribagh, meaning thousand gardens.

which is a woven everyday textile, this piece imbued with profound cultural implications through the weaving acts, where the act of weaving becomes an act of remembrance.

The last sail completes the dialogue by adding air to earth and water. Paban (Air) blends the themes through bold, expressive strokes. The installation of the sail structure, majorly reflected through the painting of Bishwajit Goswami transforms the physical form of the sail to become a vibrant testament to nature's expressions. There is a veil in front of the sail, which captures the fluidity of the river, the motion of the air -- weaving these elements into a visual narrative.

**Brihatta itself**

Of course, aside from the art pieces, the art space itself deserves its own recognition, given that it's an experience itself. Located in the heart of Hazaribagh, Dhaka, a place well known for tannery industries, an unexpected place for an art foundation, Brihatta uses all that to emphasise the point it is trying to make -- art is for everyone.

Once you are here, you become one of them, and Brihatta becomes yours. "To connect -- with others, nature, and ourselves -- is both an artistic pursuit and a human necessity," said Bishwajit Goswami, who invites everyone to Brihatta.

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PHOTO: COURTESY

## World urges calm as India strikes Pakistan

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three of its fighter jets had crashed on home territory.

However, the Indian embassy in Beijing called reports of fighter jets downed by Pakistan "disinformation".

At a media briefing in Delhi, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri detailed India's rationale for the attack.

Misri said the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 that claimed 26 lives aimed to "undermine normalcy returning to Kashmir," making a firm response imperative.

"Our intelligence indicated that further attacks against India are impending. Thus, compulsion, both to deter and prevent and hence earlier this morning, India exercised its right to respond to such more cross-border terrorism," he said.

Misri also briefed 13 foreign envoys in New Delhi on the strikes, an Indian source familiar with the developments said.

"India made it clear that if Pakistan responds, India will respond," a source who attended the meeting said.

The largest Indian strike was on an Islamic seminary near the Punjabi city of Bahawalpur, killing 13 people according to the Pakistani military.

A government health and education complex in Muridke, 30 kilometres from Lahore, was blown apart, along with a mosque in Muzaffarabad -- the main city of Pakistan-administered Kashmir -- killing its caretaker.

Four children were among those killed in yesterday's attacks, according to the Pakistan military.

Pakistan also said a hydropower plant in Kashmir was targeted by India, damaging a dam structure, after India threatened to stop the flow of water on its side of the border.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the overnight operation was New Delhi's "right to respond" following the Pahalgam attack.

"The targets we had chosen were destroyed with great precision and sensitivity, ensuring that no civilian population or area was affected," Singh told reporters in New Delhi.

"We only targeted terror camps,

exercising our right to respond to the attack on our soil."

Pakistan had denied any involvement in the Pahalgam assault and called for an independent probe.

India said it hit militant groups Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Jaish later said 10 relatives of its leader Masood Azhar -- who was released from an Indian jail in 1999 in exchange for 155 hostages from a hijacked Indian Airlines plane -- were killed, with no mention of the fate of Azhar himself.

"There were terrible sounds during the night, there was panic among everyone," said Muhammad Salman, who lives close to the mosque.

"We are moving to a safer place... we are homeless now," added 24-year-old Tariq Mir, who was hit in the leg by

across the "line of control", their de facto border in Kashmir, officials there said.

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shrapnel.

In Indian-held Kashmir, residents fled in panic from the Pakistani shelling.

"There was firing from Pakistan, which damaged the houses and injured many," said Wasim Ahmed, 29, from Salamabad village.

"They were taken to hospitals in Uri and Baramulla towns. There has been extensive damage here, everything is destroyed, and people are fleeing the area."

India had been widely expected to respond militarily to the Pahalgam attack, which it blamed on Pakistan-

based group Lashkar-e-Taiba, a UN-designated terrorist organisation.

The two nations have traded days of threats and tit-for-tat diplomatic measures, while Pakistan has conducted two missile tests.

"Escalation between India and Pakistan has already reached a larger scale than during the last major crisis in 2019, with potentially dire consequences", International Crisis Group analyst Praveen Donthi said.

Diplomats have piled pressure on leaders to step back.

"The world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan," the spokesman for UN chief Antonio Guterres, Stephane Dujarric, said in a statement.

US President Donald Trump told reporters in Washington he hoped that the fighting "ends very quickly".

"I want to see it stop. And if I can do anything to help, I will be there," he told reporters in the Oval Office.

Concern poured in, including from China -- a mutual neighbour of both nations -- as well as from the EU, Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Turkey, while airlines have cancelled, diverted or rerouted flights.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was expected in New Delhi yesterday, two days after a visit to Islamabad, as Tehran seeks to mediate.

EU's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the India-Pakistan situation is very concerning, adding that the EU was trying to mediate the crisis.

China's foreign ministry called on "both India and Pakistan to prioritise peace and stability, remain calm and restrained, and avoid taking actions that further complicate the situation".

Russia's foreign ministry called on the parties to exercise restraint to prevent further "deterioration".

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan talked with Shehbaz Sharif to convey his solidarity.

During the call, Erdogan told Sharif that Turkey supported what he called Pakistan's "calm and restrained policies" in the crisis, his office said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Modi yesterday briefed Indian President Droupadi Murmu about the cross border operation.

India has called for an all-party meeting today to brief them about the military strikes in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, according to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju.

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