



ART BEYOND GALLERIES

First step towards CAFÉ EXHIBITIONS IN DHAKA

RIBR

The possibility of an art exhibition taking place in a popular coffee shop can be as exhilarating as the smell of freshly brewed coffee. The warmth of the coffee diffusing through the air adds an extra dimension to the exhibition itself.

And so, Arabica Coffee Shop at Anabil Tower on Kemal Atatürk Avenue hosted an exclusive exhibition called Beans & Brushes. The show featured paintings by one of Dhaka's most talented artist couples, Fareha Zeba and Saidul Haque Juise.

The private opening celebrated art, culture, and creativity, aiming to support and nurture Dhaka's creative communities. The artists transported their own stories, emotions, and experiences to the café walls, giving their work a new and meaningful



platform while also adding character to the cosy coffee shop.

"The exhibition aimed not only to highlight their artistic talent but also to provide visibility and recognition in a space that is not a gallery but a lively coffee place, where art could reach new audiences, spark conversations, and find its way into new homes," says Maliha Hossain, founder and CEO of Arabica Coffee.

Artist Saidul Haque Juise adds, "The Arabica Coffee Shop is run by one of our students, and her idea to combine coffee with art had been brewing for a long time. In many places around the world, coffee shops also serve as art galleries, and this has become quite

popular. So why not here? Coffee culture is spreading rapidly in Dhaka, and art in coffee shops should spread along with it."

The goal was simple: visitors could enjoy their coffee while also engaging with art, looking at it, and perhaps feeling a connection.

"Maliha spoke to us about this idea repeatedly, asking whether it could be possible. Eventually, we agreed to try it out and see how people responded. The response was encouraging. Many of the people who come here do not usually go elsewhere to see art. Dhaka has become divided in many ways, and people often remain within their own areas," Juise explains further.

The duo has taken the first bold step to bring their art out of galleries to popular cafes. This should encourage fellow artists to explore the possibility of transforming happening spaces into art galleries.

Coffee shops in Dhaka are already vibrant social spaces, drawing young people after work, on weekends, and even during late-night strolls. This culture can be a natural catalyst when paired with an exhibition. It allows young people to engage with art in a casual, familiar setting. Since many cafés are located close to residential areas – often within walking distance – the more this idea spreads, the greater its impact on art appreciation.

"Arabica Coffee has created a small vortex here, though only a few paintings can be displayed. Still, it is a beginning. The response has been strong. Visitors are looking carefully, trying to understand the paintings, and trying to connect with them. Although we could not arrange too many works, whatever was possible is being shared with the people who come to the coffee shop," says Fareha Zeba, adding that the paintings will be displayed throughout the month.

"I feel excited, as a teacher who has been moulding school children to practise art, culture, and creative work for the last 25 years, to see how this idea will pan out in introducing a new generation to fine arts exhibitions in everyday spaces. This accessibility to appreciating art in their favourite haunts is precisely why the community is embracing the effort with enthusiasm," Juise concludes.

Trader robbed, hacked to death in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A fish trader was robbed and hacked to death by unidentified miscreants in Faridpur's Saltha upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Utpal Sarker, 26, said Inspector (investigation) of Saltha Police Station Maruf Hasan.

According to locals and police, Utpal was heading to Gopalganj's Muksudpur upazila on a battery-run van to buy fish around 4:30am. When he reached near Kalitala bridge, a group of three to four men blindfolded the van driver, Firoz Molla, and tied him to the railing of the bridge.

The attackers then hacked Utpal to death and dumped his body under the bridge before fleeing with Utpal's money.

Locals spotted the body in the morning and informed police. A team from Saltha Police Station recovered the body around 7:30am.

Man with physical disability tortured on theft suspicion

Complaint lodged; one held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A man with physical disability was hanged from a tree with his hands tied and beaten on suspicion of theft in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila on Thursday.

The victim is Jalal Miah, 24, of Burdeo village.

Ratan Sheikh, officer-in-charge of Companiganj Police Station, said the victim was in his home in the morning when a group of people picked him up and hung him from a tree near his house.

They accused him of theft and beat him with sticks for hours. On information, police rushed to the spot and brought Jalal to the station.

A video of the incident was circulated on social media, drawing widespread outrage.

Jalal's mother filed a complaint with the police station in connection with the incident. Police arrested a suspect, Arfan Mia, 43, subsequently.

The victim was sent to the upazila health complex for treatment, the OC added.

Number of fire-prone structures triples

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Chowdhury, director (operations) of fire service, said, "Since most owners of the buildings, listed as risky in the past, have not taken steps to improve safety, the number continues to rise, with new ones added every year."

He further said they have scaled up inspections, which have made available more data on risky buildings.

Asked what steps the fire service takes after identifying a risky building, Tajul said, "We serve notices to the building owners. But since we don't have magistracy power, we cannot take immediate action if anyone doesn't comply."

Noting that the fire service prioritises awareness building, Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal, director general of the fire service, said "Awareness needs to be raised at all levels. Progress can be achieved if building-specific safety and awareness at the individual level are ensured."

WEAK ENFORCEMENT OF LAW

According to section 18 of the Fire Prevention and Extinction Act, 2003, if

Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), the local administration or city corporations, which then assign magistrates to run mobile courts.

"During such drives, we either impose penalties or seal off buildings, depending on their condition."

"We can conduct 30 to 40 mobile courts across the country a month against a requirement for around 400. But to achieve the target, we need magistracy power," he added.

When asked, Md Jahirul Islam, chief executive officer (CEO) of Dhaka South City Corporation, said, "Whenever the fire service asks for magistrates, we cooperate with them."

Muhammad Asaduzzaman, CEO of Dhaka North City Corporation, said they stand ready to provide the fire service with magistrates to run mobile courts.

He further said the DNCC periodically inspects the city corporation markets to assess fire safety measures. "Besides, our head office and regional offices regularly arrange fire drills."

Rajuk officials said they have the authority to conduct drives through

measures typically apply to multi-storey buildings."

In reply to a query, he said, "We are currently revising the building construction regulations. Stricter fire safety measures will be included in the rules to help mitigate risks."

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Fire safety experts have stressed the need for effective safety measures and strict enforcement of regulations to reduce risks.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Abu Nayeem Mohammad Shahidullah, former director general of the fire service, said, "The biggest weakness lies in initial response systems, fire alarms, and water supply – all of which are part of fire management."

"Fire drills must be conducted regularly in commercial buildings and government establishments. Besides, there should be regular inspections of residential buildings," he added.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, "Most buildings in our cities lack effective fire safety systems. Fire risks are further compounded by the negligence

Health concerns, air ambulance delay stall plan

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Khaleda's other daughter-in-law, Syeda Sharmila Rahman, wife of late Arafat Rahman Koko, and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also visited the hospital last night.

Zubaida's last visit to Bangladesh was on May 6 this year, after nearly 17 years, to meet Khaleda. After spending a month with family members in Dhaka, she returned to London on June 5.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

Special prayers were held across the country for Khaleda's recovery after Juma prayers yesterday.

Fakhrul and other senior leaders participated in a prayer gathering organised in front of the central party office in Nayapaltan.

During the event, Fakhrul said, "Begum Zia dedicated her life to democracy. Her illness began in prison. She became gravely ill due to a lack of proper treatment."

BNP leaders and activists at all levels, along with people from all



Zubaida Rahman visits her mother-in-law BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Evercare Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

strata of life, from the capital and across the country, participated in the prayers.

Prayers were also held in temples,

churches, pagodas, and other places of worship for Khaleda's speedy recovery.

Female migration declines amid abuse

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and are forced to return to escape abuse and unsafe conditions.

BMET receives numerous complaints from returning female workers every year.

A recent study by the Oivbashi Karmi Unnayan Programme, titled "A Far Cry from Justice for Migrant Workers," also highlights the widespread abuse and violence faced by women abroad.

The study found that 94 percent of returning women experienced regular physical and mental abuse. Forty-seven percent reported sexual harassment, while 97 percent were denied medical care.

Eighty percent did not receive enough food, and 82 percent worked from early morning until midnight. Fifteen percent were locked in rooms without food or water, and 97 percent were denied weekly leave.

Most female workers did not receive employment contracts before leaving Bangladesh.

BRAC has reported assisting over 100 returnee workers over the last six years, most of whom are women. These workers suffered physical, mental, or sexual abuse, and many experienced severe trauma due to overwork and low pay.

According to the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, the bodies of 412 female migrant workers were returned over the last five years since 2021, with 84 of them having died by suicide.

From 2017 to 2022, 69 percent of female workers' deaths were officially

reported as natural. However, 48 percent of families do not trust the reports, according to the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit.

Migration and refugee expert Asif Munier said women are not adequately prepared to compete abroad, so most of them work as domestic help or garment workers.

"Society still views female migrants negatively. Most female migrants are unskilled, which limits their

and economically vulnerable women mainly go to Saudi Arabia to work as housemaids.

Instead of improving their situation, their vulnerabilities increase due to abuse and torture. Many women even die by suicide as a result, he added.

Other countries, including Indonesia, have addressed the safety of their female migrant workers.

"They train women in caregiving



40,088 women have migrated by September this year. Last year, 61,158 women went abroad, while the figure was 76,108 in 2023 and 105,466 in 2022, according to the BMET.

opportunities. The government has not provided sufficient training or explored new labour markets. As a result, the number of women going abroad continues to decline," he added.

Shariful Hasan, associate director at BRAC Migration Programme and BRAC Youth Platform, said socially

and nursing, helping them move away from unskilled domestic work. Bangladesh has not yet taken any such steps," he said, adding that the government must focus on skill development for women.

"Only skilled women can migrate safely and obtain opportunities abroad to improve their fortunes."

Putin, Modi agree to boost trade, ties

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Donald Trump on its goods over India's purchases of Russian oil.

Russia has said it wants to import more Indian goods in an effort to grow trade to \$100 billion by 2030. It has so far been skewed in Moscow's favour due to New Delhi's energy imports.

Describing India's enduring partnership with Russia as "a guiding star", Modi said: "Based on mutual respect and deep trust, these relations have always stood the test of time."

"...we have agreed on an economic

cooperation programme for the period up to 2030. This will make our trade and investment more diversified, balanced, and sustainable," he told reporters, with Putin by his side.

Modi, who warmly embraced Putin on the airport tarmac when he arrived on Thursday, also reiterated India's support for a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine.

Putin said Russia would continue to ensure "uninterrupted fuel supplies" to India, signalling a defiant stance in the face of US sanctions, and also

flagged a project underway to build India's largest nuclear power plant at Kudankulam.

A joint statement issued following the summit said: "The leaders emphasized that in the current complex, tense, and uncertain geopolitical situation, Russian-Indian ties remain resilient to external pressure."

Putin yesterday received a ceremonial welcome on the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the colonial-era presidential palace, with a 21-gun salute as his convoy drove in.