



24th Young artists showcase talent at Shilpakala Academy



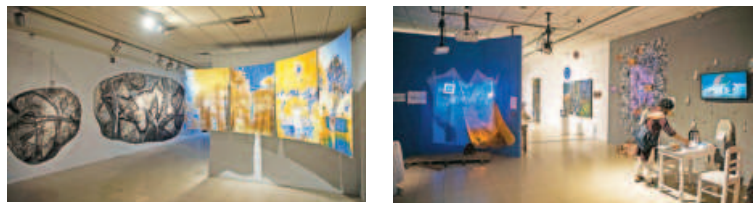
PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE
The inauguration ceremony of the 24th Young Artists' Art Exhibition 2025 was held on December 11 at the National Art Gallery Auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, celebrating emerging artistic talent from across the country.

Although the programme was scheduled to begin at 4 pm, it started at around 5:45pm. Cultural affairs adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki inaugurated the exhibition as chief guest. Renowned artists Professor Dr Abdus Sattar and Professor Mostafizul Haque attended the event as guests

of honour, while Mr Sheikh Rezauddin Ahmed, director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, presided over the ceremony. Reflecting on the nature of art, Professor Abdus Sattar said, "Every country carries a distinct artistic identity. You can often recognise where an artwork is from at first glance. Take Ravi Varma's *Urvashi*—the story behind it alone could fill a book. Art is not just about visual admiration; every work carries a narrative." Farooki apologised for arriving late and said he felt

for artists," he said. "But what truly matters is the personal signature in an artwork—just as a Van Gogh painting is instantly recognisable." Following the speeches, a prize-giving ceremony was held. Seven participatory honour prizes were awarded. Ashfiqur Rahman won the first prize, Sheema Mondol secured second place, and Noor-e-Ala Siddique received the third prize. The evening concluded with guests visiting the galleries to view the exhibited artworks. The exhibition will remain open to the public till December



inspired by the young artists on display. "Competition can be both inspiring and unsettling

22, daily from 11 am to 8 pm, at Galleries 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the National Art Gallery.



'NAKSHIKATHAR JAMIN' TO HAVE SPECIAL SCREENING TO COMMEMORATE VICTORY MONTH

To mark the month of Victory, the Liberation War-based film *Nakshikathar Jamin*, directed by Akram Khan and starring Jaya Ahsan, is set to return to the big screen.

Based on Hasan Azizul Haque's acclaimed story *Bidhobader Kotha*, the film revisits the trauma of 1971 through an emotional lens. The narrative follows two sisters whose lives are shaped by

love, sacrifice, and survival amid wartime turmoil.

The film will be screened on December 20 at 5:30 pm at the Russian Cultural Centre, in remembrance of the martyrs and war heroines.

Jaya Ahsan and Fariha Shams Sheuti lead the cast, alongside Iresh Zaker, Rawnak Hasan, Dibya Joyti, and others.

NEWS

TIB slams bureaucratic

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surrender to bureaucrats with anti-reform interests. In a statement yesterday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said after the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance was published as a gazette, TIB and other stakeholders — despite weaknesses — had hoped that an opportunity had emerged to free the commission from bureaucratic capture and to constitute it in line with public expectations and international standards. "However, within just one month, on December 9, 2025, the very selection committee that could have served as the cornerstone for preventing bureaucratic

abuse of power has been transformed into an instrument of government control." "The Human Rights Commission and other commissions in Bangladesh have long been ineffective due to government influence, and this change in the selection committee is essentially not an isolated incident but rather an example of a conspiratorial attempt to maintain the same process," he added. Describing this bureaucratic takeover of the selection committee — and the government's acquiescence — as deeply disappointing, Iftekharuzzaman said the amendment includes a commendable provision

to establish a national preventive mechanism to prevent cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. However, the inclusion of the cabinet secretary in the selection committee alone undermines all prospects of the independence, impartiality, and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission and the very spirit of that provision. Moreover, the TIB chief noted that the ordinance replaces obligatory requirements with permissive provisions. He pointed out that instead of binding requirement to inform the commission about measures taken in response to the commission's orders the new wording makes it

more flexible with phrases like "may be informed," along with the addition of several similar provisions. This, he said, tramples all positive potential that the ordinance was expected to deliver. TIB called upon the government to immediately withdraw from this embarrassing position of surrender to a sabotage-driven, anti-reform bureaucratic clique; to repeal all imposed provisions in the ordinance — particularly the decision to include the cabinet secretary in the selection committee — and to completely overhaul the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance anew.

Arrest attackers

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Editor Mahmudur Rahman formally called for the all-party rally at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3:00pm on December 15. Rahman threatened a larger movement against the government if the attackers were not apprehended within the 48-hour deadline. The rally was moderated by Inqilab Moncho founding member secretary Masudur Rahman. Other speakers included Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish chief Mamunul Haque, AB Party Secretary Asaduzzaman Fuaad, Inqilab Moncho member secretary Abdullah Al Jaber, and Inqilab Moncho and Ducusu leader Fatema Tasnim Juma. The programme concluded with a procession. Meanwhile, BNP senior leader Mirza Abbas termed the attack "a small portion of a big conspiracy" ahead of the national election. He made the remark while addressing a protest rally in front of the party's Nayapaltna central office. He said, "This is not an isolated incident. First, BNP's candidate Ershad Ullah was attacked in Chattogram, now Hadi has been attacked in Dhaka. This is a small part of a big conspiracy." Later, the party members brought out a procession that marched through the Bijoynagar and Fakirapool areas. In Jhalakathi, the district unit BNP organised a procession from its party office, which marched through the town's main roads and ended in front of the press club. In Rangamati and Manikganj, BNP supporters also held protest processions. Protest programmes were also held in Tangail, Siraganj, Patuakhali, and Kishoreganj. Hadi was shot by miscreants in Paltan area on Friday. He is now undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Jail term to be scrapped

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The Medical Education and Family Planning Division of the health ministry prepared the draft and uploaded it on its website last week, seeking public opinion. Mollika Khatton, joint secretary (medical education) of the division, said the draft was prepared to address some issues that were not covered by the existing 15-year-old law. "We have sought opinions from stakeholders, and several meetings will be held before the draft is finalised," she told this correspondent. Experts have welcomed the formation of medical tribunals to address professional misconduct by doctors, but voiced concerns over several other proposals, including the scrapping of jail terms for prescribing banned medicines. Syed Mahbubul Alam, a Supreme Court lawyer and policy expert, said the proposal to cancel the jail term provision should be reconsidered, as it could drive up the use of banned medicines, posing serious risks to public health. "Only imposing a fine for this offence is not enough," the public health lawyer told this correspondent. He also noted that the jail term for those practising without BMDC registration should not be reduced. "The draft is still under scrutiny, and the authorities should take these issues into account. Otherwise, the move will not yield much benefit." When asked about scrapping the jail term for prescribing banned medicines, BMDC President Saiful Islam said doctors in Bangladesh sometimes need to prescribe unregistered medicines to patients who return home after receiving treatment abroad.

In response to a question, he said that if a doctor prescribes any medicine banned by the government, it will be considered a criminal offence, and the matter will be handled by a medical tribunal. When this correspondent told him that the punishment would only be a fine of Tk 5 lakh in such a case, he said they believe the fine is sufficient to deter doctors from prescribing banned medicines. **CHANGES, NEW PROVISIONS** The draft proposes reducing the punishment for any MBBS or BDS degree holder who practises medicine without BMDC registration. Anyone found guilty of this violation may face one year's imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh, or both, whereas the existing law stipulates three years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both, for the offence. The draft states that anyone without an MBBS or BDS degree may face up to five years in prison or a fine of Tk 10 lakh, or both, for using the title "Dr". Repeat offenders will face double the penalties. The existing law stipulates a jail term of up to three years or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both for the same offence. The draft includes a section that says a doctor or a dentist may face a fine of Tk 5 lakh for using an unauthorised degree, post, or symbol. It also proposes one year's imprisonment for medical technologists for providing services without BMDC registration. It suggests increasing the fine on a medical or dental institution to Tk 1 crore from Tk 5 lakh for operating without BMDC approval. There is also a provision

for imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of Tk 10 lakh or both for obtaining BMDC registration through deception or for falsely claiming to be registered doctors. The existing law stipulates three years in jail or a fine of Tk 1 lakh or both for these offences. **INVESTIGATION, TRIAL** One or more "medical tribunals" will be set up, and the BMDC may refer any complaints against a doctor to them for disposal. Each tribunal will be led by a retired district judge. It'll include two professor-level doctors as members, one of whom must be a woman. Any decision made by the Professional Discipline Committee of the BMDC can be challenged before a tribunal. The tribunal will also have jurisdiction over offences such as causing death by negligence, as mentioned in several sections of the Penal Code, 1860. Tribunal verdicts can be challenged before a three-member Medical Appeal Tribunal, headed by a sitting or former Supreme Court judge or an individual of equivalent status. **FUNCTIONING OF BMDC** Under the existing law, the president and vice president of the BMDC are elected by its members. The draft proposes that the government form a search committee to select them. It also said the BMDC will hold three meetings annually instead of two, as stipulated in the existing law. The new law will make mandatory annual inspections of medical and dental institutions by BMDC teams, which are not required under the existing law.

Parties vow unity against plots to derail

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showcase their strength and sabotage all preparations for the election. These plots must be resisted through unity." Yunus said the attack was part of a premeditated conspiracy, backed by powerful forces. "Based on the information received so far, it appears that the conspirators have expanded their network. They have deployed trained shooters on the ground." The chief adviser urged the parties to move away from the conflicts that have emerged among the forces supporting the July uprising. "Do not let divisions spread among yourselves. Let there be political statements, but we must move away from a culture of viewing others as enemies or attacking them. "Elections bring tension, yet it must remain within limits."

BNP Standing Committee members Salahuddin Ahmed and Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmad; Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar and Assistant Secretary Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair; NCP Convener Nahid Islam and Chief Organiser (southern region) Hasnat Abdullah; and Inqilab Moncho Member-Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber and Law Adviser Asif Nazrul took part in the meeting. Leaders said they would take a firm stance on strengthening communication among parties to prevent any cracks in the unity among anti-fascist political forces, noting that failure to do so would only ease the way for the return of the ousted Awami League. BNP leader Salahuddin said unity was essential in the current situation, adding that under no circumstances should blame be cast on one

another. "No matter how much our political statements differ, for the sake of the nation and for the spirit of July, we must stay united." He advised the government to intensify efforts to recover illegal arms and take action against the conspirators. Jamaat leader Porwar said the tendency to blame one another through political statements has increased in recent times, "creating opportunities for opponents." "For petty party interests, we have turned each other into adversaries. Why should we speak in ways that divide the nation? "We must remain united as before. All parties must reaffirm their commitment." NCP Convener Nahid Islam said coordinated efforts have been underway since the July uprising to diminish its significance, adding that whichever

party comes to power after the election will also face its consequences. "Narratives are being created in the media and on social media platforms to portray those behind the uprising as criminals, while efforts are underway to normalise the Awami League and Jatiya Party. "We do not need special security, nor will we accept it. July must be collectively owned. In the tug-of-war over who defines July, we are destroying it ourselves. Conspirators see our disunity as defeat. They are doing whatever they please from India, while we remain powerless." Nahid Islam further said those operating under the guise of intellectuals and cultural activists to advance the Awami League's agenda must be stopped. Hasnat Abdullah said no security measure would be enough if parties did not remain united.

BNP assures allies of fair number of seats

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separately, and if necessary, it will withdraw their declared candidates. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, along with Standing Committee members Nazrul Islam Khan, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, were present at the meeting held at the BNP Chairperson's Office in Gulshan. "We are continuing our discussions with partners — the seat-sharing issue will be finalised very soon," Tuku told The Daily Star after the meeting. At the meeting, the 29 party leaders expressed their frustration that the candidate announcements were made without prior consultations with allies, Syed Ehsanul Huda, spokesperson for the I2-party alliance, told The Daily Star. "Everyone spoke in the same tone — that the BNP's behaviour is disrespectful. It was wrong to announce seats without consulting partners. Are you [BNP] trying to isolate yourself from everyone? If you want to go with a single policy, we need clarity on that," said Huda, the chairman of Bangladesh Jatiya Dal. So far, the BNP has left out one seat for each of its allies. While the other parties are trying to bring various groups on board, the BNP appears to be losing its allies in the political field, he said. "Even if you form a government after the election, don't think all problems will be solved. You will still need these parties," Huda added. However, most leaders stopped short of cutting ties with the party, believing that the move

would be more harmful than beneficial. "We had asked, if you don't want to keep us, just tell us," said Fariduzzaman Farhad, coordinator of Jatiyatabadi Somomona Jote. Fakhru has said they may change candidates for seat adjustments, he said. Several leaders at the meeting also pointed out that neither of the two rounds of candidate announcements included figures from the July movement. "Since the BNP had promised to consider the parties participating in the simultaneous movement, they have said they will implement it," said Rashed Khan, general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad. The BNP has stated that their candidate list, announced in two phases, is a preliminary one and they will sit with partners in 2-3 days to finalise seat adjustments, he added. The party has promised to resolve seat-related issues by December 17-18, said Saiful of Biplobi Workers Party. The BNP leaders said that they acknowledged the concerns of their partners, but they said the party does not want to be seen as handing over seats to the opposition. "Considering the ground reality of the partners, we don't want to lose seats or give away seats," said a senior BNP leader asking not to be named to speak candidly on the party's predicament. Leaders of Ganasamhati Andolon, Ganatantra Manch, Gonoforum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bhashani Janashakti Party, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh, among others, also attended the meeting.