



Landscape rendered in oil at 'THE COLOR OF NATURE'

Safiuddin Shilpalay is adorned with Shahida Parveen's marvelous paintings, most done with oil colours, and a few with watercolours. She is an MFA holder from the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka.

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

The grind and hustle culture, as a consequence of capitalism, has reduced the number of artists who have kept the practice of oil painting still alive. Acrylic colours, a fast-drying medium, saves time. But the ultra-smooth surfaces of oil paintings have a uniquely classy charm of its own, at least to me. And it's not every day I get to visit a solo art exhibition almost entirely dedicated to oil paintings.

Safiuddin Shilpalay inaugurated *The Color of Nature*, first solo art exhibition of artist Shahida Parveen on January 2. Eminent artist, Professor Emeritus Rafiqun Nabi graced the event as the chief guest. The ceremony was presided over by artist Professor Syed Abul Barq Alvi. Veteran cartoonist Professor Shishir Bhattacharjee was present as the special guest.

Safiuddin Shilpalay is adorned with Shahida Parveen's marvelous paintings, most done with oil colours, and a few with watercolours. She is an MFA holder from the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. Her landscapes are



PHOTOS: COURTESY

not exceptionally detailed, and yet, they look as real as photographs. The artist explained that she loves the dreamlike qualities of impressionism and does her work accordingly. This particular art style stemmed from the rejection to perfectionism by European artists in the 19th century such as Vincent Van Gogh.

The beauty of Bangladesh, especially the districts of Bandarban, Rangamati, Magura, and Chuadanga, is the most prominent subject

in her work. The sunny afternoon sky – bright but eye-soothing, sunsets, trees, majestic hills, the transparency of the water, the adorably blooming waterlilies, boats, the ethereally beautiful Sunderbans – all come alive through her brushstrokes. She has also painted our southern islands near the borders which in her opinion felt like another dimension.

The artist has created portraits inspired from real people but has almost unnoticeably played with proportions to emphasise on the expressions rather than the features. One particular portrait with a mask on, surrounded by green leaves and dead leaves depicts the traumatic state and living with the unpredictability of life and death behind closed doors during the COVID pandemic.

In short, the exhibition creates a certain nostalgia for me and the reasons cannot be traced. It evokes a yearning to witness the ever-changing, forever astonishing natural beauty of our beloved motherland, to go see the known but unseen. The exhibition ran at Safiuddin Shilpalay until January 6, 2026.

Grammys reintroduce Best Album Cover category

The Recording Academy has reintroduced the Grammy Award for Best Album Cover, reviving the category for the first time in more than 50 years. The award will be presented at the 68th Grammy Awards on February 1, 2026, in Los Angeles.

The category recognises the growing cultural impact of album artwork in the digital era. Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr said the move aims to acknowledge creatives who shape the musical experience beyond sound.

This year's nominees include Wet Leg's *Moisturizer*, Bad Bunny's *Debi Tirar Más Fotos*, Tyler, the Creator's *Chromakopia*, Perfume Genius's *Glory*, and Djo's *The Crux*. Under Grammy rules, trophies will go to art directors, while other contributors will receive certificates.



NEWS

Govt to launch monitoring hub

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Imams and religious leaders will be involved in awareness efforts through mosques, temples and churches across the country, and leaflets are being printed and will be distributed nationwide.

The government will expand its voter awareness campaign using election caravans. Currently, 10 caravan teams are operating, each consisting of 10 vehicles.

The number will be increased to 20 so that the campaign can reach all 495 upazilas, including remote and island areas such as Bhola.

The caravans will operate until

January 31.

Regarding postal ballots, Shafiqul said that 1,533,682 signed up to cast their votes in this method before registration closes on Wednesday.

Of these, 761,140 are from inside the country, most of whom are involved in election duties and would not be able to vote in their respective centres. Another 772,542 registrants are non-resident Bangladeshis.

"This is the first time we are doing this, and the response has been unprecedented. Many countries are closely watching how our diaspora voting model works."

Postal ballots will be available once the final list of candidates is published, starting from January 21, he added.

Asked about the murder of Rana Pratap Bairagi, the acting editor of *Dainik BD Khabor*, in Jashore on Tuesday, Foyez Ahammed, senior assistant press secretary, said police have found no link between the incident and journalism or politics.

"The victim was previously accused in a murder case and was involved in extremist politics. The killing is believed to be linked to internal factional rivalry and investigations are ongoing."

Temperatures

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for the past three days, especially when the cold intensifies at night. We had to bring our baby to hospital for admission."

Over the past three days till yesterday morning, at least 1,250 children were admitted to upazila and district headquarters hospitals across eight districts of Rangpur division, according to the health department.

Over 4,000 children – suffering from pneumonia, breathing issues, cough, fever, diarrhoea and bronchitis – have been treated at outpatient departments.

Dr Tapan Kumar Roy, a child specialist at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital, said children from poor and floating families are the most vulnerable. "Due to the lack of adequate warm clothing, nutritious food and proper shelter, children from these families are easily affected by cold-related illnesses. The situation of children in char areas and river erosion-affected regions is even more precarious."

Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, a child specialist at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said that during winter, children's body temperature drops rapidly, weakening their immunity and increasing the risk of infection.

He stressed the importance of keeping children covered with warm clothing at all times, protecting them from cold air, and ensuring breastfeeding and nutritious food. "Parents should consult a doctor as soon as even mild symptoms appear."

Salman, Anisul

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conversation, said protesters should be "finished off", saying the claim was denied outright.

He argued that the imposition of curfew was lawful under Section 24 of the Special Powers Act, which empowers the home ministry to do so, noting that even the current government had imposed curfew in Gopalganj to maintain law and order.

According to the formal charge, indiscriminate shooting of students followed the alleged conversation in Dhaka and elsewhere.

Addressing another allegation that Salman led businesspeople to a July 22, 2024 meeting with then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and urged continuation of the crackdown, the prosecution said the act amounted to incitement and participation in crimes against humanity.

The defence countered that Salman, acting as an adviser and businessman, merely conveyed business concerns without any ill intent.

It added that the meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office, not Gono Bhaban, and claimed to have evidence to that effect.

On charges that Anisul oversaw the filing of 286 "false cases" against around 450,000 protesters – leading to illegal arrests and torture – the defence said the law minister had no authority over filing cases.

If aggrieved individuals do not lodge complaints, police file cases themselves, Munsurul said.

He argued that the charges lacked documentary support and that neither accused exercised control over law enforcement or auxiliary forces.

Police operations, he added, were directed by then Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman, not the accused.

Concluding his submissions, Munsurul said the prosecution had failed to show that Salman or Anisul acted beyond their legal responsibilities and again sought their discharge.

During the hearing, he requested that Anisul – who was in the dock alongside Salman – be given a pen and a piece of paper, which the tribunal allowed. Anisul later thanked the tribunal.

PROSECUTION'S REPLY

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam urged the tribunal to reject the discharge pleas, citing recorded conversations among Salman, Anisul and then state minister for ICT Zumaid Ahmed Palak.

He said the recordings showed they acted beyond the rules of business and wielded authority over cabinet decisions.

Tajul alleged the accused planned curfews and internet shutdowns to conceal mass killings and suppress protests, referring to discussions on shutting down the internet, imposing curfew, and blocking eight apps, including Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp, while misleading the public by claiming services were damaged.

He further claimed that Salman spoke with the then inspector general of police and doctors in Rangpur to alter Abu Sayed's postmortem report, describing him as the de facto commander after the then prime minister.

Tajul rejected the curfew defence, arguing it was imposed to facilitate mass killings rather than restore order.

Meanwhile, in a separate case, ICT-2 yesterday allowed defence counsels to produce four witnesses on January 11 in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of seven protesters and the burning of six bodies in Ashulia on August 5, 2024.

Level playing field absent

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comrades," he said, referring to the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho and a prominent youth leader of the July uprising. "This incident has further intensified people's concerns regarding this election."

He also criticised the lack of visible security measures, saying the party urged the EC to increase law enforcement presence at the grassroots level.

Raising doubts over whether the February 12 election would be free and fair, Asif said, "In the last three elections, we've seen administrative bias, ballot stuffing, and rigging under the cover of night. This has created fear that such practices could recur."

On the appeal process over nomination papers, he said the NCP wants neutrality. "We do not want any favoritism or preference towards any big party. Our desire is to build a democratic Bangladesh – something we haven't seen in the last 17 years."

Grocer hacked to death

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rabbis at a nearby farm, about a five-minute walk from the shop, before heading home.

"He had no enmity with anyone and was not involved in politics. I demand a proper investigation and exemplary punishment for the killers."

The victim's younger brother Roni Chakraborty said Moni had lived in South Korea as an expatriate worker. He returned home around two years ago and started a grocery business.

"If this had been a robbery or snatching, the attackers would have taken his mobile phone, wallet or motorcycle. But everything was found intact," he said.

"So it does not appear to be a case of theft. We urge the police to uncover the motive behind my brother's murder," Roni added.

The killing has cast a pall of gloom over Charsindur Bazar.

"He was very friendly. His murder has left the entire bazar in shock," said Abu Sayed Mia, a betel leaf trader at the bazar.

A human chain was formed at Charsindur Bazar around 2:00pm yesterday, with the victim's family members, friends and well-wishers, traders and community leaders participating.

He also warned against any attempt to undermine the electoral process. "If that happens, we will not sit idle. If necessary, we will return to the streets to fight for free and fair elections."

Referring to BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman's arrival, Asif said the differential treatment accorded to a party leader was "an ominous sign for Bangladesh's democracy."

"Regular visits by government officials and intelligence agency heads to a party office pose a threat to democracy," he added.

Meanwhile, after a five-member IAB delegation met the CEC, party spokesperson and senior joint secretary general Gazi Ataur Rahman said, "In various areas, one or two political parties are being given VVIP protocol. This has raised questions in the public mind and is an obstacle to a level playing field ahead of the election."

He also criticised what he termed excessive reactions following BNP

They demanded punishment for the killers.

Contacted, the OC said police are investigating to determine the motive behind the killing and to arrest those responsible.

No one had been arrested and no case had been filed as of the filing of this report around 7:00pm yesterday, the OC added.

Contacted, Roni said they would file a police case today after completing the victim's funeral.

11-yr-old killed

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instructed his younger brother Rubel to kill the child.

On January 2, Babul helped Rubel enter the house, after which the latter strangled Ayesha to death. Her body was later stuffed into a sack and left outside the family's kitchen before the accused fled the scene.

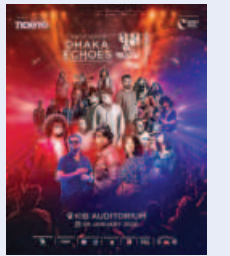
Police recovered the body on Sunday and detained Rubel for interrogation. During questioning, he admitted his involvement and later gave a formal confessional statement in court.

On Monday, Ayesha's elder sister Sathi Akter filed a murder case with Rangabali Police Station, naming Rubel as the prime accused.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Dhaka Echoes: Ghumparani Gaan'

Dhaka Echoes gathers a generation of Bangla rock and alternative voices to honour Shahrin Shahrir as his second album comes alive on stage. With performances by Level Five, Blue Jeans, A K Rahul, Adverb, Palash Noor, Masha Islam, Ritu Raj, and Angel Noor, the concert celebrates influence, memory, and the evolving sound of Deshi music.



DATE: FRIDAY | JANUARY 9, 2026
TIME: 3PM-11PM
VENUE: KIB AUDITORIUM, FARMGATE



DIFF set to open with Chinese feature

The Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) will open on January 10 with a Chinese feature, organisers confirmed. The festival begins with Chen Xiang's *The Journey to No End*, screened as the inaugural film at the Bangladesh National Museum.

Organised by Rainbow Film Society, DIFF will screen more than 246 feature-length and short films from over 70 countries across multiple venues in Dhaka.

The opening ceremony starts at 4pm, followed by the Chinese film at 5:30pm and the Iranian film *Without Me* at 7pm. The festival includes 11 competitive and non-competitive sections, including Bangladesh Panorama, which presents nine local films.

The nine-day event runs until January 18 and includes Chinese Film Week, celebrating global cinema.

Drone strike kills 10 in Sudan's El-Obeid

AFP, Port Sudan

A drone strike on the Sudanese city of El-Obeid killed 10 people including seven children on Monday, a medical source told AFP.

An eyewitness said the strike hit a house in the centre of the army-controlled capital of North Kordofan, which the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have sought to encircle for months.

Since April 2023, Sudan has been gripped by a war between the army and the RSF, with some of the worst violence currently unfolding in Sudan's strategic southern Kordofan region.

El-Obeid, the region's main city, lies on a key crossroads connecting the capital Khartoum with the vast western Darfur region – where the army lost its last major position in October.

Following its victory in Darfur, the RSF has pushed through Kordofan, seeking to recapture Sudan's central corridor and tightening its siege with its local allies around several army-held cities.