



PHOTOS: AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Art within reach unfolds in 'ONE SQUARE STORIES'

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

On February 14, 2026, Bhumi Gallery in Lalmatia inaugurated **One Square Stories**, a group exhibition by 20 Bangladeshi artists that centres on accessibility in art. Built around the idea that art should not remain a luxury confined to the urban upper class, the exhibition presents works created on one-square-foot canvases; compact in size, economical in medium, yet rich in detail and expression.

Art and culture, the exhibition suggests, should be part of everyone's life. At the same time, artists deserve recognition and fair reward for their skill. Through its modest format, **One Square Stories** attempts to bridge these two sentiments, offering works that are both attainable and thoughtfully crafted.

Eminent artist Professor Emeritus Rafiqun Nabi attended

the opening as chief guest, while Akhter Mahmud Rana, adviser of United Group, was present as special guest. Artists Professor Nisar Hossain and Mohammad Eunus, along with Bhumi Gallery founder Saifur Rahman Lenin, delivered speeches before the exhibition formally opened.



The participating artists are Mohammad Eunus, Jamal Ahmed, Ranjit Das, Ahmed Shamsuddoha, Kanak Champa Chakma, Mohammad Iqbal, Mahmudur Rahman Dipon, Shailla Akhter, Azmeer Hossain, Sadek Ahmed, Kamruzzoha, Abdus Sattar Toufiq, M M Maksud Biplob, Abdullah Al Bashir, Shahid Kazi, Monjur Rashid, Nazmul Haque Bappy, Azmol, and Jayanta Mondal.

During the visit to the gallery, paintings in shades of ultramarine immediately drew attention. The style was distinct

yet familiar enough to recognise Azmeer Hossain's bright blue works. Nearby were delicate paintings of birds and nature, identifiable as Kamruzzoha's. On the opposite wall hung Shahid Kazi's thick, textured sunflowers rendered in dry strokes. Jayanta Mondal's paintings captivated with their ethereal quality, while Sadek Ahmed's architectural works evoked nostalgia. Mohammad Iqbal created comforting abstract pieces using Japanese washi tapes. Jamal Ahmed and Kanak Champa Chakma portrayed rural

Bangladesh, while M M Maksud Biplob painted prominent urban locations of Dhaka. Azmol Hosen depicted the Sundarbans in bold brushstrokes, producing a raw, photographic effect.

Ranjit Das and Shailla Akhter presented vibrant portraits. Mohammad Eunus, Mahmudur Rahman Dipon, and Abdus Sattar Toufiq conveyed varied emotions through abstract forms. Ahmed Shamsuddoha's hyperrealistic hibiscus flowers stood out for their meticulous detail. Monjur Rashid, Nazmul Haque Bappy, and Kamal Uddin explored floral subjects in distinct styles, while Abdullah Al Bashir's sparrow feeding its young inside a wall niche added a tender note.

In essence, the exhibition reflects Mies van der Rohe's philosophy of "less is more". Bhumi Gallery will host **One Square Stories** until March 14, 2026.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'The Hive and the Hymn'

An interdisciplinary gathering tracing the fragile poetry of the Sundarbans, this programme bridges research, performance, and memory. Centring Moul honey collectors, the exhibition reveals fragile traditions shaped by danger, devotion, and cohabitation along one of the world's most contested forests.

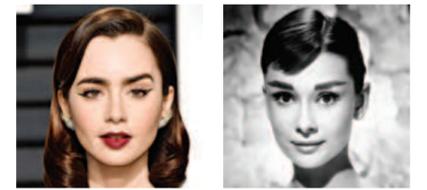
DATE: MONDAY - THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 23 - 26, 2026

TIME: 10:00AM - 8:30PM

VENUE: BRITISH COUNCIL AUDITORIUM, DHAKA



Lily Collins to star as Audrey Hepburn in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' project



Actress Lily Collins is set to portray screen legend Audrey Hepburn in a new film about the making of **Breakfast at Tiffany's**, the 1961 romantic comedy widely regarded as Hepburn's most iconic role.

Collins, 36, confirmed the news on Instagram on February 23, saying the project has been nearly a decade in development. She described herself as 'honoured and ecstatic' to take on the role.

The film will be written by Alena Smith, known for Apple TV's **Dickinson**, and is based on Sam Wasson's book **Fifth Avenue, 5 A.M.: Audrey Hepburn, Breakfast at Tiffany's and the Dawn of the Modern Woman**. The book explores the film's production, cultural impact, and figures such as Truman Capote, Edith Head and director Blake Edwards.

NEWS

Death toll now 3 as expat dies

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the institute.

Earlier in the day, Sumon's nephew Md Shawon, 16, died around 7:00am. He had been on life support since Monday evening, his uncle Md Jamsheer told The Daily Star.

On Monday afternoon, Sumon's sister-in-law Nur Jahan Begum Rani, 40, died while being transferred from Chattogram to Dhaka.

Nine members of the family, including Sumon, were referred to the burn institute from Chattogram Medical College Hospital on Monday afternoon for advanced treatment following the blast.

Sumon, an expatriate based in Poland, had returned to Bangladesh to

spend Ramadan and Eid with his family.

He had travelled from Cumilla to his brother's house in Chattogram for a nasal surgery.

Sumon was resting at the house after the surgery and was scheduled to return to Cumilla on February 27, said his cousin Muhammad Milon.

He had a return ticket to Portugal booked for after Eid, but the accident destroyed the future of the entire family.

Describing his last conversation with Sumon, Milon said he visited him in the morning when Sumon asked for water, saying he could not take the pain anymore, before asking about his wife and children.

Sumon's wife Pakhi Akter, 31, is currently fighting for her life with 100 percent burns. Their two children, Anas, 8, and Ayesha, 4, are also in critical condition.

Heartbreaking scenes were witnessed at the burn unit corridors yesterday.

Pakhi's mother Monowara Begum broke down in tears, saying her daughter tries to speak but cannot due to her swollen face.

The two children, both suffered 25 percent burn and are in the intensive care unit, were crying for their mother, Monowara said.

Family members said the explosion occurred at dawn on Monday.

After having Sehri, Sumon and his two brothers, Sakhawat and Shipon, were

sitting in the dining room with their families, waiting for the Fajr azan.

The blast ripped through the flat just moments before the prayer call while the children were in the bedroom.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sardar Md Shakhawat Hossain Bakul visited the victims at the burn institute yesterday and assured the families that the government is ensuring the best possible treatment for the injured.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, four members of a family, including a toddler, suffered burn injuries in an explosion caused by a gas line leakage in Daudkandi upazila of Cumilla early yesterday.

The injured -- Monowara, 60, Zill Haque, 37, Umme Humayra, 30, and Hurram, 2 -- were rushed to the emergency department of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery around 6:00am.

Confirming the matter, Residential Surgeon Shawon said Monowara suffered 2 percent burns, Zill Haque 54 percent, Umme Humayra 65 percent and Hurram 6 percent burns.

The accident occurred as the gas connection was illegal. Although the line was disconnected earlier, they reconnected it unlawfully, probably just yesterday, said Amlan Dutta, manager (Gouripur branch) of Bakhkrabad Gas Distribution Company.

Top US general warns

FROM PAGE 12
to use lethal force if necessary, his spokeswoman said yesterday.

Washington has deployed a massive military force to the Middle East, sending two aircraft carriers as well as more than a dozen other ships, a large number of warplanes and other assets to the region.

The USS Gerald R Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, has reached the US naval base of Souda Bay on Crete, en route to joining the massive military build-up in the Middle East.

The ground forces of Iran's Revolutionary Guards held military drills on the country's southern coast, state TV reported yesterday.

Meanwhile, Iran's government spokeswoman said yesterday that students have a right to protest but must "understand the red lines", in the first official reaction to renewed anti-government rallies on campuses.

University students kicked off a new semester with gatherings over the weekend in which they revived slogans from

nationwide protests against the country's clerical leadership that peaked in January and were met by a deadly crackdown.

"Sacred things and the flag are two examples of these red lines that we must protect and not cross or deviate from, even at the height of anger," government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said.

She added that Iran's students "have wounds in their hearts and have seen scenes that may upset and anger them; this anger is understandable".

'We thought she was dead'

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daughter Liza Akter said at a programme yesterday.

After 2021, all communication stopped.

Two years later, the family filed a written complaint with the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training. Still, there was no trace of her. "We slowly prepared ourselves for the worst. As the years passed, we lost all hope."

Yesterday, Rizia was handed over to her family at a formal programme at BRAC's Migration Welfare Centre in Uttara, where Liza shared how her mother finally made it back home.

"We thought she was no more. We accepted that she might be dead."

But around 4:45pm on February 12, a Saudi Airlines flight landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Among the passengers was a woman who could not properly say her name. She could not tell anyone where she lived, nor was she carrying any documents.

Warrant Officer Mahub Alam of Civil Aviation Security said, "Her physical and mental conditions were unstable. She could not

provide any address or family information. We immediately handed her over to BRAC for safe shelter."

For nearly two weeks, BRAC tried to identify her. Her photos and details were shared with media outlets and on social platforms. Finally, the Police Bureau of Investigation collected her fingerprints and matched them with national ID records.

They confirmed she was Rizia Begum from Mandannagar village in Barlekha, Moulvibazar. They contacted her family and visited the village to verify the identification.

For 13 long days, her children remained in a state of anticipation and disbelief.

Yesterday, when Rizia finally stood before her family at the BRAC centre, there were no dramatic words, no emotional speech. Only tears. "When we saw her, we could not recognise her face... The torture changed her completely. And she says nothing," Liza said, holding back her sobs.

Rizia remained silent. At the same event, another Saudi returnee, introduced as Rima Akter (pseudonym), trembled as she described her

ordeal.

Rima lost her parents in childhood and grew up in an orphanage. Later, she worked as a domestic worker in Dhaka, married, and had two children. When her husband died, she decided to go abroad in July 2024 to support them.

But upon reaching Saudi Arabia, Rima was sold four times. "Each time, I was physically and sexually abused... At one point, I was handed over to the police. That is when I learned I was pregnant."

Now six months pregnant, Rima was sent back to Dhaka on February 9 -- not with justice, but with trauma.

Airport Armed Police later transferred her to BRAC for shelter and medical care, while her two children are living with relatives.

Officials present at the programme acknowledged the challenges.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration Programme and Youth Platform, proposed establishing a formal support structure at the airport to assist abused migrant returnees.

He said the deeper problem is systemic.

"Women return mentally broken, abused, sometimes pregnant. But there is no formal SOP at the airport to support them... The traffickers remain powerful. The victims return to uncertainty."

He called for a structured state mechanism at airports to immediately assist abused migrant workers. "These incidents deeply pain us. We cannot allow women to leave with hope and return in silence."

PBI's Additional Deputy Inspector General Enayet Hossain Mannan said, "This is the first time PBI identified a distressed female migrant worker using fingerprint data. We will continue to stand beside victims and take action against trafficking networks."

Among others present at the programme were Superintendent of Police of the Airport Armed Police Battalion Mohammad Mozammel Haque; Assistant Superintendent of Police Rakibul Hasan Bhuinya; In-charge of the Expatriates' Welfare Desk at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Shariful Islam; and Civil Aviation Security Officer Mahub Alam.

Speaking to The Daily Star about female migrant workers' abuse, especially in Saudi Arabia, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Md Nurul Haque, said, "Previously, there was no formal MoU with Saudi Arabia, but the last government signed one. So now we can raise workers' rights issues more formally and strongly. Protecting female workers from harassment is on our priority list."

He added that, if necessary, the government will reconsider sending female workers to places where abuse is frequent. "For example, many women are going to Jordan, where there are fewer such allegations compared to Saudi Arabia."

The state minister, however, said that since they have just taken responsibility, they will need some time to implement everything properly.

Meanwhile, for families like Rizia's and Rima's, survival itself has become the only relief -- even as justice remains distant. "She does not speak anymore," Liza said softly. "But at least she is alive."

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