

CELEBRATING ART, ARTISTS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Galleri Kaya marks 22 years of artistic journey

Artist Kamaluddin

SRIJON SHAIKAT

For 22 years, Galleri Kaya has remained a familiar and influential presence in Bangladesh's art community. What began as a gallery has gradually evolved into something larger: a meeting place for artists, collectors, students and art enthusiasts. Over the years, it has hosted exhibitions, encouraged dialogue, and created opportunities for artists at different stages of their careers.

As Galleri Kaya marks its 22nd anniversary, several prominent artists reflected on its journey and the role it has played in shaping the country's cultural landscape.

Artist Ranjit Das believes Galleri Kaya's contribution extends far beyond exhibiting and selling artwork. In his view, the gallery has made remarkable progress and helped reshape the art scene in Bangladesh through its consistent commitment to quality.

Das credited much of that success to Galleri Kaya Director Goutam Chakraborty. Among the exhibitions

Artist Shahanoor Mamun

he remembers most vividly is Murtaza Bashir's print exhibition. He described Bashir as one of Bangladesh's finest line-drawing artists after Zainul Abedin.

He also spoke about the importance of art camps organised outside Dhaka, which allow artists to engage with different environments and audiences.

While international recognition for Bangladeshi art may still take time, Das believes Galleri Kaya is moving steadily in the right direction through initiatives such as books, albums and publications that introduce local art to wider audiences.

Supporting young artists is another area where the gallery has made a lasting difference, according to Das.

Das also pointed to the gallery's impact on Uttara. At a time when few associated the area with cultural activity, Galleri Kaya helped establish it as a destination for art and creativity.

Artist Shamsuddoha described exhibiting at Galleri Kaya as an important milestone in his career. He praised the gallery's contribution

Artist Aloptogin Tushar

Looking ahead, he hopes to strengthen Galleri Kaya further while creating new opportunities for cultural exchange. Bringing artists and ideas from different parts of the world into conversation with Bangladesh's art scene remains one of his goals.

Culture, he believes, is central to national identity, and Bangladesh has a rich artistic heritage worth celebrating.

Artist Jamal Ahmed offered a simple reflection. Galleri Kaya, he said, should continue doing what it has been doing for the past two decades. He expressed gratitude for his association with the gallery and said its place within Bangladesh's art community is already firmly established.

Galleri Kaya's group exhibition, "22nd Anniversary Exhibition", reflects the cultural backdrop of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi art, as well as cross-cultural ties with neighbouring countries. It features a selection of works produced between 1957 and 2026 by 45 modern and contemporary artists. The exhibition is running from June 12 to June 26.

'No option but the streets'

Warns Shafiqur, says govt must honour mandate for reforms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday warned that the party would launch street agitation if the mandate of the last election is not honoured and constitutional reforms remain unimplemented.

"If this verdict is frustrated, no sustainable social order can ever be built in this country. If parliament is curtailed, there will be no option but to take to the streets," he told journalists after a meeting with leaders of the 11-party alliance at Sylhet Circuit House.

Shafiqur, also the Leader of the Opposition in parliament, said nearly 70 percent of voters had cast their ballots, making their preference clear. "A week before polling, the mood across the country – on trees, buses, trains and launches – pointed unmistakably in one direction."

"But after the election, ordinary people told us they voted for us, yet another party formed the government. They asked why we accepted it," he added.

He stressed that Jamaat entered parliament with two pledges – one to the people and one before Allah. "We promised not to abandon the people. In the first session we declared we would cooperate on all good work, but on everything else we will not only withhold cooperation – we will protest."

Criticising the ruling party, Shafiqur said it had broken its pre-election promise to accept the outcome of a referendum. "They themselves said all parties would accept the referendum point. Now they ask what constitutional basis a referendum has. Three referendums were held after independence – were those unconstitutional?"



N Korea says nuke status 'irreversible'

AFP, Seoul

North Korea said yesterday its status as a nuclear weapons state was "irreversible" and key to ensuring regional stability, rejecting calls by the United States and its allies for denuclearisation.

Pyeonggang has repeatedly insisted it will not abandon its nuclear arsenal, portraying it as essential to deterrence, with Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un calling the policy a "line of no retreat" earlier this month.

The North's statement came after a trilateral meeting between South Korea, Japan and the United States in Tokyo on Friday, at which the allies reaffirmed their commitment to the "complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula", according to Seoul's foreign ministry.

"The US and its vassal forces' meaningless rhetoric against the DPRK... can never affect the irreversible position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state," the unnamed spokesperson said in a statement published by the official Korean Central News Agency on Sunday, using the acronym for the North's official name.

Ex-IGP Benazir arrested in Dubai

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The Red Notice sought his location and provisional arrest pending extradition and listed Singapore, the UAE, Malaysia, Türkiye, Australia, the United States, and Canada among countries he might visit.

ACC Deputy Director (Public Relations) Akhtarul Islam said yesterday that the commission had requested the Red Notice in connection with two cases: one involving alleged passport fraud and another concerning wealth acquired beyond known sources of income.

On November 10 last year, the ACC submitted a charge sheet against Benazir over illicit wealth accumulation, concealment of assets, and money laundering. The case is now under trial. He is also facing five other corruption-related cases, investigations into which are ongoing.

Beyond the corruption allegations, Benazir, also a former chief of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), is facing trial before the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in a crimes against humanity case linked to enforced disappearances and torture at the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell.

The tribunal has issued another arrest warrant for him in a separate crimes against humanity case over the May 5, 2013, crackdown on Hefazat-e-Islam at Shapla Chatter.

During his years in Rab and the police, domestic and international rights groups repeatedly raised concerns over alleged enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and other human rights violations.

In 2021, the United States imposed sanctions on Rab and several of its then officials, including Benazir, over allegations of serious human rights abuses.

According to the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances formed by the interim government, Benazir was allegedly involved in at least 95 cases of enforced disappearance during his tenure as Rab

chief.

EXTRADITION PROCESS

The Daily Star spoke to a former assistant inspector general at the National Central Bureau (NCB) in Dhaka and another Bangladesh Police official who previously worked with Interpol about the process of bringing Benazir back.

They said the home ministry would prepare a summary of the case underlying the Red Notice and send it to the foreign ministry, which would then formally communicate with the UAE foreign ministry seeking extradition.

The NCB acts as the official link between national law enforcement agencies and Interpol's global network.

The officials said several fugitives had previously been returned from Dubai through Interpol channels.

"If the UAE government is interested, they can ask Bangladesh Police to take Benazir back," one official said.

The most recent example was the return of murder accused Arif Sarker from Dubai on May 6 with Interpol's assistance.

Still, both officials expressed reservations about how quickly Benazir could be extradited, citing his influence and familiarity with legal procedures.

They said he could challenge extradition proceedings in UAE courts, in which case Bangladesh Embassy representatives would also appear to argue for his return.

One official said that although Benazir faces multiple cases, including those before the ICT, extradition would depend not only on Interpol procedures but also on relations between Bangladesh and the UAE.

He added that Benazir could also be returned under bilateral legal arrangements. Bangladesh and the UAE signed an agreement on the transfer of sentenced prisoners in 2014.

RISE AND FALL

Benazir was among the most influential police officials during the Awami League regime. He served as commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police from 2010

to 2014, director general of Rab from 2015 to 2020, and later as IGP from April 2020 until September 2022.

Following his retirement, media reports alleged that he had amassed vast wealth through illegal means. He later left the country with family members as the ACC began investigating.

After the political changeover on August 5, 2024, investigations into multiple corruption allegations against the former police chief gathered pace.

A Daily Star investigation published in June 2024 found that Benazir had forced several hundred Hindu families in Gopalganj and Madaripur to sell ancestral land through intimidation, indirect pressure, and restrictions on access to their properties.

Affected landowners said many sold farmland at prices far below market value out of fear of Benazir's influence. Some alleged access to their land was blocked after surrounding plots were acquired, while others said their farmland became unusable after sand was dumped on it.

The investigation also found that the ACC had identified at least 605.77 bighas of land acquired by Benazir and his family in Gopalganj and Madaripur, much of it previously owned by members of the Hindu community.

The Daily Star previously reported that Benazir's wife, Jissan Mirza, owns a three-bedroom apartment worth an estimated Tk 14 crore on the 54th floor of The Address Fountain Views Residences in Dubai's Burj Khalifa area.

In addition, Benazir's daughter, Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir, is listed as the owner of two now-defunct companies – Bandub Project Management Services and Bandub Top Project Management Services – both established in 2020 and located in Dubai's Bur Dubai Al Fahidi area, according to the Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS), a Washington DC-based non-profit.

BB dissolves Islami Bank board

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The decision was taken under Sections 45 and 47(3) of the act in the interest of the bank, its depositors and the public, the central bank said.

BB had previously dissolved the board dominated by members of the S Alam family following the fall of the Awami League-led government in August 2024 and appointed five independent directors. The board was subsequently reconstituted several times.

The latest move comes as Islami Bank grapples with a severe liquidity crunch. Over the past two weeks, the bank's current account balance with the central bank slipped into a deficit of around Tk 4,000 crore amid protests and controversy surrounding Khurshid's appointment.

To ease the pressure, BB yesterday provided Tk 2,500 crore in emergency liquidity support to the bank.

The crisis had accelerated after

Khurshid, a former BB deputy governor, was appointed chairman on May 24, hours after the previous chairman resigned and just before the start of a week-long Eid holiday.

Khurshid was among four senior BB officials who resigned amid protests by central bank employees shortly after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024.

His appointment immediately triggered concern among stakeholders.

After the Eid holidays, protesters gathered outside the bank's Motiheel head office on June 1 under the banner of the Conscious Customers' Forum, demanding cancellation of Khurshid's appointment and reinstatement of former managing director Omar Faruk Khan.

The demonstrations coincided with accelerating deposit withdrawals, prompting the bank to seek Tk 10,000 crore in liquidity

assistance last week.

Jamaat-e-Islami's open support for the protesters and statements by senior party leaders signalled clear opposition to the new chairman. The party also backed resistance within the bank, where employees voiced objections to the appointment.

The dispute later spilled into parliament, where the government and opposition exchanged allegations over Islami Bank's broader role and, specifically, its position during the last election.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed alleged that the bank had favoured Jamaat, while Jamaat lawmakers rejected the claim and demanded that the remarks be expunged from parliamentary records.

Jamaat has long been viewed as maintaining close links with Islami Bank since the lender's establishment in 1983 by individuals affiliated with the party, and Islamic organisations.

'Very close' to Middle East deal

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The US president had previously said a deal to end the war in the Middle East would be signed as early as yesterday and that the blockaded Strait of Hormuz would reopen immediately, though Iran had offered a less concrete timeline.

"The Zionists' aggression against Dahieh once again showed that the United States either lacks the will to implement its commitments or

Iranian figures, who argue that it does not serve Iran's interests and would deprive Tehran of leverage over the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

A statement from the foreign ministry of Pakistan, which has been a key mediator between the warring parties, had also said that the deal's signing was planned for yesterday.

But Iran's Fars news agency, citing "a well-informed source close to the Iranian negotiating team",

Meanwhile, a cyberattack disrupted services at four major Iranian banks, though no customer data was compromised, the country's banking coordination council said yesterday, according to state media.

The council said the attack targeted a shared communications infrastructure used by Bank Mellī, Bank Tejarat, Bank Saderat and the Export Development Bank of Iran, prompting technical teams to

Iran general vows Israeli strikes 'will not go unanswered'

Tehran 'not yet' taken final decision on deal: Iran media

Qatari delegation in Tehran for Middle East war talks

Cyberattack disrupts services at four Iranian banks

Iran face NZ in politically charged opener

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The Iranian team also shifted their base camp from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, Mexico, meaning they must cross the border for each of their three group-stage matches in the United States.

Tensions surrounding the team have remained high despite reports of progress in diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. Iranian football officials have criticised FIFA after 15 members of their federation were denied visas to travel to the tournament. The atmosphere was evident during the World Cup's opening ceremony at Los Angeles Stadium, where

boos were heard as the Iranian flag was carried onto the field.

On the pitch, both teams will be aiming to rewrite their World Cup histories.

Iran are appearing in their fourth consecutive World Cup and seventh overall but have never progressed beyond the group stage. They have, however, shown signs of improvement, defeating Morocco in 2018 and Wales in 2022 to record group-stage wins in consecutive tournaments.

New Zealand, meanwhile, are making their first World Cup appearance since

2010 where they were eliminated from the group stage despite drawing all three matches. It will be their third appearance overall and they are still searching for their first-ever World Cup victory.

Their hopes will largely rest on captain Chris Wood, New Zealand's all-time leading scorer, who demonstrated his form during qualifying with back-to-back hat-tricks against Samoa and Fiji.

Monday's encounter will mark the first World Cup meeting between the two nations and the first time either side has faced an opponent from the other's confederation at the tournament.

lacks the ability to do so," Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on X, referring to the suburbs.

"If you do not have the will or the ability to fulfil your commitments, then there is no point in talking about continuing down this path."

Iranian Brigadier General Mohammad Jafar Asadi said yesterday the latest Israeli strikes "will not go unanswered".

The prospective agreement has faced opposition from hardline

reported yesterday that Tehran had "not yet taken or announced its final decision".

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei had said the day before that the deal would not be signed yesterday, but added: "The possibility of this happening in the coming days cannot be ruled out."

A delegation from fellow mediator Qatar arrived in Tehran yesterday "to help facilitate the finalisation of the agreement", a diplomat with knowledge of the situation told AFP.

implement protective measures and temporarily affecting some banking services.

An Indian national has died from medical complications aboard the vessel MT Celestial while it was docked at Duqm Port in Oman, the Indian embassy in Muscat has said according to Reuters.

The death comes days after three Indian seafarers were killed in a US strike on a tanker off Oman, triggering criticism from the public and opposition parties.