




Art Dhaka 2026 opens a new horizon for art and architecture

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As the city's creative pulse quickens, Art Dhaka opened on November 6, at Aloki, bringing together visual culture, critical dialogue and architectural innovation. Running until November 10, the initiative seeks to create a cultural platform where art is experienced, debated and collected.

At the centre of this vision stands ***The Glasshouse***, a temporary structure designed with sustainability in mind. Built with components intended to be dismantled, repurposed and reused after the event, it serves as a gathering space for installations, performances, talks and conversations with artists.

Nearby, Shala, the designated collectors' lounge, offers an intimate setting for dialogue among artists, patrons and cultural practitioners. A curated food venue presents traditional Bangladeshi flavours in contemporary formats, while an event shop features artist-led publications, prints and design objects.

Art Dhaka's founders share a commitment to supporting local contemporary art while encouraging international exchange.

The main fair comprises two curated sections, with artworks available for purchase by visitors and collectors. ***Narration. Thought. Chronicles.***, curated by Zihan Karim, occupies the ground floor, while The Still Point, curated by Najmun Nahar Keya, is on the upper floor.

The Print Pavilion, titled ***The Art of Access*** and curated by Fareha Zeba, explores the processes and traditions of printmaking. Bringing together prints and works on paper by artists across generations, it offers an accessible entry point into collecting.

Leaping Across Time, curated by Mustafa Zaman, pays tribute to pioneering artists whose practices helped lay the foundations of modern art in Bangladesh.

The Immersive Art Zone explores artistic legacies through sound, image, movement and spatial storytelling. It features the visual worlds of Zainul Abedin and SM Sultan, alongside a specially developed presentation



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

of works from Rokeya Sultana's ***Fata Morgana*** series.

The exhibiting artists work across a range of media, exploring personal histories, the possibilities of materials and social and cultural change.

Bishwajit Goswami's figurative and conceptual works examine human anatomy, identity and spatial presence, drawing on the emotional and psychological dimensions of contemporary life.

Sourav Chowdhury brings together printmaking techniques, textured surfaces and mythic symbolism in narratives that connect folklore, memory and modernity.

Dinar Sultana Putul's engagement with organic materials, tactile processes and environmental concerns invites viewers to reflect on ecological cycles and material heritage.

Art Dhaka's ambition to expand the infrastructure for contemporary art in Bangladesh also invites scrutiny. Its concentration of prominent founders, elite collectors and established artists creates a rarefied atmosphere that may feel removed from the wider art community.

Bringing architecture, sustainability, performance, design and culinary arts into one programme, Art Dhaka proposes an expansive vision of a cultural gathering.

Its promise lies in connecting these disciplines while creating room for public participation and serious artistic debate. How widely it opens that space will help determine its lasting contribution to the city's cultural life.

APURBA to perform in Florida after successful New York concert

Actor-turned-singer Ziaul Faruq Apurba is set to perform in Florida following the success of his first solo concert in New York earlier this year.

Held in August at the Jamaica Performing Arts Centre, ***Apurba Live Musical Night*** saw him entertain audiences for nearly two hours with songs and personal anecdotes. Following the response, Apurba revealed that he had received concert proposals from 12 US cities but preferred to take time preparing for each event.

His next performance is scheduled for December 13 at the seventh ***World Fair and Fest*** in Tampa, Florida. He will take the stage at 7:30pm local time on the second day of the two-day festival.

In a video message, Apurba said, "After New York, I am now coming to Florida to share my music with you. Looking forward to meeting everyone through songs and stories."





Vijay Sethupathi to present at 54th International Emmy Awards

Tamil actor Vijay Sethupathi is set to serve as a presenter at the 54th International Emmy Awards, scheduled to take place in New York on November 23, 2026.

He joins a list of Indian personalities who have previously presented at the prestigious ceremony. Actor Aashka Goradia presented in 2009, followed by Simone Singh in 2010. Prerna Wanvari also presented an award in the Arts Programming category in 2012.

Sethupathi was last seen in Baththa, set in Madras in 1986, where he plays a feared gangster who develops an unlikely bond with an eight-year-old boy after becoming trapped in a school toilet.

He will next star alongside Sai Pallavi in filmmaker Mani Ratnam's upcoming romantic drama ***Inji Vellam***.

US firms supply

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to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) data.

Imports from traditional Middle Eastern suppliers, including Oman, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, fell to zero in September.

Oman and Iraq accounted for 41 percent and 21 percent of imports respectively in September 2025.

Besides the United States, smaller quantities came from the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which together accounted for 12 percent of imports. Malaysia's share declined from 5 percent to 3 percent.

Ajam J Chowdhury, director of Omera Petroleum Limited and former president of the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh (LOAB), said freight charges for bringing LPG directly from the United States stood at around $82 per tonne before the Middle East crisis, but some vessel owners were now demanding as much as $250 per tonne.

Mohammed Nurul Alam, chief executive officer of JMI LPG, said his company had imported around 8,000 tonnes of LPG and paid a premium of $300–350 per tonne over the Saudi Contract Price to secure supplies.

"We were selling the product at a loss to maintain supplies," he said.

He said the conflict had reduced vessel availability and made it difficult to arrange shipments and secure insurance coverage, adding to the cost of bringing LPG to Bangladesh.

FEW ALTERNATIVES

Ajam warned that Bangladesh's growing dependence on US-origin LPG posed a supply-security risk, as importers had limited alternatives.

Although countries such as Nigeria and Algeria could emerge as alternative suppliers, Bangladeshi importers had little experience sourcing LPG from those markets, he said.

Another feature of the changing supply chain is the growing role of intermediary storage and trading hubs in Asia.

US-origin cargoes are sometimes stored and traded through facilities in Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and China before reaching Bangladesh, Ajam said.

He added that large importing countries, including India, had already secured cargoes for the next three to four years, making it difficult for smaller buyers to secure supplies.

"Even if the war ends, supplies may not return to normal immediately, as the damaged infrastructure in the Middle East would take time to repair," he said.

Md Redhwanur Rahman, chief operating officer (sales and marketing) of Bashundhara LP Gas, which was once a major market player but is currently unable to import, said, "Even companies with term supply contracts were not receiving their full contracted volumes because of shipping constraints."

The company had faced banking restrictions in 2024 and 2025 and had yet to sign a new long-term supply contract with any global supplier, he added.

BERC Chairman Jalal Ahmed said the shift towards US supplies had increased the distance LPG cargoes needed to travel to reach Bangladesh, adding to transportation time and costs.

CONCENTRATED IMPORT MARKET

Although around 35 companies hold licences to operate in the sector, only 10 to 12 are active importers.

The five largest importers accounted for around 71 percent of Bangladesh's total LPG imports of 17.43 lakh tonnes in FY2025-26, according to BERC data.

United Aygaz was the largest importer, bringing in 2.96 lakh tonnes, followed by Meghna Group's Fresh LPG with 2.8 lakh tonnes.

Omera imported 2.65 lakh tonnes, BM Energy 2.03 lakh tonnes and Jamuna Spacetech 1.87 lakh tonnes.

Several other major companies, including Basundhara, Unitex, Orion, Beximco and JMI, have reduced or suspended imports, according to industry sources.

Govt's debt burden swelling

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The government also provided Tk 20,000 crore in capital support to Shamilita Islamic Bank, formed last fiscal year by merging five troubled Islamic banks. Further support may be needed as reforms of weak banks continue.

Considering these factors, the World Bank projects the fiscal deficit to widen to 4.8 percent of GDP in FY27 and 4.9 percent in FY28, as expenditure growth outpaces revenue gains.

BANK BORROWING, DEBT RISKS

The World Bank warned that "the government's continued reliance on the banking sector to finance the fiscal deficit risks exacerbating existing macro-financial vulnerabilities".

By absorbing available bank liquidity, government borrowing risks crowding out private-sector credit, keeping lending rates high and discouraging investment.

It could also complicate efforts to contain inflation and deepen the "sovereign-bank nexus", tying public finances more closely to banking-sector risks.

Domestic banks hold the largest share of domestic public debt through Treasury bills and bonds.

REVENUE SHORTFALL

The World Bank said revenue collection improved only modestly in FY26 and remained below target, while tax policy and administration reforms made limited progress.

A narrow tax base, weak compliance, and fragmented tax administration continue to constrain revenue mobilisation.

Key reforms, including separating tax policymaking from tax administration, remain delayed.

The World Bank also called for digitalising tax administration and phasing out poorly targeted tax exemptions.

Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said weak revenue mobilisation was the main driver of rising public debt, forcing the government to rely increasingly on domestic and foreign borrowing.

Bangladesh's revenue-to-GDP ratio, which stood at 7.9 percent in 2025, is among the lowest in the world, he said, leaving the government dependent on loans to meet its spending needs.

"The original sin is that our revenue collection is much lower than that of the countries participating in the conference. That is what we need to address first," he said.

Mustafizur said the budget also failed to provide a complete picture of debt servicing, as principal repayments, particularly on domestic debt, were not disclosed as clearly as interest payments.

A clearer account of both is needed to show how much public money goes towards servicing debt, he added.

He said the conference could help Bangladesh learn from other countries about managing debt, securing concessional loans and negotiating lower interest rates and longer repayment and grace periods.

But it would not solve the underlying problem without stronger domestic revenue mobilisation.

"Unless we address this problem, no one will be able to pull us out of the debt trap," he said.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, also said government expenditure had risen without a corresponding increase in revenue, widening the deficit and adding to public debt.

He said the conference could help Bangladesh build the technical capacity to issue sovereign bonds in international markets and attract potential investors.

Policymakers need to understand listing and regulatory requirements, choose suitable bond instruments, and identify appropriate markets, as Bangladesh is considering raising funds through a sovereign bond.

"Issuing bonds alone is not enough; there must be buyers willing to invest in them," Hussain said.

He added that credit ratings, underwriting and guarantees would be crucial. Guarantees from institutions such as the International Finance Corporation or specialised private financial institutions could reduce investor risks and lower borrowing costs.

"If these issues are discussed and translated into concrete steps, the conference could produce some meaningful outcomes. Otherwise, it could end up being little more than an opportunity to attend sessions, listen to presentations and exchange views," he said.

Crude bomb blasts

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General Hospital during an Awami League motorcycle procession. Police said 70 to 80 motorcycles were travelling from Banani towards Kuril Bishwa Road. Three people were arrested.

Also on November 5, two crude bombs were thrown near the July Memorial in Badda, while explosions occurred outside Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Karwan Bazar and at Gate 3 of Rajarbagh Police Lines.

On Friday night, eight crude bombs exploded in Khilgaon, Adabor, Shahbagh, the airport area and Kalshi in Mirpur between 7:55pm and midnight. A Baishakhi Paribahan bus was also torched at the Coca-Cola intersection on Pragati Sarani.

Early yesterday, a Pallisheba Paribahan bus carrying garment workers was set ablaze in Saturia, Manikganj. Around 4:00am, a BRTC bus on the Khagrachhari-Chattogram route was torched in Khagrachhari town's Mahajanpara area. Its helper, who was sleeping inside, escaped unharmed.

DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media) Akhter Hossain said five Awami League affiliates had been arrested over the explosions in the past 24 hours.

He said a special drive targeting criminals and leaders and activists of the banned organisation was underway to maintain law and order. Figures on Awami League arrests since November 1 would take at least another day to compile, he added.

According to the Police Headquarters, at least 21 people were arrested in connection with crude bomb explosions between November 1 and 7. During the same period, at least 898 people linked to the Awami League were arrested in ongoing police drives.

Similar attacks occurred ahead of an Awami League-announced lockdown in September. On September 19, at least 14 crude bombs exploded across Dhaka, a bus was torched outside Kafrul Police Station and three people were injured. The DMP subsequently established over 200 checkpoints and intensified patrols and searches.

Former inspector general of police Ashraful Huda urged stronger intelligence operations alongside regular policing, citing manpower shortages.

"When there is only one police officer for every 1,200 people, it is not possible to ensure security everywhere by deploying uniformed police alone."

He also called for closer supervision by senior officers to ensure field-level personnel perform their duties.

Prof Muhammad Omar Faruk of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University's Department of Criminology and Police Science said the explosions appeared intended to create instability, spread fear and fuel resentment against the government.

He warned that politically motivated individuals and separatist groups, including those previously involved in terrorism, might exploit the situation.

Faruk recommended stronger police surveillance, CCTV monitoring and patrols in crime-prone areas and around key installations, saying increased police presence could prevent attacks.

DMP Additional Commissioner (DB) Shafiqul Islam said security was being strengthened. "We are planning to install CCTV to cover the city. Besides, checkposts will be set up in the city area."

New Gini housing attacked again

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Mohammad Nazim Uddin Bhuiyan, owner of New Gini Properties.

They also vandalised a farm inside the compound and robbed gold ornaments from his sister, who was there at the time, he alleged.

Nazim claimed the attackers belonged to the same group that had carried out the September 26 attack.

Police detained 14 people, including four women, in connection with yesterday's incident, Sazzad Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (Cantonment Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

"When one group went there, the other group resisted them, leading to a clash. Police brought the situation under control and detained 14 people from both sides," he said.

Of those detained, three sustained serious injuries. They were first taken to Kurmitola General Hospital before being referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he added.

On September 26, around 200 to 250 people stormed the housing project at around 10:30pm, firing gunshots and vandalising several structures, including content creator Salman Muqtadir's Brownfish Studio, the company's office and an under-construction building.

Construction workers were also beaten, while mobile phones, cash and other valuables were allegedly looted.

New Gini Properties subsequently filed a case with the Cantonment Police Station, accusing 13 named people, including retired Major General Golam Mohiuddin Chowdhury, and 150 to 200 unidentified people.

The initial police investigation pointed to a land dispute between the housing company and the retired military officer as the motive behind the September attack.

On October 17, Nazim also filed a general diary with the Cantonment Police Station, alleging that three people accused in the case had threatened to kill him.

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff

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program that defined the first year of the president's second term.

But he faced widespread criticism after the deadly shootings of two protesters by immigration agents in Minneapolis in January -- incidents that sparked mass demonstrations.

"Stephen Miller is the architect of the most barbaric, inhumane policies of this administration. Trump couldn't have made a worse choice," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer posted on X.

"Our Democratic majorities will fight him every step of the way."

'It's Miller Time'

In a post on Truth Social earlier announcing Miller's appointment, Trump described him as "one of my most trusted advisors."

Trump said Wiles had "done an outstanding job" and would be "moving over to the Trump Political Operation. I want to thank her for her service as Chief of Staff -- She has done a great job!"