





PHOTOS: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

‘Art First’: A new chapter in artistry initiated by DD Art Gallery

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

“Art First” was the slogan DD Art Gallery founder and curator Rizwan Bin Farouq put forward before the audience on November 13, reflecting his passion for art and its place in Bangladesh. Despite the country’s wealth of artistic talent, recognising and adequately compensating artists, craftsmen and sculptors remains a challenge – one that has shaped the gallery’s philosophy over the years.

Bringing together the works of 35 distinguished contemporary artists, DD Art Gallery inaugurated a group art exhibition on November 13 at its new premises in Gulshan-1, Dhaka, marking a new chapter in its journey of promoting Bangladeshi art.

Presented by Dhaka Bank, the exhibition features established names alongside artists from newer generations, offering visitors a glimpse into the diversity of Bangladesh’s contemporary art scene. The participating artists include Shahabuddin Ahmed, Hashem Khan, Monirul Islam, Rafiqun Nabi, Farida Zaman, Rokeya Sultana, Jamal Ahmed, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Nisar Hossain, Nazia Andaleeb Preema, Vinita Karim, and several others.

The programme began at 6:30 pm, with Miss World Bangladesh 2026 Samanzaar Sayeed hosting the event.

The opening remarks were delivered by Rizwan, who addressed the philosophy of “Art First” and the need to create greater appreciation for artistic expression.

Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, the chief guest at the event, spoke about the importance of integrating artists and creative professionals into Bangladesh’s economic development. “What we want to do is bring artists and art to the forefront of the economy and growth factor of Bangladesh. The whole idea of the creative economy is to support the artists, artisans and craftsmen all over the country,” he said.

Emphasising the importance of financial sustainability, he added, “All the artists who have been struggling, we want to help them, financially support them and provide them with a market and branding platform.” He also highlighted the need for art critics who could evaluate artworks and establish their market value.



Following the speeches, the guests took part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, formally inaugurating the gallery’s new premises and exhibition.

Among the featured works are Shahabuddin Ahmed’s ***Running*** and ***Hanging***, Rafiqun Nabi’s familiar street-child character in ***Tokai***, and Monirul Islam’s abstract compositions ***Let There Be Light*** and ***Blue Prism***, marked by geometric forms and delicate lines.

The exhibition also features Farida Zaman’s ***Sufia***, Rokeya Sultana’s ***Time and Madonna*** and ***Flaming Desires***, and Kanak Chanpa Chakma’s ***Ritual*** and ***The Bell***, drawing on themes of identity, motherhood and indigenous heritage.





Vinita Karim’s ***The Crimson Hour*** and ***Emerald Tide*** bring together acrylic, embroidery, gold and copper on linen, while Nazia Andaleeb Preema’s ***Surreal Night*** and ***Dancing Spring*** offer contrasting explorations of colour and form.

The occasion also marks a significant moment for DD Art Gallery, which was established in 1999 by art collector and curator Rizwan Bin Farouq. With its new space, the gallery aims to bring artists, collectors and art enthusiasts closer together while expanding its reach through a digital platform.

Among the dignitaries named in the exhibition catalogue are Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury as chief guest, artist Monirul Islam as special guest, and Dhaka Bank Chairman Abdul Hai Sarkar as guest of honour.

DD Art Gallery’s continuing effort is to create a space where art is not standing on the sidelines. Instead, it is bringing together different generations of artists and opening new conversations about the place of art in Bangladesh. The exhibition is open for visitors at DD Art Gallery’s new premises on the fifth floor of House 61, Road 27, Gulshan-1, Dhaka until December 3, daily from 3 pm to 8 pm.

NEWS

Bangladesh eyes financing options amid rising debt

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The ratio is estimated to have increased to 40.5 percent in fiscal 2025-26 from 38.9 percent the previous year, and is projected to reach 43 percent this fiscal year.

According to the global lender, the projected increase reflects growing expenditure on public sector salaries and pensions, subsidies, capital support for troubled banks and debt servicing, against a backdrop of weak revenue growth.

“Public debt continued to rise, posing risks to debt sustainability,” said the Washington-based multilateral lender in its latest development update released last month.

In this context, the conference will open with a scene-setting keynote exploring the fundamental rationale for sovereign borrowing, specifically how public debt, when managed prudently within a strong fiscal policy environment, can finance productive investment, boost job creation and productivity, and accelerate growth alongside sovereign debt management challenges.

The event aims to examine sustainable borrowing strategies and appropriate cost-risk trade-offs in a high-interest-rate environment.

The opening session will examine empirical evidence on the relationship between expansionary fiscal policy, public investment and economic growth; how economic cycles can be weathered sustainably; and when borrowing enhances development versus when it crowds out private investment or becomes fiscally destabilising.

It will also draw lessons for LDC-graduating economies as they expand market access and diversify their creditor base.

A dedicated session on the new IMF Debt Sustainability Framework (DSA) for low-income countries will assess its methodology, risk thresholds and policy implications for LDC-graduating economies preparing to access international capital markets for the first time.

Discussions will focus on how the updated framework differs from the old DSA, where Bangladesh currently stands regarding calibrated risk thresholds and what policy adjustments can maintain a favourable debt profile.

The event also aims to strengthen Bangladesh’s domestic government securities market and explore opportunities for attracting international portfolio investors, explore opportunities for mobilising private capital for public investment through blended finance and risk-sharing arrangements.

It also aims to promote cooperation with multilateral development banks, international investors, credit rating agencies, and peer-country debt management institutions.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury will inaugurate the conference this morning.

One person’s reject, lifeline for another

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“Most people in this area are financially disadvantaged -- they cannot afford to buy vegetables at regular market prices. That is why these cheaper vegetables are in high demand,” said Jakir Hossain, a shopkeeper at the market.

According to Jakir, several traders have been supporting their families through this business for years.

The 55-year-old Moneja Begum has been supporting herself through this trade for 22 years, ever since her husband died.

She earns between Tk 200 and Tk 400 a day by selling the spoiled produce at Fokirni Bazar, beside Tejgaon Railway Station.

For instance, on Wednesday, she bought around 100 kg of damaged cucumbers for Tk 800, which she sold for Tk 1,300 over Wednesday and Thursday. She still had 10kg remaining.

“That is how I manage to run my household,” she said.

Several customers at the market said they came there because the vegetables were considerably cheaper than those sold in regular markets.

Vegetables are cut and prepared before cooking anyway, so minor damage or cracks do not necessarily make them unusable. What matters is being able to buy them at an affordable price.

A significant portion of the vegetables is also purchased by small hotels and messes, helping them reduce food costs.

Karwan Bazar, one of Dhaka’s largest wholesale markets, also has a separate section where broken, cracked and stale vegetables are sold.

Around 30 to 35 traders operate there beside the wholesale outlets.

Their customers include small hotels, suppliers of meals to messes, and low- and middle-income households living in nearby areas.

Harun-or-Rashid, a trader at the market, said wholesale businesses often have vegetables left unsold after regular trading hours. Some vegetables are also damaged or cracked during transportation.

Others become stale after remaining unsold for two or three days.

“The wholesale traders sell these vegetables at reduced prices. We buy them and then sell them to customers at even lower prices,” he said.

Saifur Rahman Chowdhury Sujon, general secretary of the Karwan Bazar Wholesale Traders Association, estimated that around five to eight percent of the vegetables arriving at the market suffer some form of damage.

Giving an example, he said a consignment of eggplants worth Tk 1,000 might have to be sold for Tk 200 or Tk 300 if some of the vegetables are cracked, broken or partially rotten.

Microsoft announces service ‘restored’

AFP, *Washington*

Tech giant Microsoft said yesterday it has “restored service” to customers, effectively drawing a close to a massive outage that caused chaos and disrupted public services and business around the world.

“We have completed our efforts to address the underlying issue of the incident and restored service to the remaining impacted customers and regions,” the US-based company said in an X post.

Microsoft had already reported a “broad recovery” for Outlook email and other services the day before, stating the major disruption was due to a technical issue and “not related to cyber or AI/ agents.”

Woman stranded in no-man’s land for five days

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while the BGB has not allowed her to enter Bangladesh.

The woman has been spending her days and nights in the open since Tuesday, resting on straw and dry leaves. Locals have been providing her with food and drinking water.

“She has been suffering under the scorching sun for five days. She appears to be mentally unstable. The standoff between the two forces has only worsened her condition,” said Abdur Rahim, a resident of the area.

Another local, Amena Begum, said, “We hope senior officials from both countries will resolve the issue soon. She is facing serious difficulties, including using the toilet. Whenever she moves in either direction, personnel from the two border forces chase her away.”

As of yesterday afternoon, the two forces had remained in contact, but no solution had been reached.

Lt Col Hasanur Rahman, commanding officer of the Jamalpur-35 BGB Battalion, said the woman had been unable to provide a specific address and gave only fragmentary information, making communication difficult.

He said the BSF claims the woman is a Bangladeshi citizen, while the BGB maintains that she was pushed into Bangladesh from India and has evidence to support that claim.

The woman has been spending her days and nights in the open since Tuesday, resting on straw and dry leaves.

Efforts are under way to persuade the BSF to take her back, he said, adding that discussions are continuing at both field and higher levels.

