

Artist Shahabuddin's Art Exhibition titled 'Peace' Inaugural Ceremony

Speech by

Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir

The Chair,
Dear Colleagues,
Cultural personalities and artists,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good afternoon to you all.

I welcome you all at the inaugural ceremony of internationally-acclaimed and Independence-award winning artists Freedom Fighter Shahabuddin's art exhibition titled 'Peace'.

I had the opportunity to see many of his artworks and attend art exhibitions of artist Shahabuddin. Today, I am here to inaugurate his art exhibition and I feel proud of it.

March is the month of many events of our national history. The greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born on the 17th March in 1920. On the 7th March, 1971, Bangabandhu in his historic speech at the then Race Course Maidan declared: The struggle for this time is for our emancipation, the struggle for this time is for independence. He declared independence at the first hour of the 26th March. The entire Bangalee nation joined the war of liberation at his clarion call and we earned ultimate victory on the 16th December after a nine-month war.

I pay my homage to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders, the martyrs and the oppressed women of liberation war.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have been graduated to a developing country from LDC. It is a great pride and honor for the nation.

Many used to ridicule us as poor but today we have been elevated in their same status. The credit of this outstanding achievement goes to the common people, the peasant and the workers and toiling masses. We have showed them the ways, and they materialized this gigantic task. I greet the nation for this dazzling fit.

We are a fortunate Nation. The soil of this country is a fertile ground for creating artists and litterateurs. Many luminaries, including Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Shilpachariya Joynul Abedin, artists Kamrul Hasan and today's artist Shahabuddin glorified the Bangalee Nation. By their excellent works, they took themselves to a unique height in one hand, on the other exalted the nation in international arena.

Adoration for wealth is not all for human beings. Humanity is not roused without nurturing and honing the good virtues of people. That is why art, culture, literature songs and games bear so much importance. Artists Shahabuddin has been living abroad for a long period. But Bangladesh has not been deleted from his heart. Shahabuddin preserved Bangladesh in the core of his heart and depicts his country through his artworks. His marvelous artwork 'Bangabandhu' captured our hearts.

The art exhibition of Shahabuddin this time is titled 'Peace'. We are in favour of establishing peace which can be family-centric, society or international-level.

The Father of the Nation was vocal in favour of global peace. In his maiden speech at the UNGA on the 25th September in 1974 Bangabandhu said: "Bangladesh has been following the foreign policy of non-alignment movement. The main theme of the policy is peaceful co-existence and friendship to all."

He further said: "Peace is inevitable for protecting the existence of human race. The deep aspiration of the people of the world lies within peace. Peace cannot be a lasting one without justice." I myself pursue the policy of peace and presented 'Peace model' in the UN which adopted it.

But peace is being battered at many parts of the world on various grounds. Innocent people are being killed in war and conflicts. Even children and women are not spared.

About 1.1 million Rohingya people from our neighbouring Myanmar have taken shelter in our country in the face of atrocities. We have given them refuge on humanitarian ground. We want that Myanmar should take back their citizens at the earliest. Ignoring various provocations, we are pursuing the path of peaceful solution to the problem. Because, Bangladesh believes in peace.

Our commitment to peace has also been reflected through our persuasion to resolve the Maritime boundary with Myanmar and India, and execution of the land boundary with India.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, when I look around, I find the touches of Bangabandhu everywhere. The place from where we are speaking, the Shilpakala Academy, was built by Bangabandhu in 1974. Under his initiative, the first national literary festival was held in 1974.

He had cherished a dream centering the Shilpakala Academy. He wanted to display our thousand-year-old cultural heritage in front of the world. The Shilpakala Academy has been working to materialize his dream.

We have spread the activities of Shilpakala Academy up to the upazila level. As a result, a cultural awakening has taken place across the country. Our singers, dancers, painters, drama artistes have been playing important role in projecting Bangladesh abroad.

I am happy to see the national song and dance centers, national art center and national drama center. I have approved the designs of these installations.

I would like to urge the artist community to widen their activities. I myself and my government is always for the welfare of the artists.

I pray for long life of Shahabuddin and all out success of his works.

With these few words, I declare the exhibition titled 'Peace' open.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.

May Banagladesh Live Forever.

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