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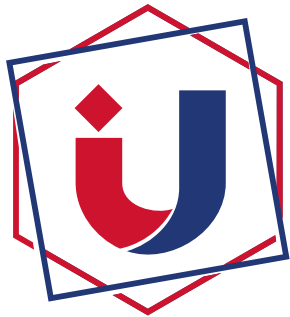
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The background of the entire image is a dark, textured surface, possibly black or dark navy, with a subtle pattern of small, colorful specks. In the lower-left quadrant, several white ceramic plates are arranged. Some are stacked, while others are placed individually. A piece of white, branching coral or dried seaweed is draped over the top-left plate and another piece is draped over the bottom-left plate. The lighting is soft, highlighting the smooth texture of the plates.

Bring Out
The Best



CONTENT

14

LEAD STORY
Shaping Bangladesh
Celebrating 5 years of success

26

CERAMIC CENTRAL
X-Ceramics' Trailblazing Legacy
Made in Bangladesh Built for the World



34

RESORT
Sarah Resort
*Journey Beyond
a Masterplan*

40

RELATED INDUSTRY
GPH Ispat
*GPH produces Green Products with
limited greenhouse gas emissions*

14th Issue

FEBRUARY 2025



Scan & Read Digitally

44

SCENIC SIGHTS

Sajek Vally

Delve into the kingdom of mountains at Sajek

49

EXPOSURE

CERAMIC EXPO BANGLADESH 2025

Pre-Event Report

56

EXHIBITION

Of Art and Altruism

'The Story of Art' Exhibition

60

ARCHITECTURAL REGIME

Ar. Bayejid Mahbub Khondker

Devoted To Architecture that benefits Mother Earth

69

FAIR

Ekushey Book Fair-2025

For the Love of Language, Literature and Nation



60



74

INTERIOR INSIGHT

WE SPACE

A Fresh Look with Inclusivity at its Core

83

HABITATION

Rehab Fair- 2024

Real Estate Enthusiasts, Innovators Show Grand Confidence

89

EXPO

DITF-2025

State-of-the-art pavilions draw huge crowds

34



CERAMIC BANGLADESH

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#TheTablewareExpert

Senior Advisor's MESSAGE



Dear Readers,

Bangladesh is on the path to a transformative era as it prepares to graduate from LDC status. This milestone brings new opportunities for innovation and sustainability in architecture and industry. In this issue of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine, we celebrate the visionaries and changemakers shaping a resilient and eco-friendly future.

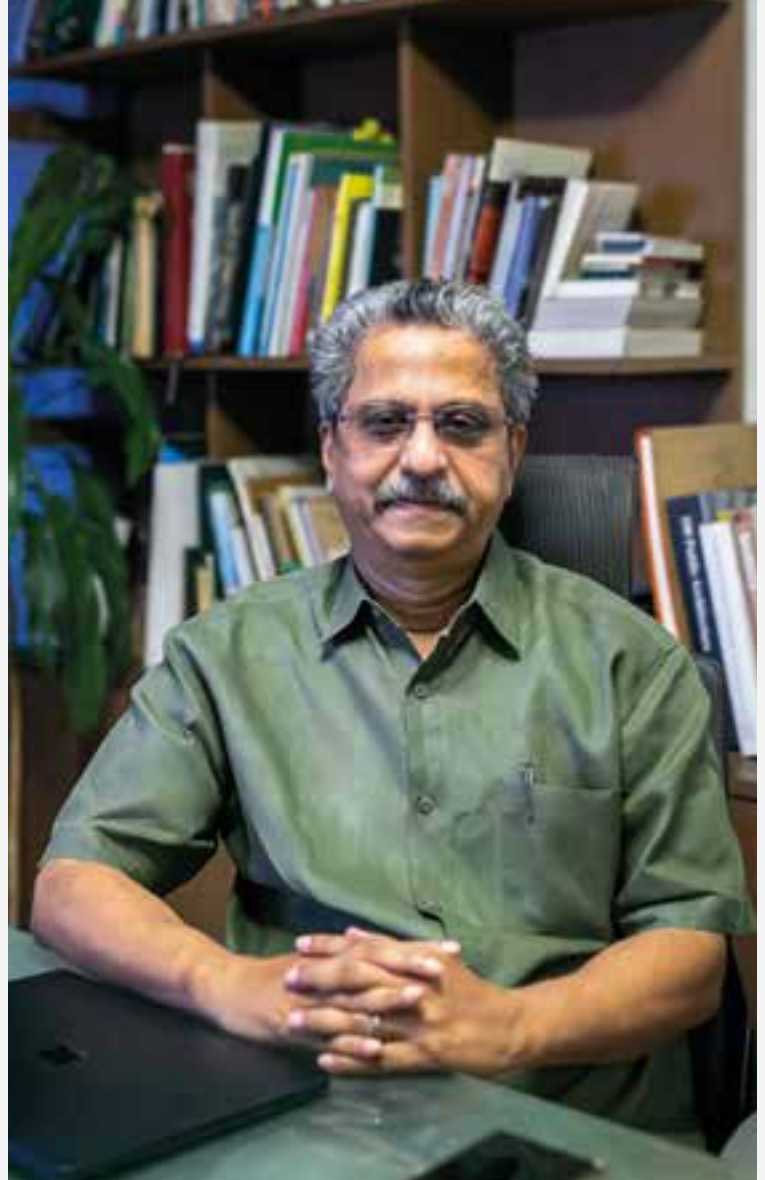
Our lead feature, Shaping Bangladesh: Designing Tomorrow, Building Today, highlights an event at the Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka, where industry leaders discussed green building practices and advanced materials essential for an eco-friendly future. This event gathered key industry leaders to discuss how Bangladesh is preparing for its upcoming graduation from LDC status. The discussions emphasized the collaborative role of architects, designers, and industries like ceramics in achieving sustainability.

Among the pioneers of sustainable architecture, Architect Bayejid Mahbub Khondker stands out. His Karupanya Factory in Rangpur, designed with ceramics and eco-friendly materials, reduces energy consumption by up to 40%. His work exemplifies how sustainability, beauty, and functionality can coexist harmoniously in modern design.

In interior design, we spotlight WE SPACE, an office by Studio.O in Dhaka. With a biophilic approach and locally sourced ceramics, it redefines workplaces as collaborative, creative, and health-focused environments.

In the industrial sector, GPH Ispat Ltd. continues its sustainability leadership with the Quantum Electric Arc Furnace, revolutionizing steel production by significantly reducing environmental impact. Their commitment to eco-friendly manufacturing sets a strong precedent for other industries.

Ceramic Expo Bangladesh (CEB) 2025 will be a landmark event showcasing innovations in sustainable ceramic production, fostering collaboration between architecture, design, and construction professionals. Similarly, X Ceramics is making strides with responsible production methods and high-quality, sustainable ceramic products catering to construction and consumer markets.



The REHAB Fair 2024 underscored the growing role of ceramics in modern architecture and interior design, attracting thousands of visitors. Meanwhile, the 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2025 highlighted Bangladesh's expanding global footprint in ceramics.

The Ekushey Book Fair 2025 captivated visitors with its beautifully designed pavilions, blending modern aesthetics with Bengali heritage. While the fair's design honored cultural values, accessibility improvements, particularly for children, remain an area for growth.

Finally, we explore two nature-inspired projects: Sarah Resort and Sajek Valley. Designed by Naim Ahmed Kibria and Asia Karim Deepa, Sarah Resort integrates sustainable materials into a luxurious retreat. Sajek Valley, a rising eco-tourism destination, demonstrates how development can harmonize with nature conservation.

As we embrace these innovations, I am optimistic about Bangladesh's future in sustainable architecture, interior design, and ceramics.

Wishing you all a joyous and blessed Eid Mubarak!

Happy reading!

—Architect Jalal Ahmed, FIAB FKIA

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Chief Advisor's MESSAGE

2025 has begun a new era for the Ceramic Sector, it's a year of success for Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine. The celebration of CBM 5th anniversary under the theme of "Shaping Bangladesh", a unique idea, has created a buzz among the ceramic producers and architects. The new theme will bring more participants to us. 5th August 2024 enable us with the opportunity to shape Bangladesh for the future by improving living standards for all.

Our concern for the country's energy crisis has severely impacted ceramic production and export marketing with no sign of any quick recovery. While pursuing temporary solutions, the industrial sector faces increased costs due to high-priced LNG importation. Many industrial units have suspended production due to loss of competitiveness, and the remaining ones have halved their production, already causing a surge in unemployment.

BBS has exacerbated the crisis by inflating the GDP size on the plea of attaining the status of middle-income country through quick graduation from least developed country (LDC). We propose to appeal for an extension of LDC graduation. The government's bureaucrats earlier prioritized false projections of increased electricity generation without addressing energy security, creating an economy of plundering national resources. Bangladesh has not yet been able to explore hydrocarbons in the Bay of Bengal and thus meet the national demand. Increased unemployment as a result of stagnant investment and disparity created anger among the youth who joined the July 2024 Revolution. We are waiting for a shift in economic policies supporting manufacturing and export earning sectors.

The interim government should prioritize excavating local coal in its energy policy to generate electricity using domestic coal instead of imported ones. Proper rehabilitation arrangements should be made by involving concerned local people through ownership participation in the shares of the five discovered coal mines. Also implementation of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant as early as possible. To protect industries and business government need to find avenue for reduction of system loss in energy sectors and banking sectors instead of enhancing energy price and bank interest.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all donors, sponsors and those who have been posting their advertisement in our magazine. My exploding thanks to all members who worked hard to make the publication a success.

—Moynul Islam



Chief Editor's NOTE

Welcome to the 14th issue of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine, February 2025. We recently celebrated the 5th anniversary of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine at the Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka on 30 January, themed "Shaping Bangladesh: Designing Tomorrow, Building Today." This milestone event brought together industry leaders and renowned architects to discuss sustainable building and innovation, highlighting our publication's crucial role in the ceramic industry. Our lead story delves into the highlights of this celebration.

February holds a special place in our hearts as we commemorate the great Language Movement of Bangladesh. The Ekushey Book Fair 2025, themed "July Mass Uprising: Building a New Bangladesh," featured over 700 publishing houses, celebrating our rich literary heritage. The REHAB Fair-2024 underscored the immense growth potential in the ceramic industry, uniting stakeholders from various sectors. Concurrently, the 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2025 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal showcased state-of-the-art pavilions and innovative designs, drawing impressive crowds.

In this issue, we also spotlight X Ceramics Group, founded by Architect Mazherul Quader, which has positioned Bangladesh as a key player in the global ceramics market. Additionally, steel company GPH Ispat Limited emphasizes their commitment to green products and sustainability.

Looking ahead, the Ceramic Expo Bangladesh 2025 at International Convention City Bashundhara promises to be a grand celebration of innovation and excellence in the ceramics industry. We feature the elegant Sarah Resort of Fortis Group in Bhawal Rajabari, Gazipur, a testament to organic architectural evolution by architects Naim Ahmed Kibria and Asia Karim Deepa. Another story on Architect Bayejid Mahbub Khondker's career reflects a steadfast commitment to environmentally friendly design devoted to the benefits of Mother Earth. As spring unfolds, Sajek Valley in Rangamati reveals its breathtaking beauty. Let us venture out to experience the serene landscapes of this popular hilly tourist destination.

We hope this issue offers an enjoyable and insightful read for all our stakeholders. Thank you for your continued support.

—Irfan Uddin

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Celebrating **5** Years of Success

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Sajibur Rahman

The soft glow of chandeliers illuminated the polished ceramic tiles as industry leaders, architects, and innovators gathered at the Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka. The air was filled with excitement as enthusiasts and professionals came together to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine. The event, styled "Shaping Bangladesh: Designing Tomorrow, Building Today," was more than just a

conference — it was a call to action for Bangladesh's construction, real estate, and ceramic industries to embrace sustainability, innovation, and resilience. This milestone event marked a significant achievement for the publication, which has become a cornerstone of the ceramic industry in Bangladesh.



"Shaping Bangladesh: Designing Tomorrow, Building Today," was more than just a conference — it was a call to action for Bangladesh's construction, real estate, and ceramic industries to embrace sustainability, innovation and resilience.

Held on 30 January 2025, the event brought together experts to discuss the evolving landscape of architecture, engineering, and sustainable building materials. From leading ceramic manufacturers to top architects, the gathering aimed to chart a vision for a greener, more efficient Bangladesh.



Preparing for the Future and Post-LDC Impact

One of the central themes was Bangladesh's upcoming graduation from its least-developed country (LDC) status in 2026. Chief guest SK Bashiruddin, Commerce Adviser to the interim government, emphasised the need for businesses to prepare for the challenges ahead. "In the coming years, Bangladesh will face numerous challenges following the LDC graduation. Innovation is crucial for progress. Corruption and bureaucratic complexities have hindered business growth over the past 15 years, but our focus should be on sustainability to foster industrial growth," he said. He called for collaboration among stakeholders to lower operational costs, innovate, and create a more business-friendly environment. He acknowledged the ceramic industry's contributions, commending entrepreneurs for their innovative products that enhance both aesthetics and functionality in modern infrastructure.



Special guest, RAJUK Chairman Major General (retd) Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman Sarker, stated that even 100-storey buildings would be permitted if built in an environmentally friendly manner. Hence, the DAP (Detailed Area Plan) is being amended.





The seminar commenced with a grand welcome address by Mr. Irfan Uddin, the Editor-in-Chief of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine, who reflected on its journey over the past five years. He expressed gratitude to the readers, contributors, and industry partners who have supported the magazine's mission to promote and celebrate the country's ceramic industry.

Innovation & Sustainability in Construction

The event featured two thought-provoking panel discussions. The first session, "Innovation for a Sustainable Future: Exploring Material Innovations & Sustainability," moderated by Dr. Amir Ahmed, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Real Estate at Daffodil International University, focused on cutting-edge sustainable materials and circular economy principles in the real estate and construction sector. The second session, "Building a Greener Future: The Role of Sustainability in Architecture," led by Architect Zannat Jui, explored green building certifications, passive design strategies, and the role of technology in climate-resilient infrastructure.





Lifetime Achievement Awards were conferred upon Professor Dr. M. Shamim Z. Basunia and Professor Architect Shamsul Wares



Several notable speakers included esteemed professors and architects, such as former BUET Prof. Dr. M Shamim Z Bosunia, Architect Prof. Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, Ar. Prof. Rafiq Azam, Ar. Jalal Ahmed, Ar. Nazli Hussain, Ar. Bayejid Mahbub Khondker, Ar. Didarul Islam Bhuiyan Dipu, Ar. Khondoker Asifuzzaman Rajan, RAJUK Chief Engineer Mohammad Nurul Islam, Engr. Shamsul Alam, Executive Director (Design) of Concord Real Estate Limited Ar. Faisal Ahmed, Managing Director of BTI Engr. Faizur Rahman Khan,

Chief Operating Officer of AkijBashir Group Mohammad Khourshed Alam, Chief Operating Officer of Meghna Ceramics Industries AKM Ziaul Islam, Director of GPH Ispat Salehin Musfique Sadaf, Chief Business Officer of Metrocem Cement Ltd. Asadul Haque Sufyani, Consultant of Khadim Ceramics Babor Hossain, and Senior Vice President of BCMEA Mohammad Mamunur Rashid emphasized on the vital role Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine has played in showcasing architectural innovations.



Ar. Professor Rafiq Azam, the Principal Architect of SHATOTTO Architecture for Green Living, and Ar. Professor Dr. Abu Sayeed M. Ahmed, the President of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), delivered two distinct keynote speeches titled “The Art of Social Changes” and “Reviving the Roots: Conservation and Restoration Progress in Bangladesh,” respectively.

Chief Operating Officer (COO) of AkijBashir Group Mohammad Khourshed Alam said the crisis of gas and electricity is the biggest challenge for industries in the country right now. Gas is crucial for the ceramic industry’s development. “However, we have to focus on solar energy to continue industries. Technology adaptation should be focused as well,” he added.

AKM Ziaul Islam, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Meghna Ceramic Ind. Ltd, said the ceramic industry has huge opportunities. There is a need to increase the interaction between industries and academia.

Salehin Musfique Sadaf, Director of Strategy & Transformation at GPH Ispat, emphasized that Bangladesh lacks sufficient raw materials to meet its demands. He pointed out that energy sources such as gas or coal are also considered raw materials. Therefore, the country must focus on adequate coal as a locally cheaper energy source and adopting recycling methods to increase the use of recycled construction materials. He stressed the importance of research and development (R&D) in achieving these goals.



Role of the Ceramic Industry

BCMEA President Moynul Islam reiterated the ceramic industry's commitment to sustainability, highlighting the need for government support and private sector collaboration to foster long-term growth and global competitiveness. Industry leaders stressed the need for increased research and development (R&D) in using recycled construction materials and ensuring sustainable building practices. As Bangladesh moves toward rapid urbanisation and economic transformation, "Shaping Bangladesh: Designing Tomorrow, Building Today" underscored the need for innovation, sustainability, and resilience. The discussions at the event served as blueprints for a more sustainable Bangladesh.

Moynul Islam also said, "Bangladesh's upcoming LDC graduation in 2026 presents many challenges for the local ceramic industry. With the loss of preferential market access, export tariffs are likely to increase, making our products less competitive in global markets. In addition, imports will also increase due to trade liberalization and FTAs in the post-LDC period. To maintain our position, we must focus on innovation, quality enhancement, and cost efficiency. Strengthening partnerships, investing in modern technologies, and adopting sustainable practices will be key to navigating this transition and positioning Bangladesh as a trusted ceramic exporter in the region."

Sustainability Efforts

Mohammad Mamunur Rashid, Senior Vice President, BCMEA, said the ceramic industry in the country is increasingly embracing sustainability by aligning with green building codes and adopting energy-efficient technologies. Manufacturers are exploring renewable energy sources, recycling production waste, and innovating eco-friendly product lines. Collaboration between the government and private sector is essential to drive these initiatives forward, according to him. "With proper policy support and investment in research, we can create a more resilient industry that not only meets global compliance standards but also contributes to a greener future for Bangladesh," he added.

Looking Ahead

BCMEA General Secretary Irfan Uddin emphasized the importance of innovation and policy support for the sustainable growth of the ceramic industry. He highlighted the role of industry collaboration in overcoming challenges and strengthening global competitiveness. As the event concluded with the cutting of the cake, the Editor-in-Chief of CBM, Irfan Uddin shared the magazine's vision for the future. With a commitment to continuing its role as a leading voice in the ceramic industry, Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine aims to expand its reach, introduce new features, and further support the growth and development of the industry. The speakers, along with other industry experts, shared their insights and experiences, making the event a memorable and enriching experience for all attendees.



Awards and Recognitions

To honour outstanding contributions to the ceramic industry, Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine presented awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant impacts. The awards ceremony was a moment of pride and celebration, recognising the hard work and dedication of those who have helped shape the industry.



Exhibition and Networking

An exhibition showcasing the latest products and innovations in the ceramic industry was a major attraction at the event. Attendees had the opportunity to explore a wide range of ceramic products, from tableware to tiles, and interact with exhibitors. The exhibition provided a valuable networking opportunity for industry professionals to connect, collaborate, and forge new partnerships.





Economic Snapshot: A Resilient Industry Amid Challenges

Despite facing setbacks in FY 2023-24, Bangladesh's ceramic industry remains a vital contributor to the nation's economy. The sector's export volume declined by nearly 2%, standing at Tk 5.92 billion, compared to Tk 6.03 billion in the previous fiscal year, according to BCMEA. However, local sales showed a modest 2.55% growth, reaching Tk 76.42 billion. The industry's total investment surged to Tk 184.25 billion in FY24, reflecting continued investor confidence. Direct employment dropped by 7% to 52,500, though the sector still engages around 0.5 million workers both directly and indirectly. With products exported to over 50 countries and strategic market advantages through GSP facilities, the ceramic sector holds significant potential to bolster Bangladesh's export earnings while aligning with global sustainability and innovation trends.



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The event was supported by leading names in the ceramic industry. Akij Ceramics Ltd. participated as the Platinum Sponsor, while Meghna Ceramic Ind. Ltd. and X-Ceramics Ltd. were powered by sponsors. Sheltech Ceramics Ltd., DBL Ceramics Ltd., and Mir Ceramic Ltd. joined as associated sponsors. RAK Ceramics contributed as the Gift Partner, and The Business Standard served as the Media Partner. This gathering marked a significant step toward aligning Bangladesh's infrastructure development with global best practices, ensuring the country is ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow with confidence and creativity.

The 5th anniversary seminar of Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine was a resounding success, reflecting the magazine's dedication to excellence and its pivotal role in the ceramic industry. The event not only celebrated past achievements but also set the stage for a promising future.

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X CERAMICS' TRAILBLAZING LEGACY

Sajibur Rahman

For over a thousand years, ceramics have shaped civilizations—gracing grand palaces, elegant table settings, and timeless architectural masterpieces. Once a symbol of affluence, these exquisite creations gradually became integral to daily life.

Like the rest of the world, Bangladesh embraced ceramics. For years, the country relied on imports to meet its growing demand. But that era is now history. Today, Bangladesh's ceramic industry stands strong, catering to domestic needs and expanding its footprint in international markets.



A Market Leader in Innovation

The ceramic sector thrives on three key pillars—ceramic tableware, tiles, and sanitaryware. Among the pioneers driving this evolution is X Ceramics Limited, a company synonymous with innovation and excellence. A subsidiary of Index Group, X Ceramics has played a vital role in positioning Bangladesh as a key player in the global ceramics market.

Founded in 2009 by visionary entrepreneur Mahin Mazher, X Ceramics began commercial operations in February 2010 as a Bangladesh-Italy joint venture.

From crafting exquisite designs to setting industry benchmarks, X Ceramics continues to push the boundaries of craftsmanship, resilience, and vision.



Game-Changing *Innovations*

X Ceramics has been a trailblazer, introducing groundbreaking innovations:

- Homogeneous 60x60 cm Tiles: Before this, the domestic market mainly featured 30x30 cm and 40x40 cm tiles. X Ceramics pioneered the production of larger homogeneous tiles.
- Polished Glazed Vitrified Tiles (PGVT): The first company in Bangladesh to introduce PGVT, raising the bar for durability and aesthetics.
- In 20x30cm tiles X ceramics bring the concept of light, deep and hi liter tiles. Before X ceramics there are concepts of decor & border concept.
- In 30x45cm tiles X ceramic first introduce digital print tiles.
- X ceramics is the first company who introduce soluble salt tiles in Bangladesh market.
- Specialty Tile Ranges: Exclusive collections such as Royal Wall Series, Anti-Slip 30x30 cm, Rock-X Series, Stone Shield, Temp Control Tiles and X Gergy Proof—all designed for both functional and decorative excellence.

With state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and a commitment to R&D, X Ceramics has diversified design possibilities and aligned with global architectural trends.



Expanding Horizons: Entering the Sanitaryware Market

With a stronghold in tiles, X Ceramics is now entering the sanitaryware segment, with commercial production expected to begin in March or April 2025.

A Leader in Bangladesh's Porcelain & Ceramic Tiles Industry

X Ceramics is one of the largest porcelain and ceramic tile manufacturers in Bangladesh, focusing on eco-friendly production and customer satisfaction. With cutting-edge technology, it has redefined industry standards, setting a new benchmark for excellence.

X Ceramics proudly presents Bangladesh's first Germi-Proof Jaynamaz tiles, offering 99% protection against harmful germs with advanced antimicrobial technology.

Versatility in Design & Durability: Quality That Lasts

X Ceramics offers a diverse range of tiles suitable for both residential and commercial spaces. Key features include:

- Easy to clean
- Superior durability (lasting over 20 years)
- Toxin-free composition
- Weather-resistant, adaptable to extreme conditions
- Water, moisture, and UV-resistant
- Sustainability at Its Core

Committed to environmentally responsible manufacturing, X Ceramics operates in an industrial zone in Gazipur's Sreepur Upazila, located nearly 35 kilometers north of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. The company strictly adheres to green practices, including:

- Rainwater & groundwater conservation
- Recycling facilities
- CFC-free cooling systems
- LED lighting & energy-efficient systems
- Solar power utilization
- Workplace Safety & Employee Well-being

X Ceramics prioritizes occupational health and safety, ensuring fair wages, timely payments, and employee benefits. The company fosters a responsible work environment with transparency in production.

"We are operating a round-the-clock Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) to minimize the environmental impact and ensure the sustainability of our ceramic production process. By effectively treating wastewater, we aim to protect the local environment while upholding the highest standards of eco-friendly manufacturing," said Mr Shahturur Rahman, Senior Vice President.

"We are also planning to implement recycling initiatives for waste materials. Additionally, heat management is a key concern, and we are exploring solutions to reduce heat emissions in our operations," he said.



The Italian Touch: A Brand Synonymous with Quality

X Ceramics is widely recognized as the brand ambassador of Italian ceramic tiles in Bangladesh. After just two years, the company began importing tiles from Italy's renowned Monika brand, solidifying its position as a premium tile provider in the market.

Shaping the Domestic and Export Markets

According to Shahturur Rahman, the company prioritizes:

- Design innovation
- Quality enhancement
- Expanded production capacity
- Research and development

Rahman noted that imports are declining due to the current political situation, making locally produced ceramics an increasingly attractive option. "We must break free from the fantasy of using foreign products. Our industry is fully capable of producing ceramics on par with international brands," he said.

The demand for premium-quality tiles has been growing by around 10 percent annually over the past decade, driven by affluent customers. With rising global demand, export opportunities for high-end tiles are expanding.



Beyond Business: A Passion for Sports

X Ceramics has also made a mark in the sports industry as the proud owner of Sylhet Strikers in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the country's premier T20 cricket tournament.

With an unwavering commitment to excellence, X Ceramics is not just shaping the future of Bangladesh's ceramic industry but also redefining global standards—one tile at a time.



MOHAMMAD SHAHTURUR RAHMAN
Senior Vice President



Challenges such as the gas shortage, price increases, SD, and rising operational costs have severely impacted the ceramic sector, turning it into a struggling industry.





Ceramic Industry Struggles: Urgent Call for Gas and SD Relief

Mr Shahturur urged the interim government to ensure a continuous gas supply and to remove the supplementary duty (SD) on local ceramic products to protect the industry.

He highlighted that overall production, including that of his company, has sharply declined in recent months due to the ongoing gas crisis.

"Challenges such as the gas shortage, price increases, SD, and rising operational costs have severely impacted the ceramic sector, turning it into a struggling industry," Rahman added.



A modern dining room interior featuring a large, square, light-colored marble dining table with a dark base. The table is surrounded by ten contemporary chairs with brown upholstered backs and light wood legs. The table is set with plates, glasses of orange juice, and a centerpiece of fruit. Above the table hangs a large, ornate chandelier with multiple tiers of glass and metal. In the background, a large, abstract, geometric artwork in gold and white is mounted on the wall. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and a light-colored wooden floor.

Inspired Interiors





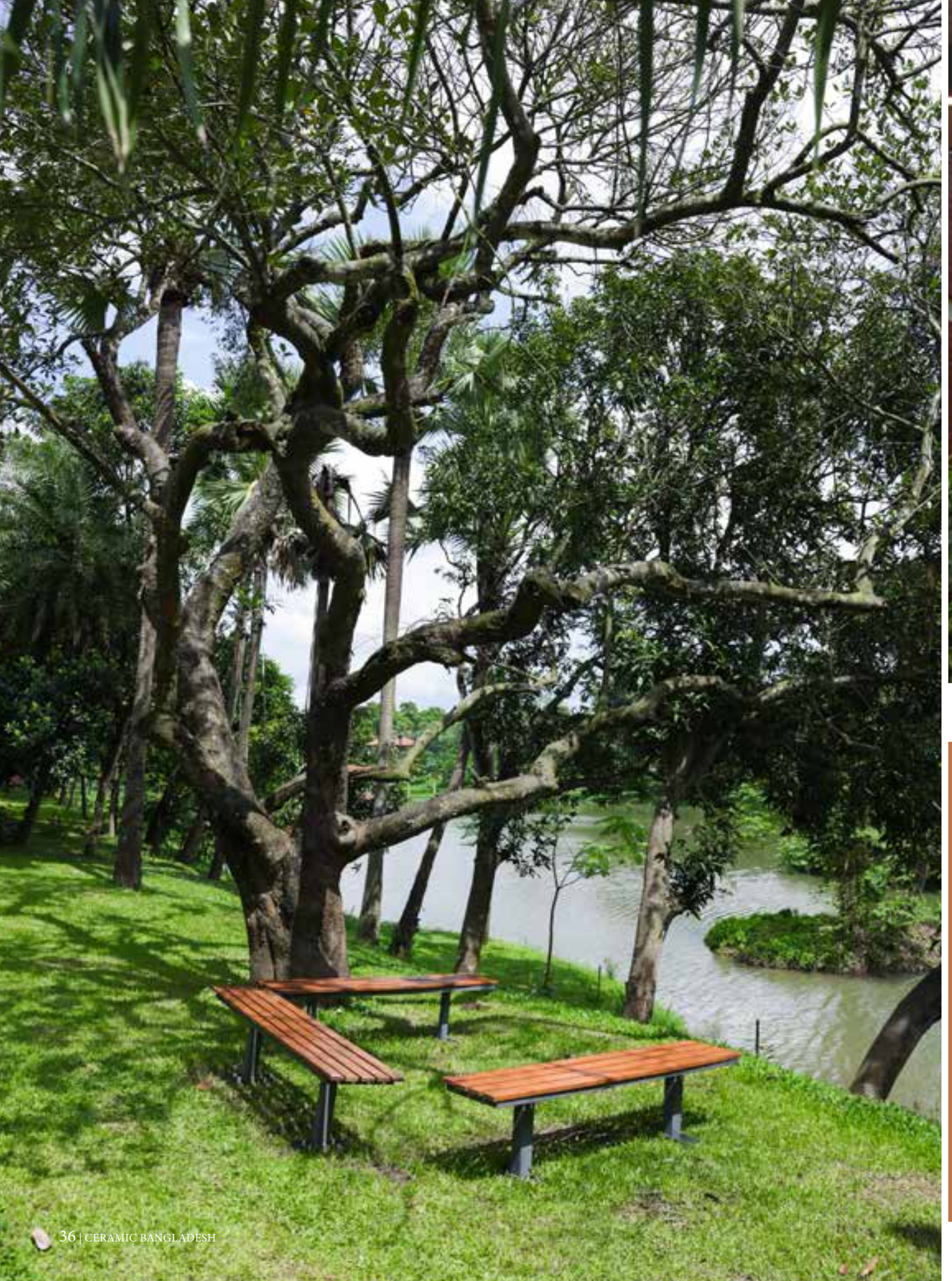
The Evolving Elegance of Sarah Resort

Journey Beyond a Masterplan

While most architectural marvels begin with a scrupulously crafted masterplan, Sarah Resort took a different path, one of organic evolution. Instead of a rigid blueprint, it grew gracefully, expanding phase by phase through strategic land acquisitions. Nestled in the historic Bhawal Rajabari, Gazipur, just one and half hour drive from Dhaka, the resort is a masterpiece shaped by the creative vision of architect Naim Ahmed Kibria and architect Asia Karim Deepa from the renowned firm Indigenous.

Kaniz F Supriya

The inception of Sarah Resort wasn't born out of commercial ambitions but rather from a personal desire – to create a retreat for friends and family. Md. Shahadat Hossan, the founder of Sarah Resort, originally owned 1.65 acres of wilderness in Gazipur (where the resort is located now). At the time, the land held nothing but an incomplete structure – mere pillars standing in solitude amidst nature.





In late 2015, Md. Shahadat Hossan envisioned transforming this barren space into a gathering haven and set an ambitious goal: to host an event on 16 December, inviting loved ones to celebrate in a newly built retreat. To bring this vision to life, he turned to architect Naim Ahmed Kibria. To meet holiday desires, this initiative from Fortis Group is indeed in a class of its own.

"Time was our biggest challenge," recalls Mr Naim. "We had an incredibly tight deadline, and constructing a structure from scratch was nearly impossible. Instead, we decided to make use of the existing columns and beams."

What followed was a remarkable feat of architecture and determination. Within just one month, the team transformed the skeletal remains into a charming cottage, integrating brick gratings in the roof. The event was a success and everyone loved the cottage which merged effortlessly with the picturesque ambience. The appreciation evoked the desire in Mr Shahadat, to build a resort in the premise so that mass people can enjoy the beauty of the landscape.





Md. Shahadat Hossan soon started acquiring neighbouring land, ensuring that every addition felt like a natural extension of the original landscape. The final phase of construction was completed in 2019, expanding the resort from 1.65 acres to an impressive 70 acres, with a built area of 3.21 acres.

"It was an extensive project," says Mr Naim. "We visited the site over 100 times to understand its natural flow, ensuring each expansion felt connected, organic, and immersive."

This fluid, intuitive approach resulted in a resort experience that feels more dynamic than a rigid masterplan could have allowed. We asked the architect what his favourite part from the resort was and he did not take a second to answer: it is the red cottages, arranged along a spiral pathway, forming a shape reminiscent of flower petals when viewed from above.



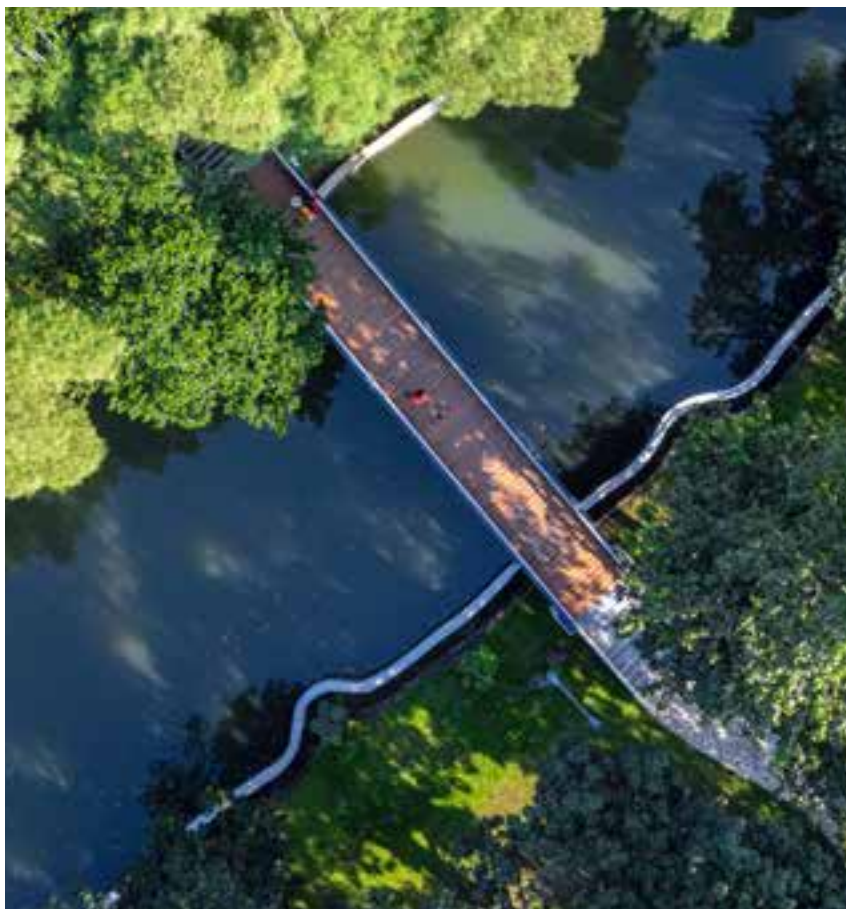
Interestingly, the particular piece of land (where the cottages are located now) once housed an administrative estate of the Bhawal kings, surrounded by a protective moat which was dried up then. Instead of erasing history, the architects revived the moat and built the cottages around it, preserving its essence.

Beyond the secluded cottages, Sarah Resort also has a 10-story tower for accommodation, offering a breathtaking panoramic view of the surrounding greenery. "Guests often tell us that waking up in the upper-floor rooms feels like floating in the clouds," Mr Naim says.

One of the most captivating aspects of Sarah Resort is its expansiveness – with nearly 95 per cent of its total area preserved as open space. Rather than altering the landscape drastically, the architects embraced the natural terrain, ensuring that every structure harmonises with its surroundings. Prioritising sustainability and authenticity, they relied predominantly on local materials, reinforcing the resort's deep-rooted connection to its environment.

The architectural philosophy of Sarah Resort bears a striking resemblance to the "Never demolish, always add, from inside out" approach pioneered by Lacaton & Vassal, the renowned French architectural duo. Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal won the 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize, the most prestigious award in the field of architecture.

Other than the aforementioned historic moat, another evidence to this approach is the restoration of the original clay houses found on the property. Instead of replacing them, architect Naim preserved and upgraded these traditional dwellings, equipping them with modern facilities while maintaining their rustic charm.



At its core, Sarah Resort embodies an effortless fusion of nature and modern luxury. With an eco-conscious design that meets state-of-the-art facilities, it stands as a family-friendly haven, catering to visitors of all ages. From quaint cottages and restored clay houses to contemporary tower rooms and lodge accommodations, the resort offers a diverse range of stays, welcoming guests from all walks of life to experience its unique blend of heritage, innovation, and tranquility.

For those in search of adventure, the resort houses an array of exhilarating activities, including zip-lining over scenic landscapes, boating across natural and artificial lakes, and exploring lush outdoor spaces. Guests looking to unwind can lounge by the swimming pool or take in the serene surroundings from various tranquil garden retreats.

"The founder is a passionate sports enthusiast," adds Mr Naim. "That's why a significant portion of the resort's land has been dedicated to outdoor recreation, ensuring guests can engage in a variety of activities while staying connected to nature."

Photo: Asif Salman

GPH Ispat

Revolutionizing Steel Production with Green Practices

GPH Ispat Ltd takes pride in meeting all steel-related needs of its esteemed clients, combining top-notch quality products with unparalleled customer service. As articulated by GPH's Director (Strategy & Transformation), Salehin Musfique Sadaf, in an exclusive interview to Ceramic Bangladesh, "GPH aims to fulfill all steel-related requirements of its extraordinary clients by offering best-quality products paired with exceptional service."



Rafikul Islam

GPH Ispat Ltd, founded in 2006 and commenced commercial operations in 2008, embodying its guiding principles: God-fearing, Plain living, and High thinking. Conceived by visionary leaders and experienced traders, GPH was established to provide premium-quality steel products to the Bangladeshi market. Since its inception, GPH has relentlessly strived to deliver maximum value to its customers by consistently offering the best steel products available.

The company made history in 2020 by introducing the Quantum Electric Arc Furnace—the world's most advanced process for producing construction-grade steel—marking its debut in Asia. The extraordinary foresight of the founder, Mohammed Jahangir Alam, in establishing this state-of-the-art manufacturing unit, has garnered international acclaim. Industry experts from the USA, Saudi Arabia, and India have visited the facility to replicate its success in their respective countries.

GPH has set an exemplary standard in prioritizing people and planet over profit by producing green steel products with minimal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This trailblazing approach to sustainability has established GPH as a benchmark in the steel industry.

"I was destined to return to my beloved Bangladesh—settling abroad was never part of the plan. Elevating Bangladesh on global platforms has always been my dream. Of all the sectors in our family business, I chose steel because of its transformative potential. Steel is not only versatile but also has the power to build nations and even reach into space," shared Salehin Musfique Sadaf.

Reflecting on a pivotal moment in 2017, Salehin described a conversation with his father while traveling from Dortmund to Bremen, Germany: "We discussed how developed nations have nurtured industries across generations to sustain their economies. These core industries, alongside their complementary sectors, have matured to surpass even their foundations in profitability. It became clear to me that investing in metals and materials is vital for Bangladesh's self-reliance and economic resilience. Developing upstream and downstream industries could reduce trade deficits and save significant foreign currency."



At GPH, we produce Steel billets as semi-finished products and 3 different grades of construction grade steel rebar as finished product. Out of 420, 500 and 600 grade rebar, GPH is only able to produce 600 grade rebars in Bangladesh because of its distinct technical capability allowing stakeholders to be able to reduce their consumption while increasing performance.

Due to maintaining the highest of the standards GPH was able to export around 125,000 metric tons of steel billet to China which is a net steel exporter country. Along with prime products since last 1 year we have partnered with Leviat Sdn Bhd, a global leader in construction technologies to promote optimized construction techniques and supporting products in Bangladesh. 'Leviat' is a part of fortune 500 (S&P) company. We also sell medical and industrial grade oxygen and nitrogen to our valuable clients.

The people who think about quality will always choose GPH because of its Moral integrity, its capability in utilizing valuable resources more efficiently and obviously visionary leadership behind it. The GPH products not only ensure the best physical property but also ensure the best chemical composition among any other brands.

Sulphur and phosphorus being the most challenging elements in any mild steel products, with the help of best technology in steel making only GPH can maintain a proper ratio of these two elements consistently. These are not any claims, this can be easily proven by the test report gained from reputed facilities. When other brands are only being able to match the specification, GPH is passing tests with extraordinary differences compared to others which show our commitment to offer the best products in the market.



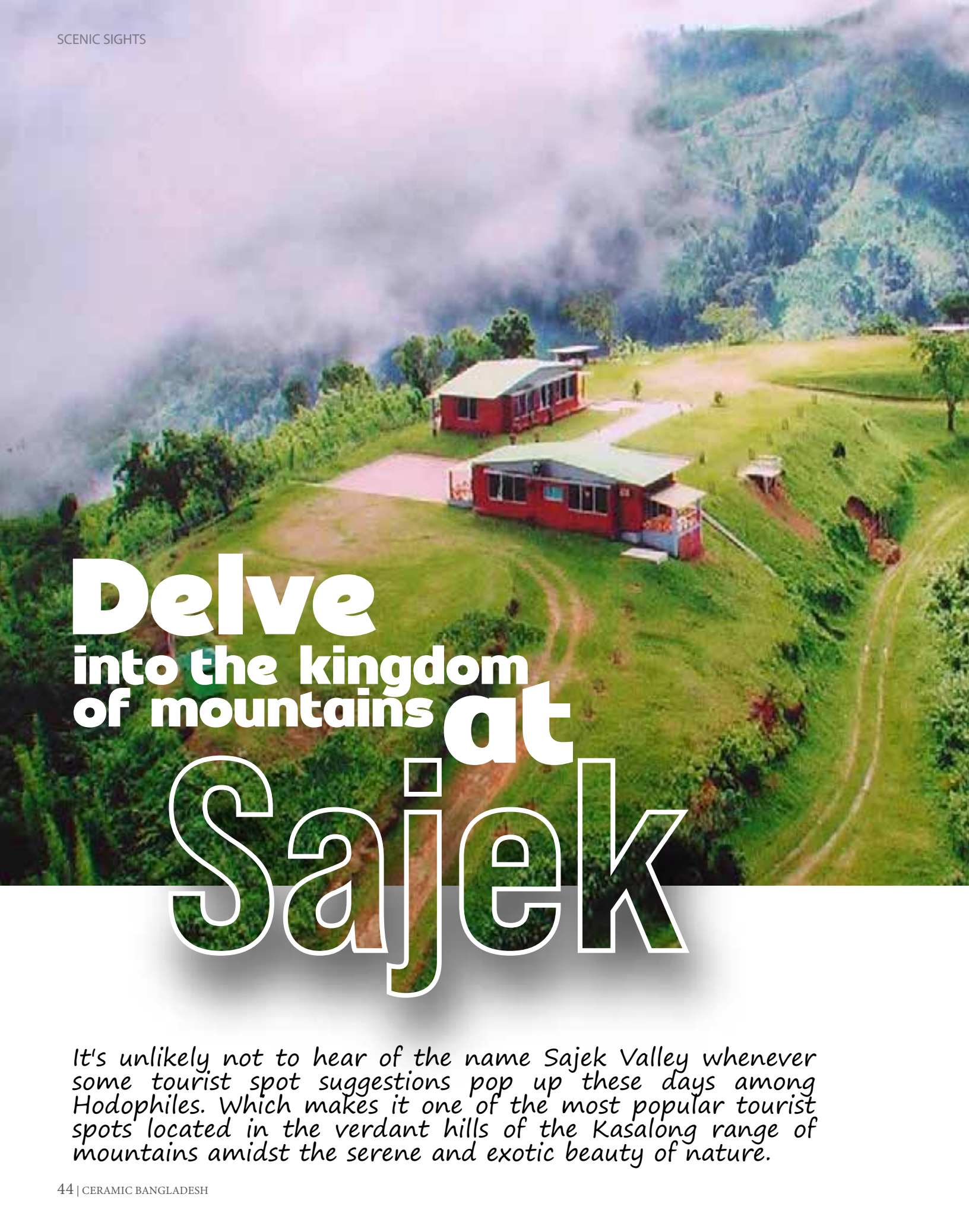
Mr. Salehin Musfique Sadaf
Director, Strategy & Transformation
GPH Ispat Ltd.

With the only accredited lab facility in the steel industry, GPH supports stakeholders in realizing their aspirations with pride. The company's devotion to economic, environmental, and social sustainability is reflected in its operations. For instance, GPH uses 115 kg of steel scrap to produce 100 kg of pure steel, ensuring unmatched quality. In comparison, other brands use only 112 kg of scrap for the same output—a testament to GPH's pursuit of added purity and customer satisfaction. GPH is capable to produce 1.0 million tonnes of billet and different parts of prefabricated building materials each year.

GPH Ispat Limited remains committed to going above and beyond, reshaping the steel industry while upholding its promise of excellence and sustainability.

Photo: GPH Ispat Ltd.



An aerial photograph of Sajek Valley, showing two red buildings with green roofs on a grassy hillside. The valley is surrounded by lush green mountains, and a thick layer of white mist or fog hangs in the air, partially obscuring the distant peaks. A dirt road winds through the valley.

Delve into the kingdom of mountains at Sajek

It's unlikely not to hear of the name Sajek Valley whenever some tourist spot suggestions pop up these days among Hodophiles. Which makes it one of the most popular tourist spots located in the verdant hills of the Kasalong range of mountains amidst the serene and exotic beauty of nature.



Photo: Abdul Momin

Fariha Hossain

Sajek Valley is often referred to as the "Queen of Hills" and the "Roof of Rangamati," and it has all the right reasons to be titled so. The valley is characterized by lofty mountains, thick forests, expansive grasslands, and miles of winding roads. The Mayni River and Mayni Range must be crossed in order to reach the Sajek Valley. Located in the Baghaichori Upazila of the Rangamati Hill District, the Sajek River, also called the Kasalong River, is the largest union in Bangladesh and divides Bangladesh from India.

Sajek Valley, which was previously the scene of insurgencies and is now surrounded by the hills of Mizoram to the east and Tripura to the north, represents Bangladesh's cultural diversity and encourages people of all ethnic backgrounds to develop tourism there for socio economic advancement.

The tribes of the Lusai, Pangkhua, and Tripura live in Sajek. Here the locals are mostly from Tripura and Lusai tribes. The village of Kalank Para, on the last frontier of the Sajak Valley, is inhabited by the Lusai people. Few Chakma also lives nearby. The simple and basic indigenous lifestyle of local people is just fabulous for visitors to spend a good time here.

Sajek is now also willing to assist individuals in their pursuit of benefits, whether it be by assisting them in their tourist endeavors or by involving them in them. This is definitely unusual when considering Bangladesh.

Unmissable

One of the main draws for visitors to Sajek is Konglak Hill. The Lusai community lives in Konglak, the last village in Sajek Valley. From the Konglak Hills, one can witness the origins of the Karnafuli River, the Lusai Hills of India. There is a two-hour journey through Ruilui Para that leads to the Kamalak fountain. This beautiful fountain is also known to many people as Padaam Toisha Jharna or Sikam Toisha Jharna.

Whether it's day or night, Sajek always appears more like a magnificent piece of art made by an artist. One of the wonderful aspects of Sajek is how nature unfolds here in its best forms. A sleek rainbow can often be noticed coming through the piles of clouds right after a good rain. Tourists especially suggested to not miss the dawn. The white clouds and the sunrise/sunset light create an astounding environment to please both the eyes and soul.



To see the sunrise, visiting the Hollypad early in the morning is highly recommended. The afternoon's colour of the setting sun from a high point is guaranteed to entice you. Post evening, the sky is mostly covered with a blanket of stars. Upon your return from Sajek Valley, you can also take in the sights of Dighinala Banbihar, Hazachara Jhorna, and the Dighinala hanging bridge.



Photo: Ashiq

There are some local 4 wheels drive cars that are used for transportation called Moon Car or Chander Gari. Usually, the moon car has the capacity to carry 10 to 15 passengers. It is claimed that one must try these cars when they visit here. While traveling through the curving hill route to Sajek, a car is suggested be reserved for a hassle-free journey. This place is also considered ideal for trekking.

To have a pleasing time here, staying in resorts is highly recommended, as Sajek offers a variety of high-end resorts that are totally worth a visit. They are designed in such a way that they will ensure an unforgettable trip throughout, along with enjoying the natural essence of the place. And to conclude, the most unmissable thing here is the variety of authentic tribal food, which is impossible to find elsewhere. Most of the cuisines are prepared with rare ethnic ingredients by traditional chefs.



Photo: Abdul Momin

When and how to get there

Sajek is beautiful in all seasons. With the changing of the seasons, it takes on a stunning new hue. So regardless of the season, one can get a new taste of Sajek. But in the rainy season, autumn, and late autumn, you will feel the white clouds more closely. However, the best part of Sajek is the surprise of the weather it has to offer every day. Hence, it's never a dull moment here.

Although Sajek is located in Rangamati district, the communication system is good through Khagrachari. There is no direct connection from Dhaka to Sajek Valley. However, you can take the train to Feni then take the taxi to Sajek Valley or by bus to Khagrachari from Dhaka and then to Sajek.



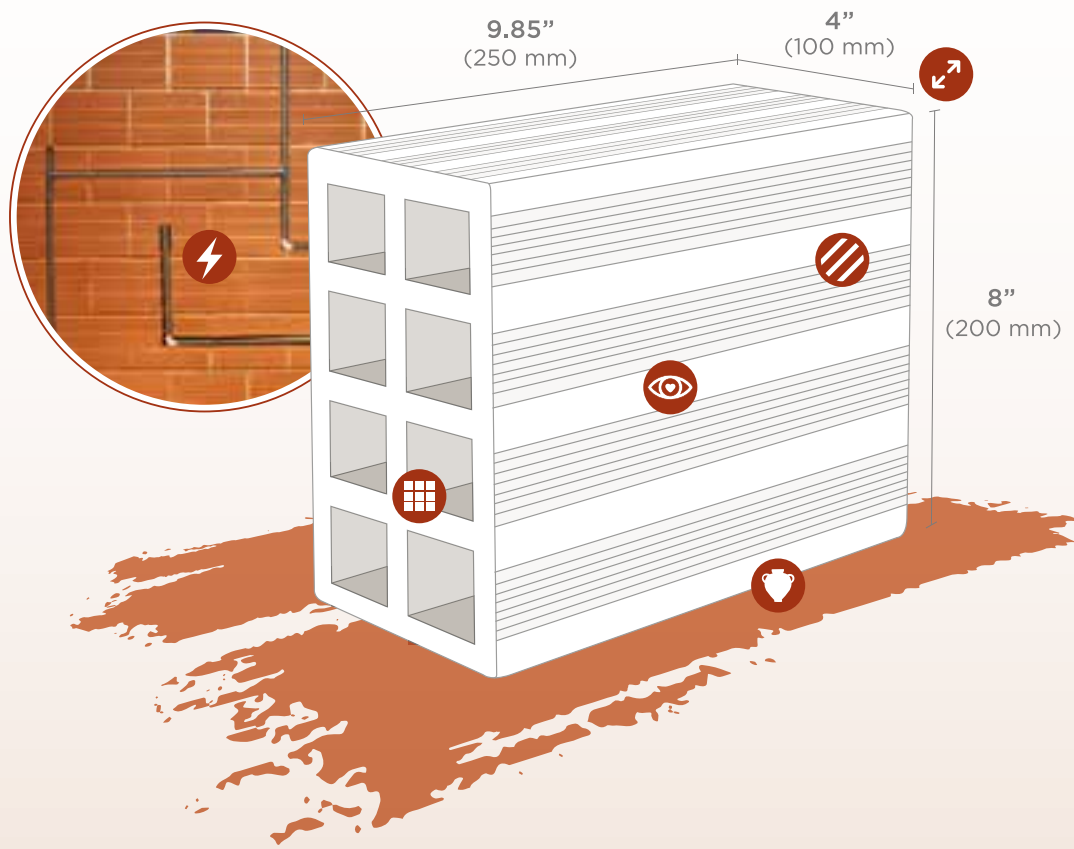
Other transportation options including bus is also available for a comfortable journey overall. Alternatively, you can take the bus to Chittagong then take the taxi to Sajek Valley. It takes two to three hours to travel from Khagrachhari to Sajek Valley across the road's high peaks and falls.

Hence it can be said without a doubt to experience the place's actual beauty firsthand rather than merely reading and viewing enough evaluations about it.

Photo: G.B.G. Son

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Construction*



 Perforations provide **high thermal & sound insulation**.
Lightweight hollow design

 Inner holes create **vacuums**
for piping and wiring

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faster construction

 Striped outer body bonds
better with **less mortar**

 Ceramic body **resists**
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or dampness

 Appealing look when
used **exposed**



**SUNSHINE
BRICKS**



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Since 1995
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PAVERS collection

PARKING TILE 55

AVAILABLE SHADES

Silver

Charcoal

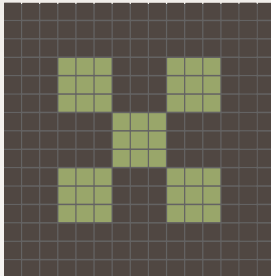
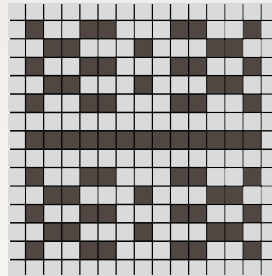
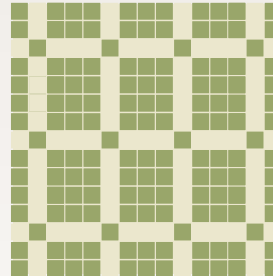
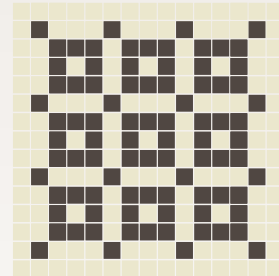
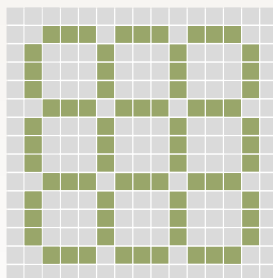
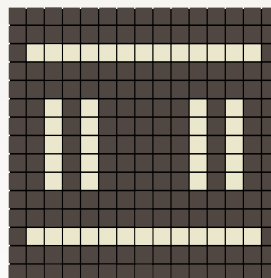
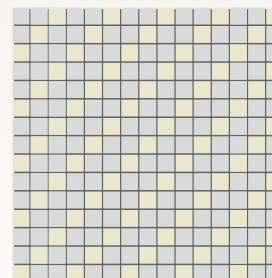


Pistachio

Cream

Which combo reflects your creativity?

POSSIBLE LAYING COMBINATIONS



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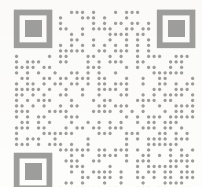


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CERAMIC EXPO BANGLADESH 2025 PRE-EVENT REPORT

The most awaited Ceramic Expo Bangladesh 2025, 4th edition is going to take place from 27th November to 30th November 2025 at International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB), at the Expo Zone (Tent Hall), Kuril, Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is going to be one of the grandest celebrations in the world of ceramics unlike the previous 3 successful events on 2017, 2019, 2022 consecutively organized by Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCMEA) and supported by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) of Bangladesh Government. The arrangements of the exhibition and seminars represent the most aspiring & the biggest events in the ceramics community platform to showcase the local manufacturers and exporters world class products globally and also helps to create long term positive impact on the expansion & growth of the ceramic industry in Bangladesh.



Preety Dey

Bangladesh is considered as the potential booming market for the ceramic industry in South Asia which makes the Ceramic Expo Bangladesh 2025 exceptionally lucrative opportunity and a leading example for the expansion of the industry. The arrangement of Ceramic Expo Bangladesh 2025 is going to be a 4-day long event with many exciting opportunities to interact with the global community & portraying local offerings in the global platform. The exhibition will enhance the chance to exhibit all the sub sectors of ceramic products such as tableware, tiles, sanitary ware, and ceramic bricks. There will also be some representation of ceramic production machinery, advanced ceramics, raw materials & latest innovation of technologies to upgrade the ceramics world.

As the Associate Partner Bangladesh Ceramic Society, Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB); International Event Partner Unifair Exhibition Services, ACIMAC, Messe Munchen; Support Partner Tecna, Asean Ceramics, Keramika Indonesia, Ceramics China; Knowledge Partner Nanomaterials and Ceramic Engineering, BUET, Ceramic ISC; Strategic Partner Ant Network, Uniceramics; Official Magazine Partner Ceramic Bangladesh Magazine, Asian Ceramics and Media Partner Ceramic Focus and Ceramic India will be there.

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KEY FIGURES EXPECTED



It is expected that there will be more than 120+ exhibitors, 25000+ visitors, 500+ delegates, 300+ brands will be participating in the exhibition. The event is going to be one of the largest gatherings for the ceramic professionals, architects, engineers and related industry individuals in South Asia biannually. The expo will cover a 17,000 sqm expo area with enthusiastic participation from 25+ countries such as China, Vietnam, India, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, Thailand etc. along with the local manufacturers of Bangladesh.

Valued Sponsors

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR



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GOLD SPONSOR



The valued Principal Sponsor of the Ceramics Expo Bangladesh 2025 is going to be Sheltech Ceramics Ltd., Platinum Sponsor are DBL Ceramics Ltd. Akij Ceramics Ltd. and Meghna Ceramic Ind. Ltd. and the Gold Sponsors are Mir Ceramic Ltd., Abul Khair Ceramic Ind. Ltd., HLT & DLT Technology and Sacmi Imola SPA respectively. There will be arrangements of buyer-supplier meet and scope of one to one business networking.

FEATURES



B2B MEETING



B2C MEETING



BUSINESS NETWORKING



CONFERENCE



SEMINAR



JOB FAIR



BEST PAVILION &
STALL DESIGN AWARD



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD



EXCITING GIFTS
FOR VISITORS



RAFFLE DRAW

The event will be full of new surprises and exciting activities for all the participants and visitors. There will be arrangement of-

- ◆ Day-long meet-up with the Architects
- ◆ Day-long engagements opportunity with the Dealers, Interior Designers & Fitters
- ◆ Seminar of Five Innovative Topics related to ceramic industry
- ◆ One Exclusive Seminar with prominent Architects
- ◆ Raffle draw each day of the event
- ◆ Job Fair
- ◆ Award and recognition for the sponsors and participants
- ◆ Exclusive Gala Dinner

Ceramic Expo Bangladesh 2025 is going to be the most promising and progressive event of the ceramics world internationally. It will bring a diverse array of exhibitors, suppliers of the raw materials and machineries, related industries, ceramic industry experts, high officials, government entities to enhance the drive of innovation, collaboration and advancement together under a single platform at a time. The event will also enable the opportunities to explore insightful seminars and conferences to share

industry related topics, advancement of the ceramic world and future of ceramics from the industry leaders, resource persons and industry experts. There will be multiple b2b meetings, b2c meetings and business networking opportunities to create more long term business relations through expansion of business collaboration. There will be a job fair, award giving ceremony, exciting gifts for the visitors & exhibitors & so on.

Glimpses of 2022's successful event



Number of
Exhibitor

87

Local- 31 | Foreign- 56



Total Exhibition
Visitors

21,000+



Total Exhibiting
Space

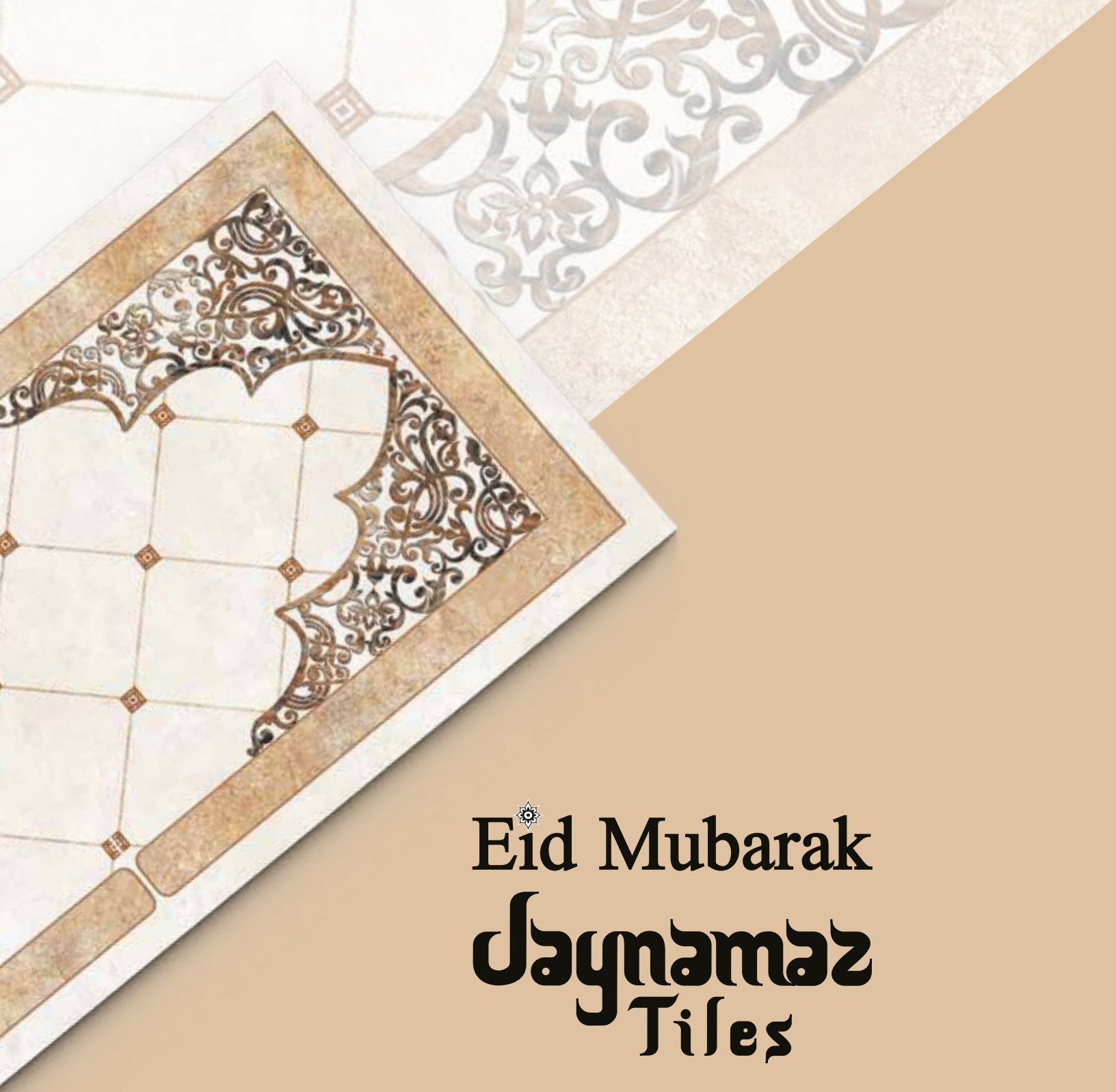
15,000 sqm



 10x durable
 Antislip

**XGERMI
PROOF**
ANTI MICROBIAL TECHNOLOGY

 99%
PROTECTION
FROM HARMFUL GERMS



Eid Mubarak Daynamaz Tiles

A safer space for every sujood



'THE STORY OF ART' EXHIBITION

Of Art and Altruism

Organized by Dhaka Storytellers from February 8 to February 13, the lush gallery space Alok Greenhouse in the capital's Gulshan hosted an exhibition titled The Story of Art. The exhibition boasted a stunning collection of 80 to 90 artworks, captivating audiences for a week.

Shahbaz Nahian

Curated by Syeda Adiba Hussain, co-founder of Dhaka Storytellers, The Story of Art was more than just a display of artistic excellence. This was Dhaka Storytellers' second art event, following the charity exhibition Art for Charity in August 2024. In the same vein, The Story of Art supported a larger cause, with a portion of the proceeds donated to five schools and one college in Sylhet, demonstrating the power of art to create tangible change beyond gallery walls.

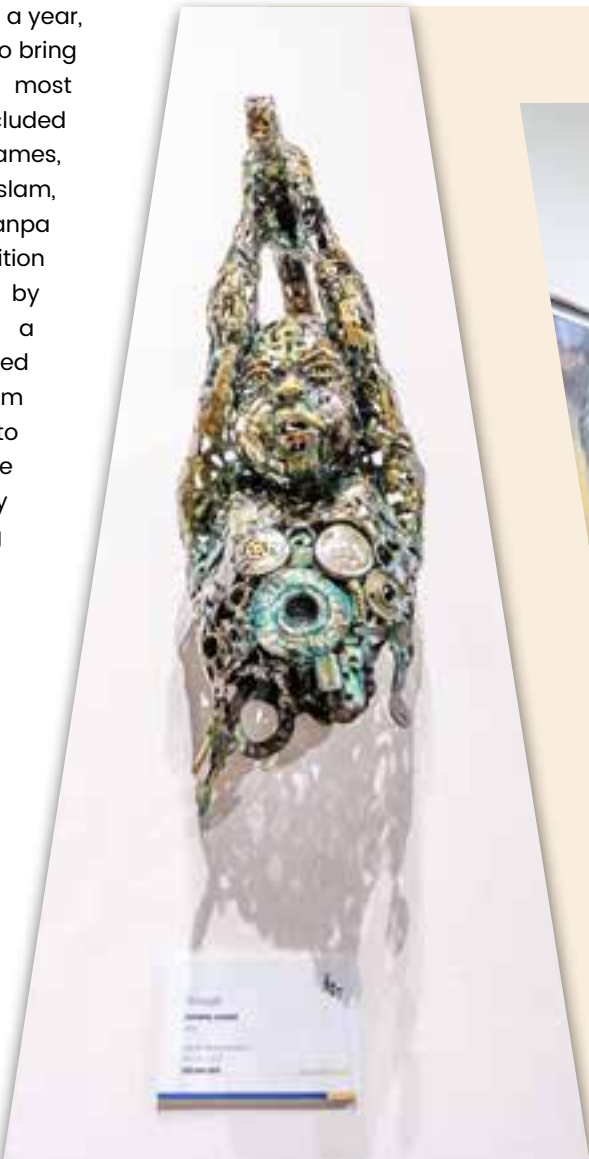


Beyond the beauty of its displays, the exhibition underscored the immense power of art to inspire and drive change. By merging artistic excellence with humanitarian efforts, it aimed to uplift communities, empower individuals, and support crucial social causes.



Having been in the making for almost a year, the exhibition was carefully planned to bring together some of Bangladesh's most celebrated artists. The lineup included some of the country's most notable names, such as Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam, Hamiduzzaman Khan, and Kanak Chanpa Chakma. Furthermore, the exhibition commendably featured artworks by several emerging artists, creating a dynamic collection that bridged generations of artistic expression. From simply beautiful paintings to thought-provoking sculptures, The Story of Art was also an opportunity for both seasoned and budding collectors to acquire unique pieces while contributing to a noble cause.

The grand opening on Friday, February 7, set the tone for the week-long exhibition. The launch was attended by an invitation-only audience, including the participating artists, their families, media professionals, and notable guests.

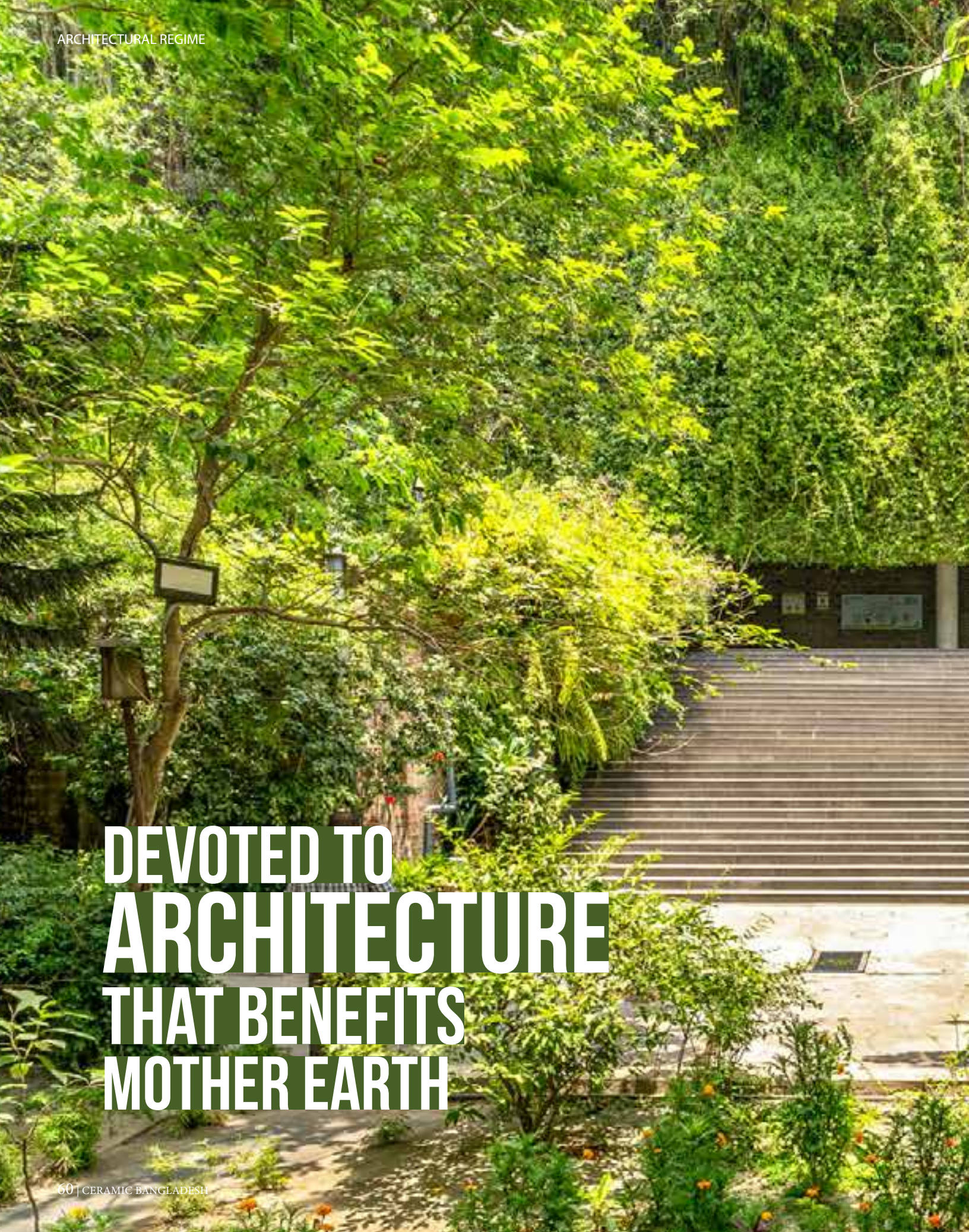


As the exhibition drew to a close, it left behind more than just a collection of breathtaking visuals; it also left an indelible impression on those who visited. The fusion of artistic expression with social commitment deeply moved attendees, inspiring them to consider the vast potential of art beyond aesthetics. The exhibition carried a narrative that extended far beyond the gallery walls, reinforcing the idea that art is not merely to be observed but to be experienced, felt, and acted upon.



The event was about more than just admiring artworks—it was about creating a shared vision where artists, curators, and spectators all committed to a cause bigger than themselves. It demonstrated that art has the ability to transcend traditional boundaries, reaching into the hearts of individuals and communities, sparking conversations, and inspiring action. Ultimately, The Story of Art was a celebration of creativity's ability to inspire, connect, and transform lives.

The week-long show was a powerful testament to the transformative synergy between art and altruism. It showcased how art exhibitions, when intertwined with a greater purpose, can spark meaningful change.

A photograph of a lush green garden with a modern building in the background. The building has a dark, textured facade and a large, flat roof. The garden is filled with various plants, including trees and shrubs, and a paved path leads through it. The text "DEVOTED TO ARCHITECTURE THAT BENEFITS MOTHER EARTH" is overlaid on the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

DEVOTED TO ARCHITECTURE THAT BENEFITS MOTHER EARTH



Kaniz F Supriya

Architecture is one of the most profound forms of art that turns into reality, where humans and the environment interact. From the outset of Architect Bayejid Mahbub Khondker's celebrated career, his design inspiration has consistently driven him to create impactful designs that seamlessly integrate with their surroundings, enhancing natural beauty without causing disruption.

Bayejid graduated from the Department of Architecture at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in 1996. Following his graduation, he spent two years contributing to the private sector before transitioning to the government sector in 2000. Up until 2010, he served as assistant chief architect at the Department of Architecture under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works in Bangladesh.

"Like any other art form, architecture thrives on creative freedom. The constraints of a government position limited my ability to fully nurture this creativity. Thus, I chose to take early retirement and established my own firm, Nakshabid," he explained.

In the 14 years since the inception of Nakshabid, Architect Bayejid's career has taken interesting turns. His portfolio now comprises a diverse range of projects, from residential buildings to factories, hospitals to museums, ports to cities, and even cemeteries to mosques. He has truly designed it all.



AR. BAYEJID MAHBUB KHONDKER

"In developed countries, architecture is practiced in a quite specialized manner. For example, there are distinct architects for aviation facilities or medical centers. Bangladesh, being a very small country, has a more generalized approach to architecture. As a result, as an architect, we get to design a wide variety of structures. This can be seen as both a blessing and a challenge," he added.



As an architect, Bayejid highly prioritizes sustainable and eco-friendly structures for both urban cities and remote areas. The architect emphasizes that global warming has heightened the importance of environmental sustainability, compelling architects to play a crucial role in reducing global carbon emissions and transforming current design paradigms.

"I take pleasure in incorporating local and sustainable materials into my designs. For instance, using glass in the exterior of a building is not always essential. I prefer to avoid it unless necessary, opting instead for locally available materials that can significantly enhance the aesthetics. This approach not only supports sustainability but also values local resources. However, I am not opposed to using imported materials; I incorporate them when the situation demands," he opined.

Believing in the aforementioned notion, Bayejid approached the interior design of Hotel Nandini with a focus on minimalist elegance, utilizing locally seasoned materials like Koroï wood, Gaab, sea grass, and bamboo. A touch of imported steel, weathered locally, adds structural integrity. The exterior design effortlessly blends glass with artisanal wooden craftsmanship, giving the boutique hotel a distinctive and visually captivating appeal. A standout establishment in the surroundings.



The previous generation of architects had the luxury of focusing primarily on aesthetics and signature style. However, times have changed, and our natural environment is now in crisis. Our duty is to preach architecture that does not disrupt nature but rather fits in.





When asked about his favorite projects to date, Bayejid found it challenging to single out any, as each one holds a special place in his heart and has a unique story to tell. Nonetheless, the architect took a moment to highlight a few of his fondest projects, including the Nurpur Graveyard in Rangpur, Karupanya Factory in Rangpur, Aman Mosque in Narayanganj, and Hotel Nandini.

“Nurpur Graveyard transcends the conventional boundaries of typical graveyards in our context. This Muslim cemetery includes a compound that houses a primary healthcare facility and a madrasa. The entire premise is funded by nearby local communities,” he added.

The graveyard is designed to create spaces for leisure, an uncommon feature in our region. The overarching design philosophy was to create an open, inviting space that encourages local community members to visit and find solace where their loved ones rest in peace. The key concept of the project is to establish a synergy between the graveyard and community amenities.

On the other hand, his iconic design, the Karupannya Factory in Rangpur, has set a new benchmark of sustainable architecture. From a distance, with the lush greenery covering all over the front of the factory, it appears like a forest. The factory is designed as an energy-efficient and climate-responsive structure that can save up to 40% on energy consumption. Energy efficiency, water efficiency, optimal use of daylight, plantation, and ecosystem preservation are its sustainable design elements.



"Traditionally, industrial spaces are viewed as environments dedicated solely to relentless work. However, this factory was conceived with a different vision. The entire compound, including the workplace, is thoughtfully designed to evoke a sense of homeliness for the workers," said Bayejid.

The Karupannya factory project earned acclaim in the open category of the 'UIA 2030 Award' by the International Union of Architects (UIA) and UN-HABITAT. Architect Bayejid Mahbub Khondker received two gold medals in the Industrial Building category and a special award for Socially Responsible Architecture and Sustainability at the ARCASIA Awards for Architecture-2023 for the same project.

We asked Architect Bayejid if he has any particular style in his work, just like many profound architects have a signature style that speaks for itself. The architect did not take seconds to answer in the negative and explained his stance.

"I do not adhere to any signature style, nor do I aspire to have one in the future. Firstly, I believe that adopting a particular style limits our creativity. Secondly, the previous generation of architects had the luxury of focusing primarily on aesthetics and signature style. However, times have changed, and our natural environment is now in crisis. Our duty is to preach architecture that does not disrupt nature but rather fits in," he concluded.

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For the Love *Of* Language Nation and Literature

With a new sun, new authorities emerge, revitalising familiar spaces. The 40th Ekushey Book Fair 2025, themed "July Mass Uprising: Building a New Bangladesh (New Bangladesh Deconstruction)," featured over 700 publishing houses at the premises of Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan. The month-long fair was inaugurated by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser of the interim government on 01 February.



Fariha Hossain

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair, a fundamental element of Bangladesh's literary heritage, returned this year with a striking and visually captivating transformation. Uniquely crafted stalls add an architectural charm that sets this year's fair apart from the previous editions. Visitors are greeted with the

richness of literature and an impressive array of architecturally designed stalls, each presenting a unique identity. The influence of the new government is evident in the fair's structured setup, where each stall showcases unique aesthetics through bold shapes, intricate exteriors, and thematic designs.

When visiting this year's Ekushey Book Fair, the crowd was astounding. People of all ages turned the fair into a true celebration. The entrance was bustling with various food vans, and women and children were all dressed up. The Book Fair has never been this festive and crowded in recent years, even on working days. Whether for recreation or out of love for books, the fair should continue in this spirit for eternity, celebrating Bangla language and literature. Readers and visitors took a moment to admire the aesthetics embraced by publishers who dedicated extra time and thought to beautifully decorate their pavilions.

One of the highlights of this year's book fair is the pavilion by Iti Prokashon, titled 'Zia's Bari' (Zia's House), named after Ziaur Rahman, a prominent army chief, freedom fighter and politician who served as the sixth President of Bangladesh from 1977 to 1981. A key figure in the country's War of Independence, Zia's name has often been sidelined in public discourse and textbooks due to the agendas of the previous autocratic regime. In contrast, Onnodhara Prokashon transformed its pavilion into a representation of the Bangladesh Parliament House. The sight of these two distinct symbols coexisting on the same ground truly captivated visitors. Afsar Brothers gave their pavilion a harmonious blend of heritage and functionality, making it an inviting space for book lovers while paying homage to Bengal's rich architectural traditions. The structure follows a half-timbered design with exposed wooden beams and white infill panels, resembling classic Bengali rural or zamindari house styles.



Other notable mentions include Bishwa Shahitto Kendro, which transformed its pavilion into a two-story BRTC bus structure, paying homage to its Moving Library. Bhashachitro Publications adopted a minimal, monochrome palette, giving the pavilion a simple yet elegant look. Bengal Books chose a wooden pavilion, creating a soothing atmosphere for buyers with its well-decorated books and thoughtful lighting.

The Puthiniloy stall featured a book-structured roof, while Gronthik designed its stall to resemble a mud house with bamboo. Shaishab Prakash's stall is shaped like a whimsical castle, inviting readers into a world of children's literature. These creative designs add a unique visual and conceptual dimension to the fair, making it not just a place for purchasing books but also for cultural and artistic appreciation.



The best pavilion design goes to Batighar, designed by artist Shahinur Rahman. The triangular front featured a stained-glass-like panel with motifs from Nakshi Kantha and Patachitra, reflecting Bengali folk art. Inside, a red dome element, inspired by a Chhoto Sona Mosque, highlighted local heritage. The steeply pitched roof with exposed red clay tiles resembled traditional Bangladeshi huts. For its artistic excellence, Batighar won the Kayum Chowdhury Memorial Award for best pavilion in this year.

Sadly, the kids' section lacked vibrancy, with limited space for children to explore and freely roam around. However, a few stalls, including Shoishob Prokash, Mayurpankhi, and EKRI MIKRI, did a decent job of capturing the attention of young visitors. Shoishob Prokash transformed its stall into a castle-like structure, Mayurpankhi adhered to its palette with subtle adjustments, and EKRI MIKRI added a creative touch by placing a horse for children to play on, making the stall an engaging and fun experience for the little ones.



Director General of Bangla Academy Mohammad Azam and Member Secretary of the Fair Management Committee Sarkar Amin said to Ceramic Bangladesh that the fair was entirely polythene and smoking-free, with security provided by the Police, RAB, Ansar, and various intelligence personnel. All participating institutions sold books on a 25% commission basis. The academy published 43 new books and reprinted 41 books for this fair. A total of 3,300 new titles were published in this Book Fair 2025 and Bangla Academy stall alone sold books worth Tk 61 lakh.

Several awards were presented at the fair, including the Chittaranjan Saha Memorial Award for the best publisher, the Munir Chowdhury Memorial Award for artistic excellence, and the Rokanuzzaman Khan Dadabhai Memorial Award for children's literature. These awards recognise the contributions of publishers and authors to the literary and cultural landscape of Bangladesh.



This year, the fair included 66 more stalls than the previous year. 99 publishers were located at the Bangla Academy premises and 609 at the Suhrawardy Udyan area. There were 37 pavilions in total, with one at the Bangla Academy premises and 36 at Suhrawardy Udyan. The Little Magazine Corner had been set up in Suhrawardy Udyan, with 130 stalls. In the children's corner, 74 institutions had been allocated. The fair also featured daily seminars and cultural programmes in the evening, and a special "Children's Hour" held every Friday and Saturday from 11am to 1pm. As part of the Amar Ekushey celebrations, various children's competitions, including art, recitation, and music, were organised. The fair had four entrance points: TSC, Doyel Chattar, MRT station, and Engineering Institute.



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A Fresh Look



WE SPACE

with Inclusivity at its Core



Samira Ahsan

In the bustling Gulshan North Avenue of Dhaka, a unique office concept in Bangladesh replaces traditional departmental segregation and hierarchy with freedom of workspace and teamwork.

Located in a prime location of Dhaka's business hub, WE SPACE is Woolworth's Group's Bangladesh office, comprising an area of 6,300 square feet. The entire project was completed in 90 days, which was a challenge in itself.





The spaces in this project have been designed with Woolworth's inclusive concept of "WE" and togetherness in mind.

This concept is reflected in the layout, flexible workspaces for users, and an interesting colour palette that complements the brand identity.

As per the question, Sudeshna Shireen Chowdhury, the founder and principal architect of Studio.O, explained, "All functions are arranged together in a loop. If you enter the office from one side, you can come back and end up in the same space."



Every space has its own identity. There is a focus zone, a collaborative zone, and a social zone, all with different kinds of identities and characters

Inspired by the concept of "We Space," the layout has been developed with a central collaborative social hub and town hall space as the heart of the office. Upon entering, a clean, central circulation spine welcomes the user into the space. This loop leads them towards designated zones, which are specifically marked to enable easy navigation.

The design ensures universal access for both circulation and entry into all spaces, promoting proper orientation and mobility. Overall, the office space has been designed to be exceptionally user-friendly, showcasing unique details and features while upholding the brand identity of Woolworth's Group.

Architect Sudeshna explains that there are no designated seats or fixed workstations. The concept is for all functions to be connected in a loop, allowing users to enter from one side and return to the same space upon exiting the loop.



The design team did not introduce a traditional reception area, as the other Woolworth's offices do not have one either. The zoning prioritises common areas, meeting rooms, and a multifunctional room near the entrance for guests. The kitchen, designed more like a coffee pantry, is also placed near the entrance for easy access by guests. Public spaces are readily accessible upon entering the office. "As you move further inside, you'll find the workspaces located near the terrace space," as explained by Architect Sudeshna.

All the furniture for this project has been locally sourced and designed, making it exclusive to the users and the office. Hatil provides modern, space-saving compactor storage that allows for a significant amount of storage within smaller areas.

Height-adjustable tables and workstations were made locally using handmade techniques. The vibrant colour palette within the workstations incorporates orange and green shades.

A unique feature is the collaborative table they designed. It can function as a whole table for four people or unfold into individual workspaces.



One of the most striking features of the space is the ceiling. The Woolworth's logo is cleverly incorporated as a ceiling light fixture, adding a unique and memorable touch to the ambiance. The clients loved this detail and are considering replicating it in our other branches to create a consistent and memorable brand experience.

Vinyl flooring is used throughout the space, with a colour scheme that complements the blue ceiling light to further highlight the blue colour in the ceiling and the brand association as well. No partitions were used in open spaces; the variation in the texture of the floor materials separates the zones.

Biophilic principles were considered throughout the design process. Planters were strategically placed to integrate nature into the workspace. The architect adds, "We always consider biophilic principles. So, we planned where the planters would go and designed accordingly."



The meeting room features a TV panel that doubles as a whiteboard, demonstrating a smart design element. Acoustics were also a priority. To minimise echo, a false ceiling with sound-absorbing panels was installed. Carpets were also used for the same purpose. In the main workspaces with exposed ceilings where talks and town hall meetings are held, sound-absorbing carpet flooring was used.

Another unique addition to the project was the soundproof office pods for four people. "These pods are fully furnished, offer 85% sound absorption, and have their own ventilation systems," explains Architect Sudeshna.

She further adds, "Every space has its own identity. There is a focus zone, a collaborative zone, and a social zone, all with different kinds of identities and characters."

Completed in January 2023, WE SPACE is a collaborative project by the eminent architecture firms Studio.O and Binyash, located in Dhaka. The team of architects brainstormed together to come up with a concept that ensures efficiency, comfort, and a positive ambiance for office users.

Architect Sudeshna Shireen Chowdhury concludes, "Working with the Woolworths team was an exceptional experience. We appreciate the unparalleled support from our partners."

Photo: Maruf Raihan



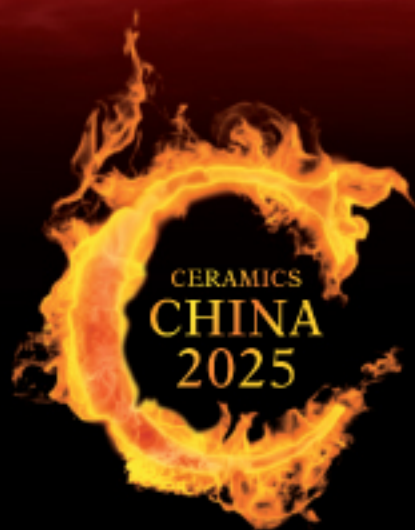


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Real Estate Enthusiasts, Innovators Show Grand Confidence

At REHAB Fair, Businesses Eye Mammoth Growth in the Ceramic Industry



The Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) organised a five-day REHAB Fair-2024 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka, to bring together all stakeholders related to the real estate sector, including land developers, house builders, buyers, financial institutions, building materials companies, and ceramic companies. The fair concluded on December 27 with an overwhelming response from visitors and prospective buyers. It witnessed significant engagement with real estate enthusiasts and industry stakeholders. RAJUK Chairman Siddiquir Rahman Sarker inaugurated the fair on December 23.

Rafikul Islam

The event attracted about 18,000 visitors and buyers, showcasing its popularity among Dhaka residents and highlighting the strong interest in the real estate sector. REHAB leaders expressed satisfaction, stating that the event successfully met its objectives of promoting the housing sector and engaging the public. According to REHAB data, the

fair saw flats, plots, and commercial spaces worth Tk 403 crore being sold and booked. Of the total amount, flats accounted for Tk 230 crore, plots Tk 96 crore, and commercial spaces Tk 77 crore. Additionally, bank loan commitments worth approximately Tk 1,090 crore were received for new projects.



Sheltech's Deputy General Manager (Sales) AKM Rafiul Islam highlighted the importance of the fair in showcasing their 50 new projects to customers. He emphasised that such fairs provide an opportunity to communicate with both new and existing clients. "Many clients come here and purchase their desired products after comparing with other companies. We received good customers at the fair," he observed.



Similarly, Mir Real Estate Ltd's Head of Marketing and Sales, Md Abu Zahid, noted that the fair allowed them to introduce seven new projects to customers. He pointed out the challenges faced by the real estate sector due to the increased cost of doing business and the rising prices of construction materials. Mr Zahid called for government policy support to help the sector thrive.

Ceramics : A New Phenomena in Real Estate

The ceramic sector is a new phenomenon in real estate. The fair highlighted the growing importance of ceramics in the real estate sector. REHAB President Md Wahiduzzaman stated that the organisation has been arranging the fair for the past 26 years with the goal of bringing all stakeholders, including realtors, developers, buyers, financial institutions, building materials companies, and ceramic companies, under one platform for the industry's development. He explained that ceramics play a crucial role in the finishing segment of construction, accounting for 60 per cent of a building's finishing part. Because a building has two segments: 40 per cent construction and 60 per cent finishing. Ceramic is part of the finishing segment. Thus, the prices of apartments depend on the finishing aspect. The fair provided an excellent opportunity for ceramic companies to showcase their products and for buyers to choose their desired items.

"I use ceramic tiles in my projects, and thanks to the tile companies, we can finish building works smoothly," Mr Wahiduzzaman mentioned. In response to a query, he mentioned that realtors seek quality products with good finishing and well-burnt tiles. "I prefer homogeneous tiles, but I have to change them due to client demands," he said. Buyers looking to purchase plots and apartments can choose their desired properties by visiting different companies' stalls at the fair. They can also examine products' quality and legal issues. REHAB assists buyers, as only REHAB members can participate in the fair.

Mr Wahiduzzaman also addressed the challenges faced by the real estate sector, including high registration costs, VAT, and taxes, as well as reduced ADP project implementation in the real estate sector due to the economic slowdown. He expressed optimism about the industry's recovery by 2025 with proper government policy support. "We are working to fulfill the dreams of the citizens," he stated.

However, in the post-Covid-19 period, the business has faced a sluggish situation. Such fairs help grow business and trade. The demand for both tiles and sanitaryware is increasing significantly in the country. "But gas is crucial to ensure quality ceramic products. I planned to manufacture ceramic items but reconsidered due to the gas supply crisis," he explained





Hints at Ceramic Industry's Growth

The Chairman of the REHAB Fair-2024 Committee, Mohammad Akter Biswas said that more than 200 related industries, including rod, cement, tiles, and electrical equipment, and approximately three crore people are directly and indirectly linked to the sector, which accounts for 12%-15% of the GDP. "Various construction materials such as tiles and financial institutions participated in the expo. Buyers have the opportunity to choose their apartments after discussing with many companies at the fair," he added.



The growth of the ceramic industry was also highlighted, as several tiles and sanitary companies have started manufacturing high-quality ceramic products that meet international standards and are exported to different countries. Earlier, imported products were commonly used, but now the ceramic industry has become significant in Bangladesh. He underscored the importance of the REHAB Fair in bringing all buyers and sellers under one umbrella, allowing them to explore various construction materials and financial solutions.



The REHAB Fair-2024 was a resounding success, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders and facilitating significant transactions and commitments. The event highlighted the growing importance of innovation and sustainability in the real estate sector, with a particular focus on the role of ceramics. As the industry continues to evolve, the REHAB Fair remains a crucial platform for promoting growth, fostering collaboration, and addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by the sector.

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STATE-OF-THE-ART PAVILIONS DRAW HUGE CROWDS AT

DITF-2025

Rafikul Islam

With a view to attracting local and foreign visitors, the exhibitors of the month-long 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2025 brought innovative architectural view at their pavilions and stalls made of various materials such as steel, board, wood, bamboo, electric cables, lights, colour and ceramic items.

Chief Adviser to the Interim Government Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus inaugurated the fair at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal, Narayanganj on 1 January, 2025.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Vice-Chairman Md Anwar Hossain also attended the opening ceremony.

This year, 343 domestic and foreign companies took part in the fair, including 11 companies from India, Pakistan, Turkey, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia in addition to Bangladesh. Last year, 304 companies participated in the fair, including 9 foreign companies from 5 countries.

The companies set up premium pavilions, mini pavilions, and reserved pavilions at the fair venue to display various products including textiles, furniture, electrical and electronics, jute and jute products, leather products, machineries, cosmetics, home furnishings, toys, stationery, crockery, plastics, melamine, herbal and toiletries, imitation jewellery, processed food, fast food, and handicrafts.

Of them, many exhibitors also offered discounts ranging from 5 to 50 per cent as well there to attract more buyers.

The Ministry of Commerce and EPB have organised DITF since 1995 to promote export growth and market diversification. This is the third edition at its new venue in Purbachal, following the relocation from Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in 2022.



Pavilions and stalls were awarded due to innovative architectural view

The best pavilions, stalls and organizations participating in various categories were recognized by presenting crests at the closing ceremony of the fair. The first prize was awarded to 22 best companies in different categories (Kiam Metal Industries Limited, Akij Plastics Limited, RFL Plastics Limited, Prisons Department, Pran Agro Limited, M/s. Helal & Brothers, Sena Kalyan Sangstha, JDPC, BGMEA, BKMEA, Hatil Complex Ltd., Jamuna Electronics & Automobiles Ltd., Navana Furniture Limited, Vision Electronics, SME Foundation, BSCIC, Orijinal Istanbul Kristal, Turkey, Pentel (Singapore) PTE Ltd., Singapore, Kewpie Malaysia SDN, BHD, Malaysia, Sonali Bank PLC, Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC and People's Leather Industries.



The second prize was awarded to 16 companies in different categories (Savoy Ice Cream Factory Ltd., Square Food & Beverage Ltd., KY Two Tone Ltd., Alloy Aluminum Furniture Limited, Exclusive Home Tex Industries Limited, Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory Limited, Bangladesh Tea Board, Nadia Furniture Limited, Minister Hi-Tech Park Limited, Brothers Furniture, Hatim Steel Structure Limited, JMG International, Hadeks Hali DeriTekstil Dis Tic A.S., Turkey, PT Nissin Foods, Indonesia, Rabab Trading International, Hong Kong and Dutch Bangla Bank PLC.



The third prize was awarded to 13 companies in different categories (Delhi Aluminium Factory, Abul Khair Milk Products Limited, SKB Stainless Steel Mills Limited, Abdul Monem Limited, BRB Cable Industries Limited, Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, Rangpur Metal Industries-Regal Furniture, Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC, Joyita Foundation, Messrs. Nurul Textile, M/S Tarique Carpet Industries, Indian Carpet Industries, and Indian Oriental Carpet, India).

Touhiduzzaman, Deputy General Manager [Public Relations] PRAN-RFL Group said, "We have a lot of products like food stuffs, plastics items, furniture, and electronics. We display the products for customers at the exhibition every year. We receive the best pavilion awarded each year due to innovative architectural view."

He pointed out that they always try to build their pavilion at the fair venue with excellent architectural views in new shapes to draw large crowds.

"As there is a limited space and it is a temporary place, so we build our stalls considering it. After getting tender from the EPB, we talk to different firms of interior designers and architects. Basically they set up the pavilion as per our direction," he added.

Touhiduzzaman stated that the stalls are set up by different construction materials like wood board, steels, tiles, bricks and others. He remarked that their main goal is to attract more customers. We decorate our stalls focusing our products. We will try to make the best pavilions in coming days as well," he also commented.



Mahin Sarker, Pavilion In-Charge of Square Food & Beverage, noted that their stall has been a hotspot for visitors due to excellent architectural views. Our pavilion got the second best pavilion award this year.

"We offered up to a 50% discount on our food and beverage items, so a lot of people purchased our products. Additionally, as our company set up an attractive pavilion so visitors drew largely here," he added.





Another a-three day fair only for exportable items in October/November

Talking to the Ceramic Bangladesh, CEO and Vice-Chairman of the EPB Md. Anwar Hossain said they tried to bring excellent architectural view in the DITF-2025. At the first time, we introduced innovative features and enhance the fair's experience for visitors, particularly after the historic student-led revolution on 5 August, 2024.



"We introduced new attractions like the 36-July Chattar and Mugdha-Sayyed Corner to showcase the revolution's impact. Additionally, visitors enter the fair with e-tickets, eliminating the hassle of manual ticket collection."

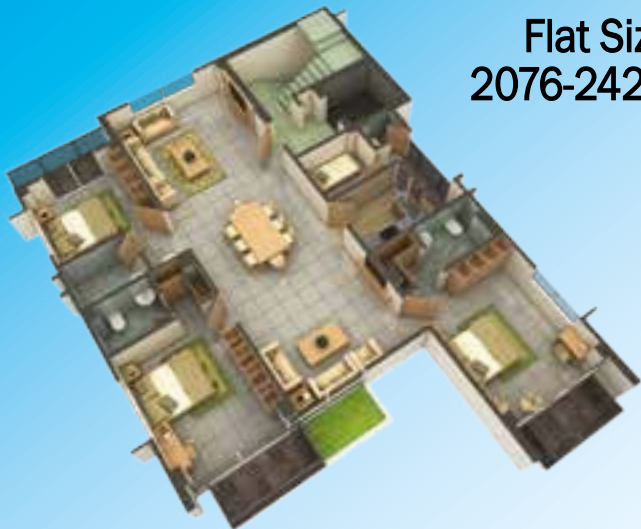
Hossain emphasised the fair's role in supporting local businesses and diversifying products to boost foreign currency earnings. "We invited many ceramic companies but they did not give positive response in the fair. We hope that in the next year fair, we can attract many ceramic companies in the expo as it is the potential and exportable products."

"We try to organize another a-three day expo at the first time at Purbachal venue in October or November where only exportable products will be displayed. It will help to attract more foreigners. We have no actual data on foreign visitors that how many foreign visitors visited the DITF-2025 and export orders too but many foreign visitors came here," he highlighted.

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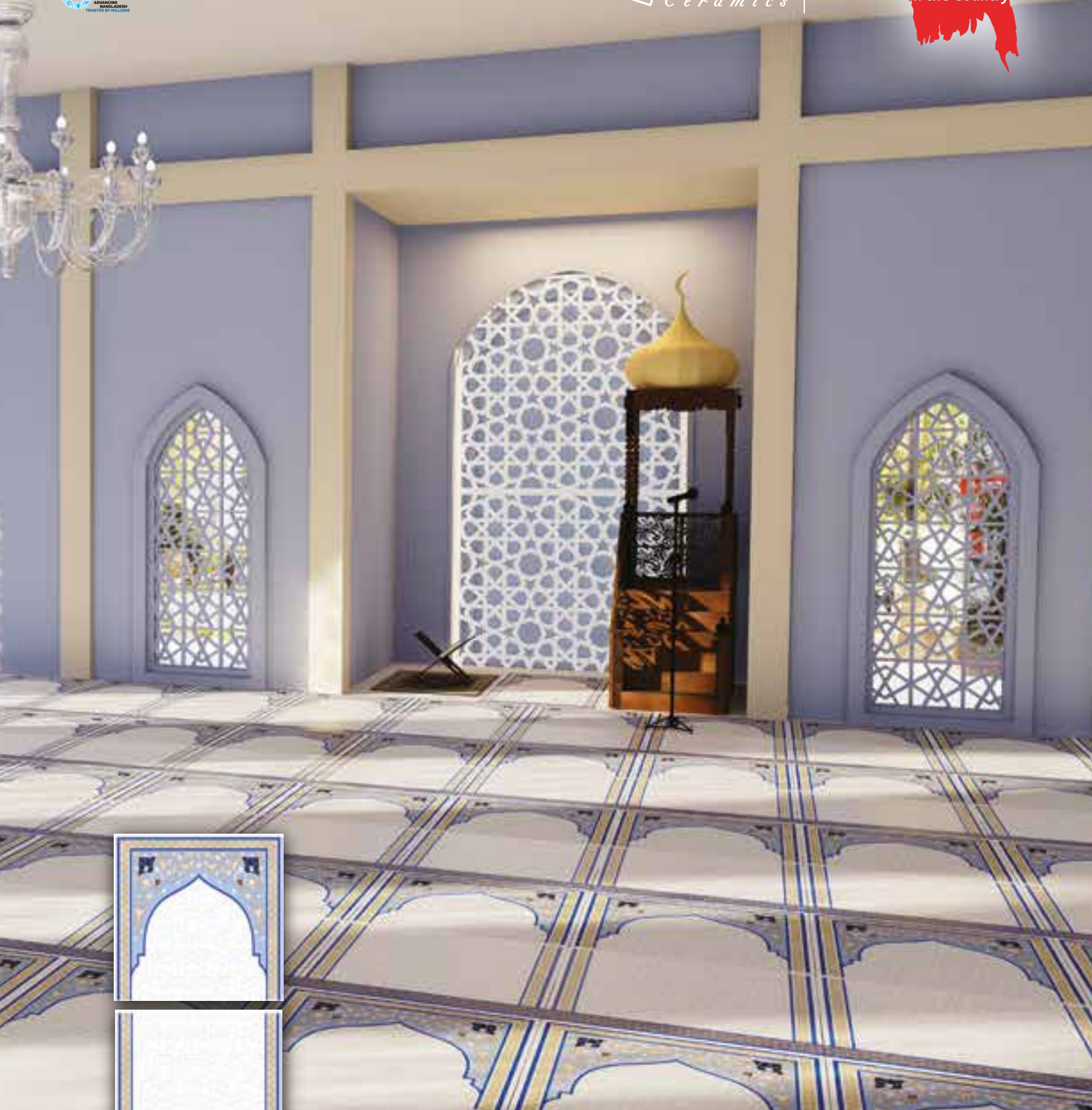
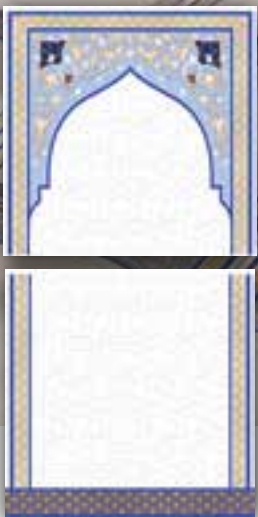
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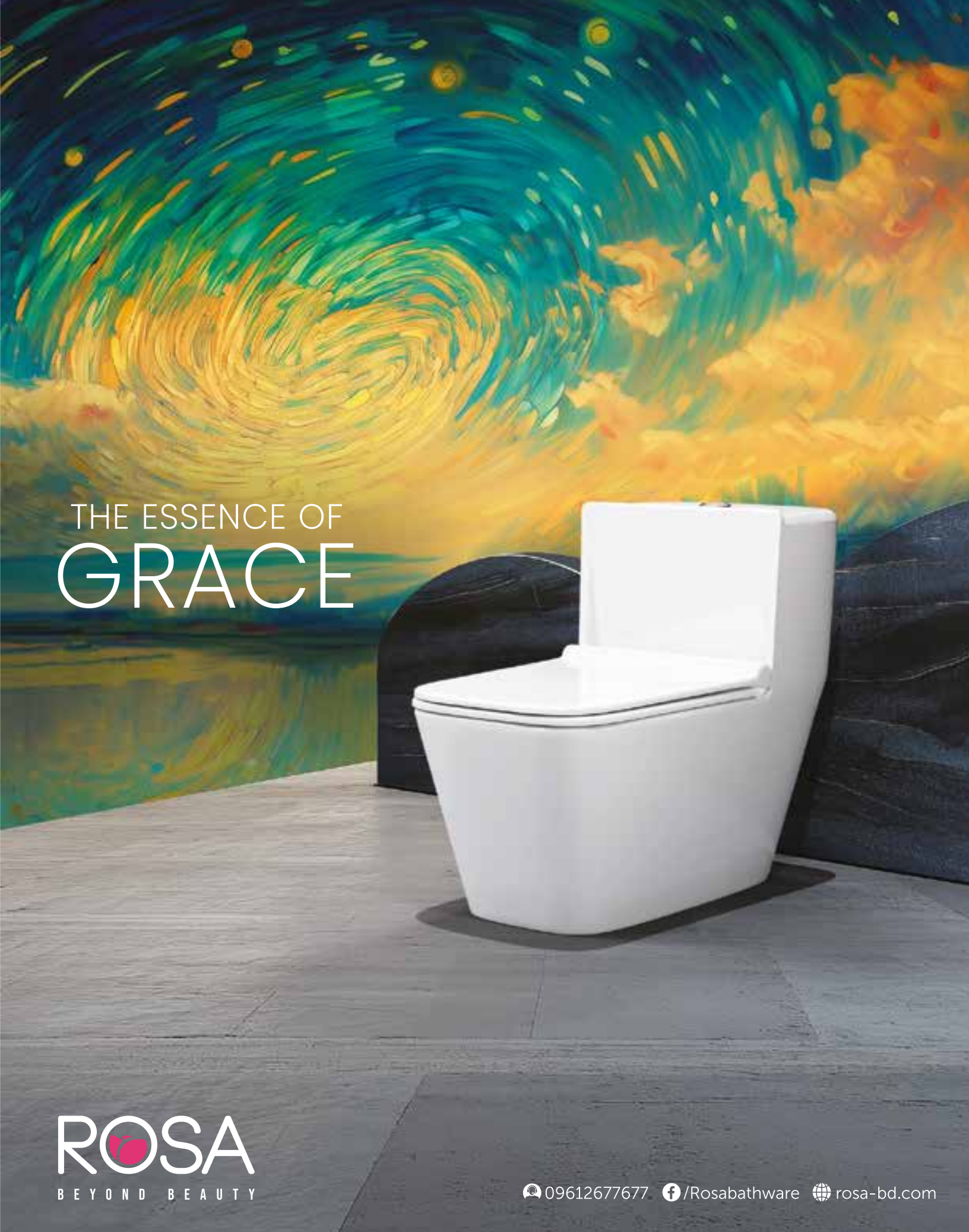
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A white, modern toilet is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image. The background is a large, vibrant mural of J.M.W. Turner's 'Rain, Steam, and Great Bridge' over the Maidenhead Railway Bridge, featuring swirling blue and white clouds and a bright yellow sun or moon. The floor is made of large, light-colored stone tiles.

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