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Sculpting away plastic

Self-taught artist recycles synthetic matters by making artworks out of them

SUSHANTA GHOSH

As the world struggles with plastic pollution, self-taught artist Emilia Roy found a creative way of recycling the waste generated by the synthetic matter.

The sculptor from Barishal's Agailjhara upazila builds statuettes from casting polybags and plastics. She also uses scrap cotton and human hair along with polythene to create patchworks of art.

Born with a creative bone in her body, Emilia was always interested in drawing, writing poetry and lyrics, and singing songs.

The amateur artist could not continue her education beyond the higher secondary level, but did not give up her creative pursuits.

"After passing my HSC exam, I got married to Alfred Roy of the same upazila. Although my academic life came to a stop after that, I continued my hobbies and artistic activities," she said, adding that her artwork became her solace after the death of her husband 20 years ago.

The idea of using polythene as a medium for sculpting occurred to her one day in 1990, when she was cooking a dish. She noticed how the heat from a hot utensil



melted a poly bag lying next to it.

"Seeing that, I thought I could burn and melt plastic to create sculptures by pouring the molten synthetic into clay models," she said.

"I started collecting polythene bags and scraps from family members, different hawkers and other people to make sculpture," Emilia said.

She said she made sculptures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mother Teresa, Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and other renowned personalities.

Her works also include statues of

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A hawker carrying goods crosses a bamboo-made bridge adjacent to the confluence of the Balu, the Norai and the Debdolai rivers near the capital's Nondipara. In the absence of a concrete bridge, people have long been using this rickety bridge that connects Dasherkranti area in Nasirabad with Nondipara. The photo was taken in Nondipara area yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT Senate prepares to set trial in motion

AFP, Washington

Articles of impeachment charging President Donald Trump with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress were set to be formally read to the Senate yesterday, setting in motion a historic trial that threatens the US leader with removal from office.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts will then be sworn in to preside over the trial and senators sworn in as jurors, as preparations get underway for an impeachment trial that will open on Tuesday, January 21.

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell said that the articles would be formally read to the chamber at noon (1700 GMT), in an announcement following their delivery to the Senate Wednesday.

"This is a difficult time for our country, but this is precisely the kind of time for which the framers created the Senate," McConnell said, referring to the authors of the US Constitution.

"I'm confident that this body can rise above short-termism and factional fever and serve the long-term best interests of

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He poured his heart into people's welfare

Say speakers about Sir Fazle Hasan Abed at a memorial discussion

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

People's welfare was the mainstay in all the activities of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed and this drove him to excel in all the ventures of Brac throughout his life, eminent educationists and development experts said yesterday.

Abed's diverse activities have contributed to alleviating poverty, improving health dynamism, and promoting education and human rights of millions of people at home and abroad, they said.

They also said Abed had set up strong institutions and adopted policies to make sure that the progress made through them is sustainable, which has now become a global example of development.

The speakers made the comments at a discussion, titled "Sir Abed in education: His thoughts, ideology and achievements". Arranged by Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation at Dhaka University's Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, the programme was held in memory of the Brac founder, who passed away at a city hospital on December 20.

Brac, founded by Abed in 1972 at the age of 36 as a small relief and rehabilitation project in north-eastern Bangladesh, has grown to be one of the most effective non-governmental organisations in the world, touching the lives of over 100 million people worldwide.

It is a unique organisation specialised in development programmes, microfinance, and social enterprises. It also has a university, a bank and a range of mission-aligned investments. Currently, Brac operates in 11 countries in Asia and Africa, with affiliate offices in the USA, the UK and the Netherlands.

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Restore full citizenship rights for Rohingyas

Fortify Rights urges Myanmar govt

UNB, Dhaka

The government of Myanmar should take steps to urgently restore full citizenship rights for Rohingyas, Fortify Rights said yesterday.

New evidence collected by Fortify Rights, including eyewitness testimonies and internal government documents, confirms that Myanmar authorities are continuing to force and coerce Rohingyas to accept National Verification Cards (NVCs), which effectively identify them as foreigners and strip them of access to full citizenship rights.

"The NVC is widely known as an abusive tool, and the government should scrap it without delay," said Matthew Smith, chief executive officer of Fortify

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Indian bakers make world's 'longest' cake



AFP, Thrissur

It was a record-baking effort. Hundreds of bakers and chefs in southern India came together Wednesday to create what they said is the world's longest cake -- about 6.5 kilometres (four miles).

They spread chocolate ganache on the serpentine dessert stretched out on thousands of tables and desks at a festival ground and adjoining roads in the coastal state of Kerala's Thrissur city.

The vanilla cake, four inches (10 centimetres) wide and thick, weighed in at about 27,000 kilograms (59,500 pounds).

About 1,500 bakers and chefs, wearing traditional whites and toque blanche caps, spent nearly four hours to put it together using 12,000 kilograms of sugar and flour.

Large crowds watched the event organised by Bakers Association Kerala (BAKE). The group's

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MIGRANT DOMESTIC STAFF Qatar scraps unpopular exit permits

AFP, Doha

Qatar scrapped mandatory exit permits for migrant domestic staff and other groups yesterday, as part of efforts to boost rights for guest workers amid scrutiny of its record.

Previously all foreigners working permanently in the gas-rich country required authorisation from bosses to leave, but now only military personnel will routinely require such a dispensation.

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 17

Fajr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:30	4:15	5:40	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:44	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



THE TURQUOISE TWITTER

A verditer flycatcher rests on a twig in Donoil village in Naogaon's Badalgachhi upazila. This species, found in different areas from the Himalayas through Southeast Asia to Sumatra, is named after its distinctive shade of blue. It has a dark patch between the eyes and above the bill base. They forage for insects by making a unique calling sound. The photo was taken last week.

COURTESY: SONJOY KUMAR

More extreme weather ahead

Warns UN, declares past decade has been the hottest on record

AFP, Geneva

The past decade has been the hottest on record, the UN said Wednesday, warning that the higher temperatures were expected to fuel numerous extreme weather events in 2020 and beyond.

The World Meteorological Organization, which based its findings on analysis of leading international datasets, said increases in global temperatures had already had dire consequences, pointing to "retreating ice, record sea levels, increasing ocean heat and acidification, and extreme weather".

WMO said its research also confirmed data released by the European Union's climate monitor last week showing that 2019 was the second hottest year on record, after 2016.

"The year 2020 has started out where 2019 left off -- with high-impact weather and climate-related events," WMO chief Petteri Taalas said in a statement, pointing in particular to the devastating bushfires that have been raging in Australia for months.

The bushfires, unprecedented in their duration and intensity, have claimed 28 lives and highlighted the type of disasters that scientists say the world will increasingly face due to global warming.

The fires have already destroyed more than 2,000 homes and burnt 10 million hectares (100,000 square kilometres) of land -- an area larger than South Korea or Portugal.

"Unfortunately, we expect to see much extreme weather throughout 2020 and the coming decades, fuelled by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere," Taalas said.

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