

Dhaka Day by Day

Of Fish and Flora

by Fayza Haq

"It's bitter, make it sweet" is one of the well-known phrases from any Russian wedding. After this the exchange of kiss and the traditional drinking of the wine proceed. There are endless rites and rituals that go with weddings. The bridegroom in the west, for instance, should never see the bride in her virginal white before the wedding or disaster strikes. Similarly something "borrowed" brings the bride luck.

In Dhaka "holuds", the fish that will be sent as a celebrated offering to the bride's house is the cause of much talk and discussion. The size of the fish is the source of gossip and chatter for hours. The fish is a symbol of fertility and sometimes the mouth of the fish is crammed with money to make the offering even more delectable.

Another integral ceremonial fertility symbol, representative of pregnancy, is the "kolosh".

Painted and decorated with endless patterns of flowers and leaves in yellow ochre and vermilion. These decorate every nook and corner of the house where the "holud" is staged.

The symbol of the plough is again an important factor in the bridegroom's house. The plough represents the male strength: it is the man who is expected to go out and earn for the family and sow the seeds of success. These together with the "alpona" form essential part of the customs and traditions that complete the "holud" without which no marriage celebration in Dhaka would be complete.

The concept of "holud" itself, ritualistic as it is, has scientific and age-old beliefs behind the use. The turmeric is said to increase the sexual appetite. It is also said to act as a contraceptive to check any unwanted early pregnancy.

The perfumed "turmeric" and oil are used for the smell, to improve the complexion and to make the skin smooth. The "holud tapta" also contains sweets which is an accepted mark of celebration. The silver container of henna is also not forgotten.

The "rakhi" that comes with the tray of delectables from each side of the parties plunging into the nuptial also harks back to hun-

dreds of years. This silk and tinsel ribbon is tied on the by the "bhabs" or the bride's sister-in-law to be who invariably takes great pride and privilege in this act. It is believed that the "rakhi" is to be formally opened by the husband on the night of the marriage in the "bashor ghor".

Among the Hindus there is the putting of the "shindur" which is put in the parting of the bride's hair. This dwells on the concept of virginity. Another act that the Hindu girl must accomplish is scatter rice as she leaves her parent's home. This rice scattering stands for the girl's debts to her parents, which is quite different from the confetti and rice that is showered in the west.

During the putting of the "holud" which proceed for seven days the girl does not adorn herself with any jewelry. Even on the actual "holud" day she is decked with garlands of "champa", tuberoses and other sweet-smelling flowers.

Holding the gate and hiding the shoes of the bridegroom cause endless diversion and entertainment for the young participants of a wedding. After the "rusumat" the bridegroom, some decades back, wiped his face and hands with the "anchal" of the bride's mother's sari. This was returned with a gold guinea tied to the sari.

Another custom of receiving guineas some 50 years ago was when the groom, "salaamed" the elders after the marriage ceremony was over. The groom placed a guinea at each pair of feet and this was in turn doubled by the elders of the family.

Dhaka, specially the older section, abounds in celebration rites and rituals. Something like "khatna", "aquika" and even "tara dikahan" to the newborn child, were items that have been celebrated over the years with pomp and pageantry. Even the piercing of a girl's carbores or nose have merited the distribution of sweets and new clothes. Similarly, in the old Dhaka, years ago, "guria ki shadi" was an entire event on its own with "shehna", "dholak" and the entire claptrap of the extravaganza of jubilation.



Entering life anew

C'wealth observers meet Hasina

The five-member Commonwealth election observers team led by Dato Pathmanabon met with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina to discuss their experience gathered during the elections, reports BSS.

The Awami League chief said her's was an organisation of the people of this country and the party would continue its struggle until establishment of parliamentary democracy and economic emancipation of the people.

US, Chinese, Pak envoys call on Khaleda

US Ambassador William H. Milam called on BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence Sunday afternoon, reports UNB.

Pakistan High Commissioner Anwar Kernal Sunday called on BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia and felicitated her.

The Chinese Ambassador Chen Songlu called on Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence yesterday and congratulated her.



The US Ambassador William B. Milam met the BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her residence in Dhaka on Sunday. — Star photo.

Khaleda, others felicitated

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador in Bangladesh, Abdul Latif Al-Matmanec, called on Begum Khaleda Zia, chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), at her residence in Dhaka Saturday, reports BSS.

Maimance congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia of her victory and her party's win as a single party majority in the February 27 parliamentary polls, BNP sources said.

The Saudi Envoy also discussed with Begum Zia the matters of bilateral interests and mutual cooperation, the sources said.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador in Bangladesh, Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Najran, called on BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence Dhaka on Saturday.

Najran congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia of her and her party's victory in the February 27 parliamentary elections which gave the BNP a single party majority in parliament, BNP sources said.

The Kuwaiti Envoy also discussed with Begum Zia the issues of bilateral interests and mutual cooperations.

Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, for impartial and peaceful holding of the parliamentary polls.

In a statement in Dhaka the Chairman of the Association M. Shamsul Haq lauded the sincere efforts, and patriotism of the Acting President for successful holding of the elections. He hoped that alongwith democracy industries would flourish in the country leading it to continued prosperity.

Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad Sunday congratulated Begum

Khaleda Zia and her party for getting majority in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad Elections, reports BSS.

BNP invites application for reserved seats

The women members of Bangladesh Nationalist Party interested in seeking nomination for the 30 reserved seats in parliament for women have been asked to submit their applications at the party's Banani office by March 10, a party source said Sunday night, reports BSS.

Subsidized accommodation for Umrah pilgrims

The Government has decided to provide accommodation at reduced rents at the three Haj missions in Saudi Arabia for Bangladesh citizens when they go their for performing Umrah, according to an official handout, reports BSS.

The three missions under the Religious Affairs Ministry are located at Jeddah, Makkah and Madina. The Bangladesh citizens intending to perform Umrah have been advised to contact Haj Officer, Assistant Haj Officer, Consulate General of Bangladesh, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Post Box Number: 6215 for availing themselves of the accommodation facility at the three missions.

Election Monitors

The election monitoring cell jointly formed by Institute of Human Rights and Legal Affairs and Liberty Forum will organise a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club on Monday at 4.30 p.m. Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury, Justice Abdul Malek and Advocate Khandoker Mahbubuddin Ahmed will speak on election monitoring and post-election situation.

Jubilee celebration of DU Psychology Department

The silver jubilee of the Psychology Department of the University of Dhaka will be celebrated on Friday, March 8. A reunion of the old and fresh students of the department will be held on the occasion. Chairman of the department, Dr Sultana S Zaman, who is convener of the jubilee celebration committee, has in a press release asked the intending participants in the programme to contact the department.

Lest We Forget Abul Kalam Shamsuddin

By Staff Correspondent

The 13th anniversary of death of Abul Kalam Shamsuddin — a renowned journalist and litterateur falls on today (Monday).

Born in 1897, his remarkable contributions in the field of journalism spread over more than half a century. As an eminent journalist and litterateur of the sub-continent, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin played an important role as one of the forerunners in the Muslim renaissance movement and in the field of journalism.

As a journalist, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin joined 'Mohammadi' in 1922. Then he associated himself with weekly 'Muslim Jagat'. Later he joined 'The Muslim' in 1925 and continued there for three years. The celebrated journalist worked with the daily 'Sultan' from 1924 to 1930. He held responsible position in the weekly 'Mohammadi' and the daily 'Azad' for 32 years from 1930 to 1962. He was the Editor of daily 'Azad' from 1940 to 1960. A respectable personality in the realm of journalism, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin became Editor of the daily 'Jehad' in 1963. He was later appointed Editor of the then 'Dainik Pakistan' in November, 1964 and remained there till 1971. He then retired as the Editor of the 'Dainik Bangla'.

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin edited the daily 'Azad' in those turbulent days when the whole of erstwhile India was in upsurge against the British and the Muslims of the sub-continent were struggling for a country of their own in the midst of many odds. As an editor and pioneer of the renaissance movement, he made significant contribution to the achievement of Pakistan. After the establishment of Pakistan, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin both as the Editor of the 'Azad' and as an intellectual made a mark of his own in the field of journalism and literature of the country. When erstwhile East Pakistan was in ferment in the fifties and early sixties as the people fought for their democratic rights, he stood with them and used his powerful pen for their cause.

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin's role during the Language Movement was a historic one. He used his pen vigorously against any attempts at tempering with the fundamental rights of the people and turned out to be one of the most fiery critics of the brutal killing of the Language Movement processionists by the Police of the then Muslim League Government. As a mark of protest, he resigned his membership of the then East Pakistan Legislative Assembly to which he was elected as a candidate of the Muslim League, the party in power. He presided over the public meeting convened on February 26 in 1952 near the present Shaheed Minar to condemn against the brutal killing. On the very day, he also formally inaugurated the historic Shaheed Minar.

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin came to journalism by choice at the earliest phase of the present century and stayed with it for more than fifty years. Both as an original writer and translator, he showed his efficiency and 'Kharataranga', 'Dristikon', 'Trisrota', 'Palassy Theky Pakistan', 'Attidnar Smriti', 'Nutun Chin Nutundesh', and translation of 'Turgenev's Virgin Soil', Homer's 'Illiad' were acclaimed by the literary critics.

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin's literary achievements won laurels for him. He was awarded Bengali Academy prize in 1972 and 'Ekushey Padak' in 1976 for his significant contribution to Bengali literature and journalism. He breathed his last on March 4, 1978 at the age of 80—a bright star dropped down from the galaxy of the intellectuals, spreading as pall of gloom over the country.



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Education Week from March 13

Education Week will be celebrated at district and divisional levels from March 7 to 9 and March 13 to 15 respectively, according to an official handout in Dhaka on Sunday, reports BSS.

The Week will be celebrated at national level in the first week of June.

The main theme of the celebration this time is "Education and Democracy". Executive committees at district and divisional levels for celebrating Education Week 1991 have already been formed.

A best college, one best secondary boys school, a girls secondary school and a madrasa will be selected at district level. District executive committee will select three best teachers one each from College, secondary school and madrasa. Competition on qirat, debate, spot speech, Rabindra sanget, Nazrul sanget, modernsong, folklore, classical, instrumental music and dance will be held at district levels in two groups—one at Class VI to Class X and the other at XI Class to higher level.

Besides, seminar or symposium on education and democracy or on education related matter and competition on this subject will be held. The divisional committee will select three best colleges, and nine best secondary schools including three madrasas and three girls schools on the basis of results received from different district level. Three colleges, three boys schools, three girls schools and three madrasas will be selected from Dhaka metropolitan area through Divisional Commissioner of Dhaka. The divisional committee will select 27 best teachers nine each at colleges, secondary schools and madrasas and six from Dhaka city two each from each group and send them to Director General of Secondary and Higher Secondary Directorate for consideration at national level.

Besides, competition at divisional level will be held with best competitors of district level on various fields. Divisional committees will send the names of first and second place holders to Director General of Shilpakala Academy for participating at national level. The Academy will arrange competition at national level.

BCPS election held

By SSMCH Correspondent

Prof. T.A. Choudhury and Prof. Abdul Hadi were elected President and Secretary of Bangladesh College of Physician and Surgeons (BCPS), at an election held on Saturday in Dhaka. Other office bearers are, Treasurer- Prof. Mahmud Hasan, Senior Vice President- Prof. Ahsanullah Choudhury, Vice President- Prof. Md. Tahir, and other two members, Prof. Nazmun Nahar and Prof. Strazul Haque says a press release.

Chehlum

The Chehlum of Riyad Faisal, son of M A Ghani, Senior Officer, National Bank Ltd. Head Office, Dhaka will be held Today (March 4) at 4-30 pm after Asar prayer at 42/c, West Mali Bagh Chowdhury Para, Ghafur Mansion (behind Nur Mosque), Dhaka.

Riyad Faisal was a student of class VIII of National Bank Public School in Dhaka, who died in 23.1.91. He was only 14.

Dhaka to restore embassy in Kuwait

The Government is taking preparations for reactivating soon country's embassy in Kuwait, just liberated from the Iraqi occupation, sources said in Dhaka on Sunday, reports UNB.

A Foreign Office source said the Bangladesh national flag was hoisted atop the mission on February 27 immediately after liberation of the Gulf state.

The mission's activity was suspended in mid-September last year after breakout of the Gulf crisis following the August 2.

All five diplomats including Ambassador K M Shehabuddin were likely to proceed to

Kuwait City in a couple of days to resume their jobs, the source said.

He informed that the Bangladesh embassy in Kuwait remained intact and all 2,000 Bangladesh nationals still there also safe and secure, surviving 40 days of the world's severest battles between the US-led multinational forces and the Iraqi troops.

Bangladesh suspended its Kuwait mission along with other countries after the Iraqi invasion and annexation of its neighbour.

Besides, the government evacuated some 70,000 stranded nationals from Kuwait and Iraq after the aggression.

Weather

Weather to remain dry

By Staff Correspondent

Weather likely to remain dry all over the country today. Day temperature may remain unchanged at most places. Light rain thundershower which recorded 2 mm was occurred at Dhaka. Weather remained dry. Day temperature remained unchanged except Rajshahi where it fell by 2 degrees celsius.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 6.03 pm and rises on Tuesday at 6.18 am.

Outlook for two days: Little change.

Extended outlook for subsequent five days: No change. The maximum temperature on Sunday recorded at 32 degree celsius at Teknaf and the minimum of 12.6 degrees at Rangpur.

Temperature and Humidity of some cities and towns recorded on Sunday are:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity (%)	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.2	19.0	69	39
Chittagong	31.2	21.1	75	64
Rajshahi	30.1	13.2	50	49
Khulna	31.0	18.8	76	60
Cox's Bazar	31.5	21.0	75	71
Sylhet	30.0	18.5	74	45

The maximum temperature of some international cities:

City	Temperature in celsius
Calcutta	32 degree
Delhi	23
Colombo	31
Hong Kong	17
Singapore	31
Rangoon	36
Bombay	29

Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Comilla and Sylhet are likely to experience 4 to 6 day nor'wester with hailstorm during this month.

The Met office said that the other parts of the country may also experience 3 to 5 day nor'wester with hailstorm. Strong nor'wester- once or twice may hit some other parts. The forecast added. Met office said that Dhaka division may experience 45-50 mm, Chittagong 50-55 mm, Rajshahi 30-35 mm and Khulna 40-45 mm rain in this month.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Fifty percent
- 5 Bailor
- 9 Containder
- 12 Sandarac tree
- 13 God of love
- 14 Period of time
- 15 Sift
- 17 Switch position
- 18 School of whales
- 19 Cry of Bacchanals
- 21 King of birds
- 23 Disapproves of
- 27 Mother
- 28 Negative ion
- 29 TV's Donaldson
- 31 Lower or Reiner
- 34 Italian river

DOWN

- 1 Possesses
- 35 Encountered
- 37 Existed
- 39 Brother of Odin
- 40 Goal
- 42 Bspatter
- 44 Pigners
- 46 Spanish article
- 48 Fortifications
- 50 Choir voice
- 53 Hunter
- 54 Fuss
- 55 Preposition
- 57 Come on the scene
- 61 Hole
- 62 Athletic group
- 64 Great Lake
- 65 Devoured
- 66 Deposits
- 67 Monty Hall's specialty

Answer to Previous Puzzle

FOE STORE PEW
IRS TUNED EGO
RESPIRE USAGE
AERO SCAR
RAYS RECALLED
ABETS ROTELI
ROD PRATE PIN
ED SAIS SLATE
REPENTEDULES
ERIE RATE
TINEA DELETES
HOD RAISE TOO
ENS DENSE END

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33

34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75

76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90

91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100