

Dhaka Day by Day

Cuddlepies and Snugglepots

by Fayza Haq



Treasured pets — no matter what size or colour — Photo by Enamul Haque

Seeing many cats and scrawny dogs in the market-places and roadsides of Dhaka is a common phenomenon. It is a relief that horses have nearly been removed from the streets for they have seldom been more than old bags struggling with their weight of the wooden carriage (gar).

However, well fed pets stunning themselves on window sills, or sleek dogs in chain being taken out for the necessary and fashionable morning and evening walks by servants and owners of the well-to-do are also another facet of the city life. The rich keep their pets in almost as good a condition as the Queen's Corgies with medicines and even sometimes food that have been imported.

The amount that is spent in doctor's bills and pet's food is also sizeable. At times the pets in the family are better off than some of the humans, who do not get the mollicoddling and cossetting that a Siamese or an Alsatian dog receives. Even a pet goat maybe rated over a cousin or an aunt by animal lovers.

People can act very intense about their pets. They might give more importance to these animals of their fancy than perhaps even themselves. Before they make sure of their own dinner or shower or their change of clothes, after work, they will rush to see that their pet cat or dog has had its plate of milk and bread or juicy bones, or the fresh bowl of fish from the refrigerator. If there should be sudden heat or rain they will first ascertain that their pets are safe rather than be concerned about their own personal work or comfort.

A friend of mine and her family were so fond of animals that their tiny two-roomed flat was overrun with Siamese cats and their kittens, a huge hound called Tiger and a hairy mop of a Pomeranian called Puffy. A couple of parrots and a monkey were also thriving in that menagerie.

My friend would spend hours cleaning and feeding her animals and playing with them, ignoring her school homework. Everywhere you turned in that small establishment there was some bird or beast staring at you or rubbing against your flanks. The place was strewn with feeding cups and baskets. One often wondered where and how the family of six ever slept for there was but one bedroom, which too perhaps had to be shared with feathered and furred friends.

Another acquaintance of mine made a little

baby out of her stray kitten. She would not go anywhere without the spoilt kitten. Queenie played and slept in her bedroom all day or followed her about. If she went visiting the kitten went with her in a basket. Once or twice it was flown to Rajshahi from Dhaka in a special cage. The kitten had a whole verandah to herself with a sandbox, apart from the sleeping basket complete with quilt. "I would be delighted to receive a fraction of the affection that an animal in this house gets," the husband would sometimes comment with a wry and tolerant laugh.

Yet another person spent so many hours playing, bathing and training his dog that his girl-friend was so baffled and jealous of his fascination for his pet that she simply walked out on him. "It was with a lot of difficulty that I sneaked out of my parent's house to be with him. Instead of playing chess with me or listening to our favourite records, he would cosset and talk endlessly with his pet. My skipping, my university classes, and annoying the home front, plus the unpleasant rickshaw ride all the way to a Banani was not worth it, I decided after all."

There is nothing perverse or particularly peculiar about being overly engrossed in animals. Yet it does appear not quite the norm for the average middle-class person in Bangladesh to find so much of time, affection and money to heap on what someone else might see as a pile of fur or feather and little else. As it is, in a place like Dhaka, the question of loneliness seldom arises in the home as it does in some parts of the west—specially among the older retired generation, where children have grown up and moved away.

One appreciates the fondness for pets in case of a lonely couple or in the question of an introvert, shy, only child, who wants to surround himself with pet fish and parrots. But when there are half a dozen members of the family clamouring for attention and even the husband or girl-friend is given a second place to the domestic lordships, the situation appears slightly lopsided to onlookers and outsiders. To rave and rant about the poodle or pony is the done thing in Britain or USA yet this cossetting does seem perhaps somewhat overdone on some occasions.

This is even though one must admit that no one has the right to undermine or discredit another's penchants.

Australian books for DU English Department

Australian Government has donated a wide and varied collection of Australian literature to the libraries of the English Department of Dhaka University, Notre Dame College and the Central Public Library Sunday, reports UNB.

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Mr RK Gate presented a selection of the books of twentieth century Australian literature to Mr Shah Nazmul Alam, Director of the Central Public Library.

According to a press release, the donation of the books is a part of Australia's cultural relations programme in Bangladesh.

The collection includes novels, poetry and short stories representing the works of a wide range of Australian writers both internationally reputed and some newly emerging.

Children's art exhibition opens

Begum Sufia Kamal, Chairperson of Bangabandhu Parishad, inaugurated a children's art exhibition at the Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhaka Sunday morning, reports BSS.

The exhibition was organised by the Parishad as part of its day-long function in observance of the 71st birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina, Awami League chief and eldest daughter of the Bangabandhu, and members of the Bangabandhu Parishad were present in the inaugural function.

Over 500 pieces arts were put on display in the exhibition under five categories according to age groups. They are: Ankur, Kunri, Kali, Puspa, and Sourava.



Eager young scientists in the making listening to an explanation at the local chemical products exhibition '91.

Basanta Utsab at JU

SAVAR, Mar 17: A day-long Basanta Utsab (Spring Festival) was observed today at Jahangirnagar University to mark the arrival of Spring, reports BSS.

Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof. Kazi Saleh Ahmed inaugurated the colourful festival as the chief-guest, while eminent dramatist Mamunur Rashid attended it as the special guest.

Mr. Mamunur Rashid thanked the organisers of the festival saying Jahangirnagar University was the only university where Basanta Utsab was observed every year.

Students and teachers brought out a colourful Basanta-jatra (spring-procession) with bullock carts on the campus. They paraded the campus with colourful caps on, carrying banners and wearing various types of dresses. The Utsab included poetry recitation, Geeti Alekha, and songs.

Imported goods now cheaper

Young scientists fail to grow as levies sap their vitals

complained one visitor to an exhibition of domestic chemical products, organised by the Bangladesh Small and Chemical Industries Corporation in Dhaka last week. The Sonargaon Hotel Ballroom had been vacated for two days last week. This was to

accommodate the Local Chemical Products Exhibition '91'.

Although it earned credit for being the first display of its kind in Bangladesh, yet the presentation was less impressive than the annual presentations at the senior school exhibition such as in Scholastica, Southbreze or even Maple Leaf. This was despite the fact that enthusiastic parents and eager teachers had escorted teams of children and even college students for the show.

Some interesting highlights of the display, however, involved an improved stove that cost Tk 250. The scientists of the Institute of Fuel Research and Development of the BCSIR claimed that it involved less cooking time, kept the kitchen clean, reduced fire hazard, and even checked deforestation. They further claimed that it helped in the increase of the organic cycling.

Despite this gadget there was a gas burning stove that cost Tk 50. The authorities claimed that it saved 25 per cent of gas, gave safe fire, involved cheaper burning than the normal metal stove.

The solar oven which cost Tk 600 involved cooking with direct sunlight. The makers claimed to produce pollution free food as well as to contribute to pollution free environment. They termed

Apart from the innovative ovens and stoves there were numerous exhibits of chemicals by pharmaceutical firms and chemical industries. The display included activated carbon used for sugar industry, soybean refinery, fertilizer factories, pharmaceutical industries and food industries.

There was sodium silicate from the soap industry, detergents, and items from paper industry, and silica gel industry.

Added to this was the precipitated silicate for rubber, the product of the solar oven as cost-free food that needed no attention during cooking.

These stoves and ovens could be used for both domestic and industrial purpose. If you knew the techniques you could make them yourselves without spending much money. These stoves were created out of mud, cement and rods.

The experts told 'The Daily Star' that Bangladesh burns 100 crores maunds of fuel every year. By using the new techniques we would be saving Tk 1,500 crores.

The latent talents of Bangladeshi boys and girls in the field of scientific innovations are seemingly dying a natural death as their items, made expensive by loads of duties, are beyond reach of consumers. The local products are more expensive than the foreign ones."

plastic industry. One found aluminium sulphate potash alum, ferrus sulphate, copper sulphate. Ammonia liquor were on display too. While items like expensive "attar" too were on exhibit, some of the items were for local consumption while others were for export as well. The exhibitors bitterly complained that the custom duties were so erratic that it was sometimes cheaper to buy foreign goods than to go in for locally produced items on which there were hefty production and sale levies.

— Fayza Haq

Establishment of tobacco industry protested

Adhunik, a national anti-smoking organisation in its annual convention Saturday expressed concern over the recent establishment of tobacco factory in the country, reports UNB.

The convention urged the government to withdraw the facilities it has extended to

manufacture a product which is financially, morally and ethically unacceptable.

It is contrary to the commitment of the government decision which vowed not to help setting up new tobacco industry in the country, it added.

Weather

Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

The city dwellers experienced scorching heat on Sunday as the temperature increased by nearly two degrees Celsius against the previous day's. The highest temperature recorded in Dhaka on Sunday was 35.2 degrees Celsius.

Met office has forecast rain/thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind are likely to occur at one or two places over the region of Rajshahi, Pabna, Tangail, Mymensingh and Sylhet.

Weather will remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, till Monday. Day temperature may rise one to four degrees Celsius over the country except Srimangal, Feni, Comilla, Chittagong, Taknaff and Dinajpur areas. The maximum temperature was recorded at 36.6 degrees Celsius.

Outlook for subsequent two days: rain/ thundershower likely. Outlook for another five days: little change.

The temperature and humidities recorded at some cities and towns of the country on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	35.2	22.6	63	46
Chittagong	34.0	22.8	75	64
Rajshahi	36.5	20.0	70	47
Khulna	35.2	21.5	70	55
Dinajpur	35.4	20.0	74	38
Sylhet	33.7	28.0	72	53
Cox's Bazar	35.3	23.5	68	72
Ishwardi	36.0	19.0	61	57
Bhola	34.0	22.8	77	72
Srimangal	34.5	19.4	66	58

Maximum temperature of some cities of the region recorded on Sunday were:

Colombo	32 degree Celsius	New Delhi	31 degree Celsius
Banok	37	Bombay	32
Singapore	33		

PROGRAMME

The 12th death anniversary of renowned litterateur, journalist and politician Abul Mansur Ahmad will be observed today (Monday), reports BSS.

Various cultural and literary organisations have dawn out elaborate programmes on the occasion including

Quran Khwani and distribution of alms to the destitutes at Dhaka and Mymensingh.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Memorial Committee has also arranged Quran Khwani at the Dhanmondi residence of the late Mansur Ahmad at 61 Dhanmondi Residential Area, Road No 6A (New) at 5 p.m. on the day.

Ziarat at the mazar of late leader at National Graveyard at Sher-e-Banglanagar will also be held in the morning.

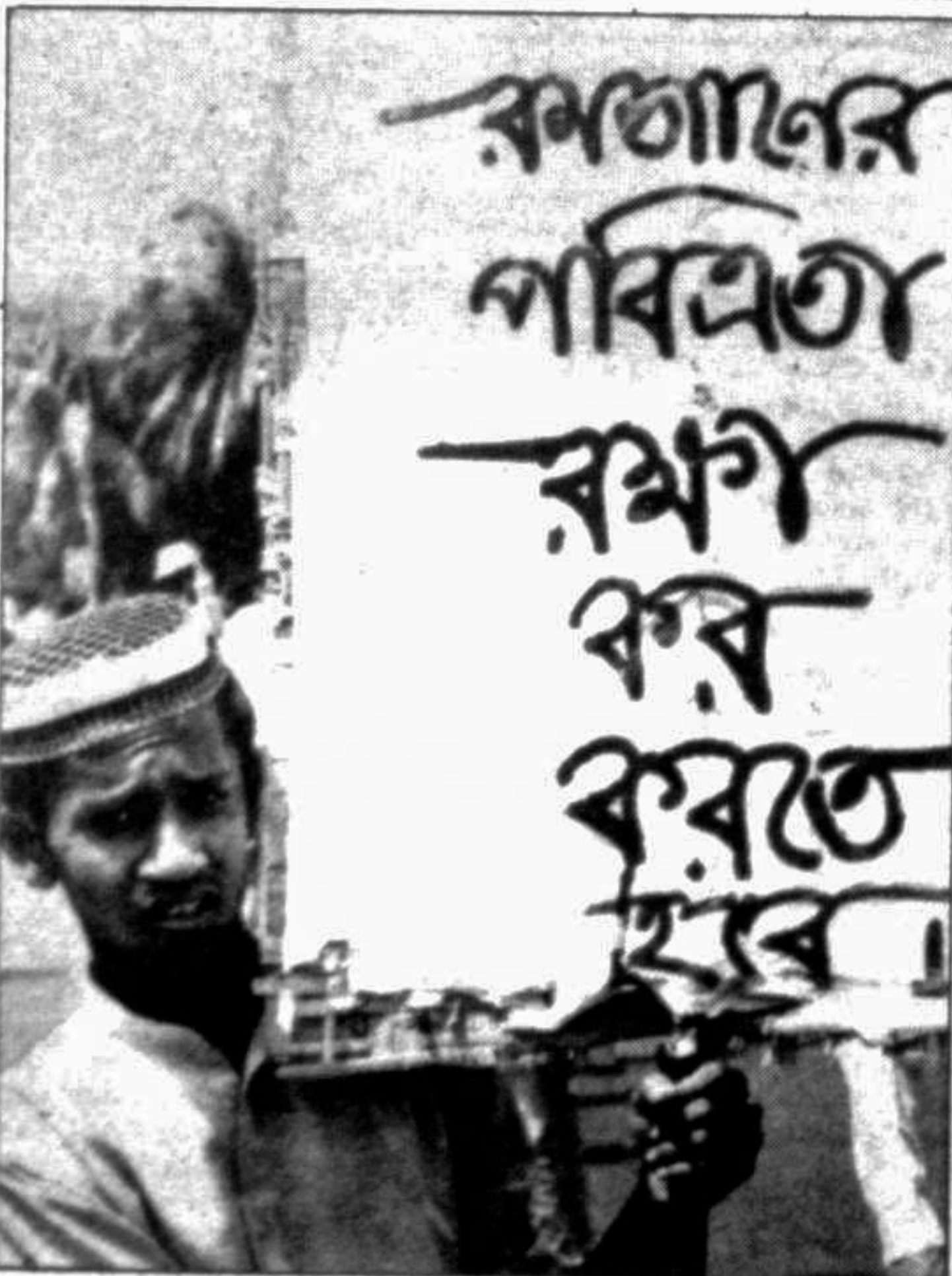
TV Monday

- 5.00 Opening and Recitation from Holy Quran.
- 5.20 News in Bengali
- 5.30 Carton - Chutch Cargo
- 5.55 Mahe Ramzan
- 6.25 Sports Programme
- 7.05 TV debate
- 8.00 News in Bengali
- 8.30 A special programme devoted Abul Mansur Ahmad.
- 9.00 Geetanjali
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Troma centre
- 11.30 Khabar / The news
- 11.45 Closing down.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

PAUSE PLANS
PALLED RELATE
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DALE PODS
AVOLL REDEEMS
HURL MISER AT
ERS FISTS ATE
AE RAYEL BIYE
DENOTE ELUDED
NOTES SANER

- 19 Fish eggs
- 21 Song
- 24 Mother
- 25 Anger
- 26 Series of games
- 28 Opeak
- 29 Sea eagle
- 30 Small rug
- 34 "Treasure"
- 35 Lamprey
- 36 Dwell
- 37 Cylindrical
- 38 Summer Fr.
- 39 Serviette
- 42 Coarse, mottled hair
- 43 Manette
- 44 Region
- 46 Assistant
- 47 Willow
- 48 "Window"
- 51 Farm animal



Islami Chhatra Shibir held a rally in city on Sunday calling upon people to maintain sanctity of Ramzan which has begun today. —Star photo

'Maintain sanctity of Ramzan'

By Staff Correspondent

Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Abbas Ali Khan has urged the people to maintain sanctity of the holy Ramzan and refrain from all activities that hampers the atmosphere of Ramzan.

Rally to keep hotels open in Ramzan

Dhaka Metropolitan Hotel Employees Union Sunday staged a rally in front of the National Press Club demanding that hotels be kept open in the month of Ramadan, reports UNB.

Leaders of the union at the rally said the order passed by the autocratic Ershad regime in 1987 closing all eating houses during Ramadan was oppressive on the hotel employees in the name of maintaining sanctity of the holy month.

Presided over by union President Mohammed Rafiqul Islam, the gathering was addressed, among others, by its general Secretary Solaiman Munshi.

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