

## Dhaka Day by Day

### Symbolism, Optimism And Beyond

by Farzana Haq

The power and beauty that our women can achieve in the world of art could be seen in the exhibition of Rokeya Sultan and Nasreen Begum at the "La Galerie," Banani.

Rokeya Sultan has been trying for a long time to get a foothold in the world of symbolism and impressionism with her etchings and lithographs. Although romantic and dream-like in her visions, she has attempted to do work which would leave a lasting impact. Looking at her work we are impressed by her combination of cynicism and optimism.

Rokeya enjoys working with figures, especially in the mother and child theme, where the child is the onlooker and the mother is the eternal suffering Madonna. As Rokeya feels through the life and existence of a woman and child, especially her own daughter Laura, she presents her thoughts in the simplified primitive form. Her creations are a combination of maturity and childlike ness.

In the recent exhibition, Rokeya has experimented with the forms in the city, rather than the village with which she has no immediate touch.

Her conception of the city, though crammed with automobiles, is peaceful and even romanticised. Rokeya's etchings have bold, fresh strokes. She is weary with realism and now fluctuates between reality and dream world. She is confident of her steps, whatever they are, and she dwells on the world that she knows best.

The details in her work show a careful choice of lines and colours. Whatever form and colour she uses, she is always aware of her surroundings. Her use of space and colour is strongly influenced by her stay at Shantiniketan. She combines the semi-abstract with the subconscious and creates a world that is a mixture of dream and magic.

About her present series that she has entitled "Sojourn" she says, "Death is the final point. What we are doing now is playing a role. In her etching about the city she has the police like an enormous clown, who is powerful at the same time as being funny. All this is like a stage, with each person playing his part," Rokeya comments philosophically.

In "No 2" she has circus characters with clowns and a trapeze girl. "Inside each clown is someone serious, perhaps. Yet he puts on an act of being happy and contented. I have purposely used this child-like art. I am weary of realism, I want to forget my academic styles and recall just the forms. I would like to present things that you can touch even in the dark," she comments.

Nostalgia has entered "No 3". The blue, black and white lithograph with fairies and images from childhood memory is a combination of sorrow and happiness. In "No 1" she has the acrobats performing again. They symbolise our



Isolation. Watercolour

present. She is not just out to decorate but also presents a message through her symbols.

In "No 10" the butterfly stands for freedom, the rainbow for hope, while the girl is portrayed as trying to emerge from darkness and ignorance. The artist is acutely aware of the social and economic position of our women.

"No 7" is the portrait of a woman without a face. "Why go into those details when one can do without them," the artist comments. The white of the "sari" stands for purity while the flowers and ferns represent dreams and hopes in life. There are a lot of problems in life but we are still full of hope. The butterflies in the picture symbolise not only nature and eternity but also the element of optimism in human beings.

The girl sitting under a tree in "No 5" shows a beauty in white "sari" with tremendous dexterity. All the pictures are dreamlike and poetic.

The artist has utilised traditional motifs and manner of painting to create both optimism and nostalgia.

#### SAARC technical body meeting begins today

The ninth Technical Committee meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on sports, art and culture begins in Dhaka today (Tuesday), reports BSS.

Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Majid-ul Huq will inaugurate the three-day meeting at 10 am at a city hotel.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain and State Minister for Culture Prof Jahan Ara Begum will attend the inaugural function as the special guests.

The ninth meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on sports, art and culture will review the progress of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the eighth meeting held in Kathmandu in 1989.

Director of the SAARC Secretariat Q A M A Rahim arrived in Dhaka on Sunday. The delegates of the SAARC countries already arrived in the city.

#### Rotary Club of Dhaka

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held today (Tuesday) at 5 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Dr Saadat Hussain, Director General of the Radio Bangladesh, will be the guest speaker and will speak on "Corruption in public offices".

#### Rotary Club of Ramna

The regular meeting of the Rotary Club of Ramna will be held today (Tuesday) at 5.30 pm at the Hotel Sonargaon. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Director General of Post Offices, will speak on the origin of postal services as the guest speaker.

#### .... and tomorrow

#### Seminar on Women's history

The Centre of Higher Studies in Humanities of the Dhaka University will hold a seminar on "Women's History: The case of Muslim Biharamillas in Bengal (1876-1939)" at the seminar room of the Centre tomorrow (Wednesday) at 4 pm. Prof Sonia Nishat Amin of the History Department of the DU will present the key-note paper on the issue.

The DU Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Wakil Ahmed will preside over while director of the Centre Dr Abul Kalam will conduct the seminar.

## Metropolitan

### 8 horticulture nurseries in CHT being damaged

Eight horticulture nurseries, raised with crores of Taka in the greater Chittagong Hill Tracts, are being damaged due to shortage of fund, reports UNB.

Ten officers and 96 staff members of all the nurseries along with their dependents have been passing their days in sub-human condition due to non-payment of their salary for the last four months, informed sources in Rangamati said.

Due to non-renewal of the special five-year scheme under which funds were made available has ended on July 30, 91, these projects are running without any fund.

In the absence of proper maintenance due to fund constraint the horticulture units are being damaged day by day.

#### 3 DU researchers conferred PhD

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University syndicate recently awarded PhD and MPhil degrees to three researchers for their research works in different fields.

Sagarmoy Barua was awarded PhD degree for his research work on "Studies on relationship between Vitamin 'A' and iron metabolism" under the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science while Dr Zebul Mahmud was awarded MPhil degree under the same institute for her research work on "Effect of Vitamin 'A' and 'E' on spondiosys".

Fazle Akbar Haidar Talukdar was awarded PhD degree for his research on "Agronomic and Physiological responses of recently developed corchorus capsularis L and C Oltorius L Lines to various cultural practices" under the Department of Botany.

Prof K Ahmad, Prof Shah Md Keramat Ali and Prof AS Islam supervised the three research works respectively.

Works Secretary Enamul Huq

The key-note paper was presented by Prof Nazrul Islam of Geography Department of Dhaka University.

The Works Minister said our thinking must be accompanied with honesty, commitment and national dedication for the prosperity of our country.

Barrister Mia assured the HBRI that the government would do everything possible for the marketing of the building materials produced by

Chief Patron of the Samity Amanullah Khan urged the government to take up a massive plan in this regard.

President of the Samity Atiqur Rahman chaired the meeting.

The meeting was addressed among others, by Sheikh Kamal Hossain, Tofael Ahmed and Golam Azam.

BSS adds : Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia Monday said the present government would take necessary initiatives to form a National House-Building Committee comprising relevant experts.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on "Housing situation of Bangladesh" organised in observance of the World Habitat Day-91 held at the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) at Mirpur in Dhaka.

Organized by the HBRI, the seminar was presided over by

Dhaka to receive



School children holding a colourful rally in city Monday in observance of Universal Children's Day.

— Star photo

#### Govt to help market local building materials

### 50 pc city-dwellers living in sub-human conditions

Speakers at a discussion

meeting on the World Habitat Day on Monday said about 50 per cent people in the metropolis are living in sub-human conditions and polluted environment in and around the slum areas, reports UNB.

Organised by Bangladesh Bastuara Janakalyan Samity, speakers at the meeting said government's steps to solve the problems are quite inadequate.

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Dhaka to receive

£15 m aid

from UK

Bangladesh will receive a

commodity grant assistance of

15 million pound sterling

(Equivalent to approximately Tk 98 crore) from the United Kingdom under an agreement concluded in Dhaka an official source said Monday, reports BSS.

The amount will enable

Bangladesh to procure goods

and services from the United

Kingdom or certain developing

countries. Both the public and

private sectors will be eligible

as importers.

British commodity assis-

tance is generally utilized for

procurement of industrial raw

and packing materials, spare

parts, pharmaceuticals, ferti-

lizer, pesticide and items of

capital equipment and barley

bridges.

With this 15 million pound

the total amount so far re-

ceived by Bangladesh from the

UK as commodity aid stood at

208.83 million million pounds.

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the

HBRI.

Enamul Huq said the trend

of migration from rural to ur-

ban areas could be reduced by

the socio-economic develop-

ment of rural people.

The seminar was also ad-

dressed, among others, by

Acting Director of HBRI A K M

Khorshed Alam, Architect Dr

Shahidul Amin, Architecture

Department of BUET, Khorshed

Alam, Senior Principal Officer

of Urban Development

Directorate.

Alam of HBRI stressed the

need for sustainable technol-

ogy for housing considering

the socio-economic condition

of the housing problem. He

urged the people to utilise the

locally produced building ma-

terials.

Prof Shahidul Amin said

the housing problem was not

created in a day and it is not

possible to solve the problem

overnight. He urged politi-

cians, scientists, technocrats

and others concerned to come

forward to resolve the prob-

lem.

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