

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Handicrafts Extravaganza for the 'Ekushey'

by Fayza Haq

Last year when I went for the 'Ekushey' function near the TSC Building and the Bangla Academy, close to the Dhaka University Campus, I was too engrossed in the poetry recitations to inspect the variety and charm of the crafts stall that were put up on the occasion.

However, this time, I made it a point to have a close view at the clay handicrafts and the other knickknacks for sale for the February occasion. I found the clay stalls positively fascinating. They had the same items that are sold at a higher price near New Market and at Shishu Park area, and at other boutiques in the fashionable areas of the city.

Tri Govind Chandra Pal had exotic fish creations that were about two and a half feet tall. He sold them for Tk 100, and informed me that they took a week to make, before firing them and painting them. There were the Middle-Eastern types 'surahis'. They had been carved and painted with leaves and flowers, and cost Tk 80 each. There were elephants too in black and burnt stenna, touched up with gold, as most of the other clay items. They were definitely Indian in style and cost Tk 70 each.

There were exotic carts with horses, which would fill the heart of the low-income every-day buyer. The details were intricate and spoke of the culture of the Subcontinent and of Dhaka - in the olden days. Deer from the Sundarbans were there too, although only as replicas, and they cost Tk 25. There was undoubted artistry in the making of these. The same applied to the sturdy bullocks, once again, resplendent in gold, black and brown.

The owner, who has four brothers and two married sisters, said he had a saving of Tk 1000 a month only. 'In the Durga Puja alone I spend Tk 25,000. There is the Saraswati Puja today and I assure you nothing less than Tk 1,000 of my income will go there. With a puja every month how much can we save? In the marriage of our two sisters I spent one lakh taka altogether.'

The firing is done in the villages near Dhaka and then the products are brought in trucks for sale, he said. The final paint is done in the city. With his saving Tri Govind buys rice and mustard in bulks to be sold on a wholesale manner.

Another seller, Sunil Chandra Tri Pal, who has his sale at Savar, like all the other potters at the 'mela', had his creations too in bronze, scarlet and brown colours. He was painting his items when I met him - like some of the others, putting a last touch for the festive occasion. He had flower tubs with engravings piggybanks in brown, gold and red, and vases with gold coloured embossing.

Samarnath Pal, from Savar, again, used a lot of brown and gold in his pottery. He said that his colleagues sometimes sold at Shishu Park but that he himself was not inclined to do the same. His clay pencil cases in black, brown and red were for Tk 5.

In yet another stall Sukumar Chandra Gopal sold images of Venus in white for Tk 25 and strange but absorbing replicas of human skeletons were for Tk 29 to Tk 20. His replica of Rabindranath Tagore was for Tk 20, while his fruits and vegetables like bananas, mangoes, liches and pineapples, ranged from Tk 5 to Tk 10. Samarnath eats at hotels and saves about Tk 100 a month, he informed me.

Along with the pottery stalls were the leather stalls like the one owned by Zakir Islam, selling wallets, boxes, jewellery boxes, spectacle cases and ladies shopping bags with intricate embossing.

One would be well advised to pick up some of the pottery for the numerous occasions such as anniversaries and birthdays that the average middle-class person faces, and does not 'have the money to spare from the usual expensive handicraft shops. I admit the clay creations at the 'mela' might not have the finesse of what one can find in areas like Banani and Gulshan boutiques, yet if you bought the tubs and 'surahis' and put a money plant in them, or combined them with some other gift - which does not cost so much, such as pen with the pen holder - the recipient would not be too unhappy.

One can decorate the niches of one's own home with the clay creations, such as the vast and empty window sill or the staircase, or landing or even the empty corner of the bedroom.

Along with the valued books, and the inevitable poetry, recitations and singing, the stalls certainly made the 'mela' worth a visit.



The exuberant sale at the pottery shops for 'Ekushey'

## Khaleda lauds Andheri Hilfe's activities

Ms Rost Gollmann, the founder and Chairperson of Andheri Hilfe, a welfare organisation based in Germany, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence Sunday evening, reports BSS.

Ms Gollmann was accompanied by Dr Armin Lowe, a retired Professor of Special Education for Hearing Impaired Children, and Dr M N Amin, Professor of Ent Department of IPGMR, Dhaka.

They spent some time with the Prime Minister, apprising her of the activities of Andheri Hilfe in Bangladesh.

The organisation runs a 130-bed eye hospital in Chittagong and a 25-bed eye hospital each at Chandpur, Maulvibazar, Sirajganj, Dinajpur, Khulna, Mymensingh, Dhaka and Bhola.

The Prime Minister appreciated the services being rendered by the Andheri Hilfe.

## Biswas urges private sector to help promote tourism Plan for railroad upto Cox's Bazar approved

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Sunday said a master plan encompassing both public and private sectors has been formulated for developing tourism in the country, reports UNB.

Tourism could play a vital role in keeping global peace and spreading trade and industry, the President said while speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session of Tourism Week at Osmani auditorium.

Biswas called upon the private sector to extend their co-operation along side the government for bringing about improvement in the country's tourism sector.

The government has approved a plan for a railroad upto Cox's Bazar to facilitate

the tourists, he said adding that plans were underway to develop facilities in the Sundarbans, Cox's Bazar and some coastal islands.

Bangladesh, being a tropical country, has a vast scope to boost up tourism, he said and maintained that the varied aspects of our nature could easily invite foreign tourists.

Our bountiful nature, history, art, architecture and archeology, holy places, lakes, rivers, rites and rituals, food, flora and fauna are of no mean interest and attraction, he observed.

The President underscored the need for building up infrastructure facilities by developing air, road and riverine communication for the development of tourism.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan and Secretary of the Ministry Habibur Rahman Khan, Managing Director of Biman, Bangladesh Airlines Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury and

Chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation AMM Nasrullah Khan also spoke on the occasion.

The inaugural ceremony followed by a cultural function which was witnessed by Ministers, Secretaries, MPs, diplomats and distinguished guests.

## Two more DCC officials suspended

Dhaka City Corporation authority has suspended temporarily two officials for corruption, misappropriation of money and negligence to duty, reports BSS.

The suspended officials are Md Mainuddin, Assistant Engineer of the Engineering Department (Mechanical-2) and Ikramul Haq Khandker, Deputy Assistant Engineer (foreman) of the same department.

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## Call to utilise literary, cultural freedom

Planning Minister A M Zahir Uddin Khan Sunday underlined the importance of upholding our national culture, life and heritage through arts and paintings, reports BSS.

He was inaugurating the two-week long first solo painting exhibition of Masudul Hasan at Saju Art Gallery in the city.

The minister said the present democratic atmosphere had provided an environment for writers and artists to freely express their creative ability in

the field of art and literature. He urged all concerned to make full use of literary and cultural freedom to build a rich culture.

A total of 62 paintings have been put on display, portraying life and nature.

The exhibition will remain open between 10 am and 8 pm everyday. It will continue till March 8.

State Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aminul Huq was also present on the occasion.

## Petrol pumps on Dhaka-Aricha road given first aid boxes

All the petrol pumps on the Dhaka-Aricha highway have been provided with first aid boxes for immediate treatment of the victims of road accidents, reports BSS.

Ramna Rotary Club has supplied the first aid boxes in co-operation with Dhaka District Police.

Inspector-General of Police, M Enamul Huq, formally distributed the boxes at a function held at Amin Bazar of Dhaka Saturday. The chairman of various union parishes of Savar Upazila and local government officials attended the function.

IGP Enamul Huq urged the owners and drivers of the ve-

hicles and the passengers as well to maintain extra-cautionness while moving in the highway with a view to averting road accidents. Local MP Namatullah Sabu also spoke on the occasion.

Several Rotary Club leaders and senior police officials also spoke in the function.

## JSP demands Ershad's release

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sramik Party (JSP) on Sunday brought out a procession demanding the release of Ershad.

The procession ended at Jatiya Press Club and held a rally there. The speakers at the rally urged all to make the February 29 grand conference a success. The speakers were, Omar Faruq Khasru, City President of JSP, Abdur Haq City General Secretary, Jamaluddin Ahmed, and Azizul Haq Vice Presidents of the organisation.



## Obtains RCOG membership

Dr Naseem Rashid passed the Membership Examinations of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (MRCOG) London held in November 1991. She is also a fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Bangladesh. She obtained her MBBS degree from Dhaka Medical College, says a press release.

Dr Naseem is the daughter of late Md Abdur Rashid and Abeda Rashid and wife of Ezzat Hucker Aly.

## Srinivasan makes farewell call on President

The Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh, K Srinivasan, made a farewell call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban Sunday, reports BSS.

During discussion, Srinivasan expressed his gratitude to the government of Bangladesh for giving all out cooperation during his tenure of office and increased friendly relations between the two countries.

President Biswas hoped that relationship between the two countries would be strengthened in context of bilateral relations with SAARC spirit.

He conveyed his best wishes to the President of India, R Venkataraman and the Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao.

Secretary to the President Ataul Huq and Deputy High Commissioner of India Amitabha Tripathi were present.

## New English School observes Ekushey

Students of the New English School in the capital held a function Sunday in observance of the Ekushey, reports UNB.

## Tk 136 cr to be spent for repairing roads, highways

Taka 136 crore will be spent this year for repairing and reconstruction of the regional roads and highways while Taka 60 crore for construction of the roads linking district headquarters with upazila sadars, reports BSS.

This was stated by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed at a big public meeting at Motilal Degree College ground under Daulatpur of Manikganj district Sunday.

Presided over by Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the meeting was also addressed by

Haroon-or-Rashid MP, Khondokar Abu Taher MP, Anser Ali Siddiqui MP and Begum Farida Hassan MP.

The Communications Minister said, the government was attaching top most priority to communication sector for ensuring economic development of the country.

He said the present government was accountable to the people as it was entrusted with the responsibility of serving the nation. He urged all concerned to do their best for the national development.

## Monday

5.00	Opening announcement, Al Quran Programme summary
5.10	New in Bangla
5.20	Recitation from the Geeta
5.25	Cartoon film: The Great Space Coaster
6.00	Ovinandan
7.05	Debate
8.00	News in Bangla
8.30	Jaramat
9.00	Katha O Sur: Songs programme
10.00	News in English
10.30	Film: Rescue
11.30	Khabar/ The News
11.40	Tuesday's programme summary
11.45	Closing

In Celebration of Bangladesh

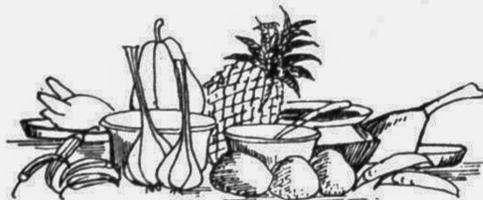
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## Weather

### Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or thundershower accompanied by gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions till 6 pm today (Monday), according to Met office.

Night temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

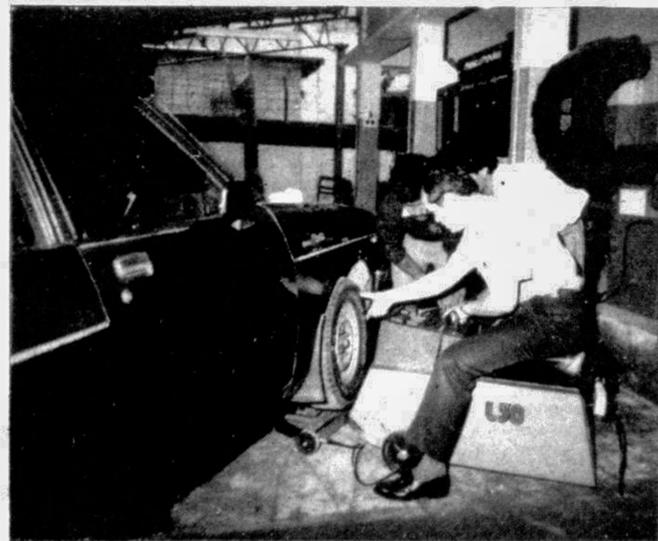
The maximum temperature, 27.6 degree celsius, was recorded at Rajshahi while the country's minimum, 14.2 degree celsius was reported from Srimangal Sunday.

The sun sets today Monday at 5:59 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6:25 am.

Temperature and the percentage of humidity recorded at some major cities/towns Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	25.7	18.4	92	68
Rajshahi	27.6	17.0	94	72
Khulna	26.5	18.6	98	71
Chittagong	25.7	17.3	86	68
Jessore	26.4	17.5	-	-
Sylhet	23.7	15.5	90	81
Bogra	26.0	17.7	94	84
Cox's Bazar	26.3	17.0	74	80

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