

Dhaka Day by Day

All those Deceptive Gems

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Her birthday is around the corner. This time you want to give her something special. And while walking with one of your girlfriends along the New Market sidewalk, you happen to notice a man sitting with all sorts of colourful stones in his large portable glass shop.

Just out of mere curiosity you peep in and ask the price of a particular red bead-necklace. "It's 7,000 Taka Sir," said the shop owner. Is not the price forbiddingly high?

Looks are deceptive. A small, shabby shop, exactly like the street vendors who offer 'ban-

gles and laces, is in fact offering you precious stones and gems.

Azizullah Zohuri, the shopowner is in this business for years together. He has all kinds of artificial, synthetic as well as original gems in his shop.

This little shop of his offers many colourful strings of necklaces: white, blue, red, green, as well as rings, stones of all sizes set in silver with matching bracelets. Besides, he also sells stones like amethyst, onyx, cultured diamonds, moonstones, jades, along with similar other stones.

Buying stones from such wayside shops is risky. Then again their sources can be very rewarding. Since you are no expert, possibilities are that you will be deceived by the synthetic ones.

Here in Bangladesh there is really no right place where you can examine or test your gems. The one and an old way to actually test the quality of gems is to go to some known jewellers or 'Zohuris'. They, with experience, knowledge and of course their expert eyes for such delicate expensive rocks, can easily identify the real ones.

Fortunately, only recently a 'gem-testing centre' in Dhanmondi has opened. It officially came into operation from February '92 but has been working since November '91. A gem-testing centre is actually a sister organization of Babylon Garments.

"Arif Muhiuddin Sikdar, a lecturer at the Petroleum Institute and a geologist is our only professional tester," said Murad an employee of the same organization.

"We use modern and scientific instruments, like polar-scope, microscope, UV lamp and of course we have the magnifying glass. For each stone, no matter how precious they are, or how many carats they weigh, we charge 200 taka and within minutes you will know the quality of your gem," he said.

"There are three kinds of stones, you can easily differentiate. Original gems usually have in them some sort of gemmological inclusions, which bear actually a few original scratch marks while formation. These inclusions are absent in synthetic gems. Their lustre, density, specific gravity, hardness, colours, weight may all be the same, except for these marks. And the imitation ones, just made of glass, may be with the exact colour," Murad informed.

All gems are stones but all stones are not gems. Gems are actually the precious ones, white stones are semi-precious. In Bangladesh pearls are the only gems available and others are brought in from Burma, Sri Lanka, India and other countries.

"So far in our laboratory we have tested 40 per cent gem and quality stones. Customers mostly come with stones of astrological value, like emeralds, rubies, sapphires. Their prices vary from 2,000 taka to 10 lakh taka, depending on originality."

When asked about these road-side stone shops at Gulistan, Baitul Mukarram and New Market Murad said "Abul Mannan, a Zohuri at Gulistan is the oldest vendor. Their sources are reliable and if you're are lucky, you might come across some precious ones."

So next time if you happen to like some silver bracelets with turquoise in such shops, you might give a second thought!



Razzaque urges SAARC states to show gesture of goodwill

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzaque Ali yesterday urged the SAARC countries, including the government of India and its Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, to show gesture of goodwill to its friends and neighbours in solving the problems of the region, according to a message received in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Participating in the general debate on "Political, Economic and Social Situations in the World" at the on-going 89th Inter-Parliamentary Union conference here, he said the outcome of the recently-concluded SAARC Summit in Dhaka, though fruitful and encouraging, left many of the burning problems unsolved. He, however, thanked Rao for his commitment to solve the Ganges water problem that Bangladesh has been facing for

decades. He said there are similar other problems of our region which have to be solved through dialogue among SAARC countries on the basis of mutual respect.

Shaikh Razzaque, who is leading a five-member Bangladesh delegation to the conference, said another discouraging feature is the trend of increasing trade barriers among various regional trading blocs like EEC and ASEAN.

The Speaker also referred to the programme of poverty alleviation and in this connection quoted Sri Lankan President Premadasa's remark at the Dhaka SAARC Summit that "an empty stomach is more dangerous than an atom bomb".

Turning to international issues, Shaikh Razzaque ap-

pealed to the United Nations to avoid double standard in dealing with the cases of Myanmar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Angola etc.

He asked the UN why the Serbs should not be compelled to stop genocide of the Bosnian Muslims, or alternatively why Bosnian Muslims shall not be allowed to exercise their fundamental right of self-defence.

Earlier on April 13 the Speaker addressed the plenary of the conference and attended lunch and dinner receptions hosted, among others, by the Vice President KR Narayanan, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, Speaker of Lok Sabha Shivraj Patil, Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Parliamentary Affairs Minister VC Shukla.



A cultural group from Chapsinawabganj presenting 'Gambhira' to celebrate Bengali new year at the Bangla Academy premises yesterday. — Star photo

DU: Accommodation crisis-II Number of students double the capacity

By Masud Arif

The resident students of the Dhaka University are finding it difficult to continue their studies smoothly and to lead a normal life in the overcrowded hostels.

In some residential halls of the university, the number of students is double the normal seat capacity.

"It is possible to study peacefully in a three-seated or four-seated room where five to eight students are staying?" some resident students said while talking to this correspondent. It is really quite tough to study in such a noisy place, students and also some provosts and teachers said.

"But still under such circumstances students devote themselves to studies," some hall provosts observed.

Normally, the hall authorities allot seats to a particular number of students of the first year (honours) on the basis of merit.

Most of the students of an academic year get seats in the halls normally when they are promoted to the third year, sources said.

The hall authority sources said there are two provisions for getting seats (a) allotting seats according to merit and (b) allotting seats through doubling permission.

According to hall sources, many students in the halls cannot stay even in their allotted seats for political reasons. The situation has been quite normal for the last five months, sources said adding, "but not completely okay".

A Bengali term "Dakhhal Neya" (to capture) is often heard mainly in the residential halls for the male students. The word is used according to the residents, when a student goes to his allotted room after getting the official permission of allotment for the seat.

There is also another type of political cause that often creates accommodation crisis in the residential halls, hall sources said.

According to the sources, a lot of students are forced to leave their allotted seats and the halls to which they are officially attached, if they do not support the political ideology of the student organisation which has the stronghold in the respective halls.

Besides, the standard and condition of the hall canteen and dining have naturally decreased day by day for the abnormal increase of the students in the halls of the university, some residents mentioned.

"We often do not find a seat in the television room and sometimes even cannot enter the room," the resident students added.

Govt providing extra Tk 23cr annually for schools: Tariqul

Social Welfare and Women's Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday said the present government was providing additional amount of Taka 23 crore annually for the schools under taking free education programme for girl-students upto class eight, reports BSS.

He was speaking at a reception ceremony of successful students of SSC examination in 1992 at the Keraniganj Girls' High School premises.

The minister said, education is the key to all kinds of development and keeping it in mind compulsory primary education has been launched by the government.

Organised by Keraniganj Students Welfare Association, the function was addressed by Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Engineering University Dr M Shahjahan, Vice President of DUCSU Amanullah Aman MP, Acting Chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission M A Kayum and General Secretary of the association Md Shohrab Ali.

President of the association Md Azharul Islam Khokan presided over the function.

Later the minister gave away prizes to the meritorious students of Keraniganj who came out successful in the last SSC examination.

Library Assoc meet held New art gallery set up in city

A meeting of the representatives of the Library Association of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh College Library Association was held with Principal Md Yunus Khan, State Minister for Education, in his office, on Tuesday to discuss the problems of college libraries of the country, says a press release.

Among others, M Shamsul Islam Khan, General Secretary and Zakiuddin Ahmed, Councillor, Library Association of Bangladesh, and Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, Secretary, Bangladesh College Library Association were present. The leaders of the associations requested the State Minister to take immediate steps to advertise the 125 vacant posts of Librarians.

An art gallery titled 'Jojoni' has been formed in the city Tuesday at the Central Road of Dhanmondi. It revealed itself through the opening of a group painting exhibition by five young artists — Dhali Al Mamoon, Goutam Chakraborty, Rokeya Sultana, Ruhul Amin Kajo and Shishir Bhattacharya.

Poet Shamsur Rahman inaugurated the exhibition while Aminul Islam, Shafiq Rehman and Sadeq Khan spoke on the occasion.

The welcome message was given by Enamul Karim Nirhar, founder of the art gallery. The exhibition will remain open for the visitors everyday from 3 pm to 8 pm till April 18.

HERE and THERE

Ritwik Film Society
Ritwik Film Society has decided to organise a month-long film appreciation course from June 13, 1993.

Leading film personalities will conduct classes on film history, aesthetic screen play, direction, cinematography, editing, art direction, sound, music, short and documentary film, videography and film culture in Bangladesh. Major classic films from all around the world will be screened in the course.

Dhaka customs vigilance team

Dhaka customs, excise and VAT collectorate has increased the number of vigilance teams with a view to enhancing the

realisation of the volume of Value Added Taxes (VAT), according to a press release here yesterday.

The teams had already started functioning and they would perform special duty on hotel-restaurants, sweet-meat shops, cinema halls and brick fields in addition to patrolling the streets.

Bangladesh Islami Biplobi Parishad

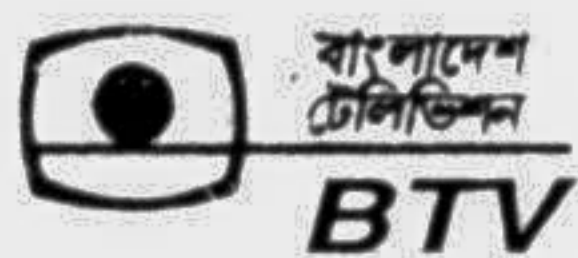
Chairman of Bangladesh Islami Biplobi Parishad Sheikh Mohammad Obaidullah Bin Sayed Jalalabadi in a statement Thursday demanded release of all arrested leaders of Babri Mosque Action Committee including Maolana Azizul Haq and Shafiq Alam Pradhan.

41-member body to observe Baishakhi Mela in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 15: A 41-member Abdul Jabbar Memorial Wrestling Tournament and Boishakhi Mela organising committee was formed here yesterday with a view to holding the traditional wrestling tournament and annual fair peacefully and smoothly at Lalidighi Maidan here on 12 Baishakh corresponding to April 25, reports BSS.

The committee was formed at a meeting of prominent citizens with Alhaj Abdul Khaleque Khan in the chair.

Alhaj Abdul Khaleque Khan and M Khurshid Anwar were made President and Secretary respectively of the Jabbar Memorial Wrestling Tournament and Boishakhi Mela Committee.



Saturday

5-00	Opening announcement
5-00	Al-Quran Programme summary
5-10	News in Bangla
5-25	Moner Katha
6-00	Cartoon: The Peter Pan and the Pirates
6-30	Taruneya
7-05	Banshari (Folk song)
8-00	News in Bangla
8-30	Mati-o-Manush
9-00	Amar Desh
10-00	News in English
10-35	Dallas
11-30	Khobar/The news
11-40	Tomorrow's programme summary
11-45	Closing

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast for the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday) says, rain or showers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Chittagong and Khulna divisions.

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The maximum temperature of the country recorded yesterday (Friday) of 36.0 degree Celsius was reported from Rajshahi and the minimum of 20.5 degree was reported from Bogra.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6.21 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5.35 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	32.4	20.6	85	74
Chittagong	30.4	23.6	82	82
Rajshahi	36.0	23.2	85	60
Khulna	34.7	23.0	82	54
Barisal	33.6	22.2	86	83
Cox's Bazar	31.0	24.0	72	71
Sylhet	30.2	22.4	91	83
Dinajpur	32.2	20.6	88	68

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