

# Dhaka Day by Day

## A Tradition in its Purest Form

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



If simplicity and quiet beauty characterizes the Bengali woman, this could not be more apparent than in her work, especially her hand work. Nakshikantha, an age-old tradition of Bengal, represents a folk art which would have faded out of our lives by now if it weren't for a few individuals who have brought it into contemporary fashion. Saris, wall hangings, linen - nakshikantha designs are the latest craze in Dhaka. The Nakshikantha Exhibition by Nasreen Akhter at the WVA auditorium in Dhanmondi is a gala of this folk art represented in its purest form on brilliant Rajshahi silks.

The saris, each of them a work of art, have names that say something about the design and theme of the piece. 'Sharmalota' for example, has a spectacular golden yellow orange and green floral design on a glossy off-white silk background. The work is extremely intricate and beautiful. 'Shapla Lanka' is another eye-catching piece with a background of an orange and grey combination silk, the 'anchal' has a delicate peach flowery design that brings an unusual elegance to the sari. Similarly 'bonophool' is based on a sea green and deep turquoise blue combination with majenta, light blue and off-white floral designs.

Most of the pieces depict motifs of rural Bangladesh that dominate the village woman's imagination - birds, flowers, leaves, butterflies etc. 'Modhuban' has a forest-like theme with thick leafy designs all over the sari while 'paan pata' displays complex betel leaf turquoise and pink design on light blue silk.

Other pieces include a breathtaking off-white silk with geometric patterns in orange, red and maroon threads. The design, says Akhter, is a copy of an original nakshikantha displayed in the Dhaka museum. Complicated and symmetrical, the sari has seven different stitches. This includes 'chatai' stitch resembling 'patti' stitch, 'anarash' (pineapple), Shamuk taga (like a snail) and mochara stitch.

One thing that is immediately noticeable about the saris of this two-day exhibition is that they display a sophistication and rare beauty that is not present in the saris sold in the market.

The secret lies in the stitches which display a special kind of skill. Akhter explains that most people think 'Kantha' and 'Nakshikantha' mean the same thing. While 'Kantha' stitch is an ordinary running stitch, the 'nakshikantha' is much more complicated and requires greater skill. Akhter points out that nowadays 'nakshikantha' has been over-commercialized and mixed with foreign stitches like cross stitch. 'The main intention of this exhibition' says Akhter, 'is to show people what authentic 'nakshikantha' is'.

Usually, the women who do 'nakshikantha', she adds, do not want to do simple 'Kantha' because they cannot use their talents. Although the designs are given by artists and the colour combination and lay out by Akhter herself, the beauty of the sari ultimately lies with the women whose skills have been inherited from their mothers and grandmothers. Sewing these complicated stitches has become almost instinctive for these women whose sense of symmetry is remarkable. Recognizing their talent, Akhter pays her workers more than most employers. For each 'nakshikantha' sari, the worker gets 1400 taka while a 'Kantha' sari earns from 600-700 taka. The selling price of each sari ranges from 2500 to 4500 taka.

Many individuals who have made 'nakshikantha' saris a profitable business, says Akhter, do not give these women what they deserve in order to keep prices low and profits high.

Akhter, who has been interested in folk art and craft since she was a teenager, says that Bengali people are very talented but most of the time this is not recognized.

The exhibition which displays a rare collection of folk art in its most brilliant and authentic form, certainly gives this recognition.



Women entrepreneurs talking to the Director of the MIDAS, Rokia A Rahman (C) at a discussion organised by the MIDAS in the city yesterday.

### MIDAS credit programme for women

**By Staff Correspondent**  
The Micro Industries Development Assistance and Services (MIDAS) has launched a credit programme especially aiming at engaging women into business offering supportive services by way of free counseling, training and credit in relaxation of collateral.

This was disclosed to the press yesterday at a discussion meeting with the women entrepreneurs under MIDAS funded projects held at the organization's office in the city.

The credit under the programme "Micro Enterprise Development Initiative (MIDI)" would be given to anybody interested in small scale business, Director of the MIDAS Board Rokia A Rahman told the press.

The meeting presided over by Rokia was also attended by Deputy Managing Director of the MIDAS Abdul Karim, and women entrepreneurs including Shahida Akhter, Zafreen Ahsan, Shahida Azad, Sarat Mala Chakma, Marium Chowdhury, Sufia Fakir.

The interest rate of the loan between Tk 50,000 and five lakh would be 14 per cent per annum, the director said.

### Biswas assures help for Islamia College

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday said that all out efforts were being made by the present democratic government to improve the quality and system of education in the country, reports UNB.

He was speaking to a 12-member delegation of teachers of the Barisal Islamia College when they called on him at Bangabhaban. The delegation was led by Principal SM Fazlul Haq.

He also urged them to help maintain academic atmosphere in the college by curbing all sorts of indiscipline among students. He assured his support for development of the Islamia college.

The President said government has made highest allocation to education sector in the current fiscal year for all round development and speedy eradication of illiteracy from the country.

He said that a social movement had been launched for increasing literacy rate in the country.

Apart from introduction of compulsory primary education and mass literacy programmes,

a "Food for Education" programme had also been launched for largest enrollment of rural children and prevention of possible dropouts.

Biswas advised the teachers to lend total support to the massive education programme of the government and the non-government organisations.

Among others, Mohammad Shamsul Alam, Mohammad Golam Kibria, Shahana Begum, Mohammad Shahajahan, Mohammad Shamsul Islam and Mohammad Mizanur Rahman Shahid, teachers of the Islamia College were present.

### Seminar on role of political instt Saturday

A day-long seminar on "Role of Political Institutions in Strengthening the Democratic Process" will be held at the Women's Voluntary Association Hall in the city tomorrow, reports UNB.

Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali will attend the seminar as chief guest.

About 100 resource persons, including political leaders Dr Kamal Hossain of the Gono Forum, Ziaur Rahman Khan of the BNP, Abul Hassan Chowdhury of the Awami League, Sardar Amjad Hossain of the Jatiya Party, Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganotantra Party, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of the NDP and Sheikh Ansar Ali, the Jamaat-e-Islami are expected to attend the seminar.

Prof Lutful Haq Chowdhury, Public Administration Department of the Dhaka University, will present the key-note paper in the seminar organised by the Study and Research Group for Democracy and Socio-economic Development (SRG).



**Morning session**  
8:00 Opening announcement  
Al-Quran  
Programme summary  
8:10 News in Bangla  
8:15 Alor Disharti  
8:40 Natun Kuri  
10:00 News in English  
10:30 Moner Mukurey: Anagato  
11:45 Film: Tarzan  
12:10 Film: Border Town  
12:30 Closing

**Afternoon session**  
3:00 Opening announcement  
Al-Quran  
Programme summary  
3:10 Recitation from the Tripitak  
3:15 Cartoon: Teenage  
Mutant Ninja Turtles  
Bengali film: Dayee Ke  
5:10 News in Bangla  
6:35 Open University  
7:05 Malancha  
8:00 News in Bangla  
8:30 Comedy series: Perfect Strangers  
9:05 Magazine: Upahar  
10:00 News in English  
10:30 Drama Serial: L.A. Law  
11:30 Khabar/The News  
11:45 Closing

### Compensation suit against airlines

**By Staff Correspondent**  
A British Airways passenger has filed a compensation suit against the carrier allegedly for not allowing him to board the airline's flight BA-144 at the Zia International Airport on December 1.

Irfan Syed, a Bangladeshi businessman who holds a US green card, was to go to Washington DC from Dhaka.

But the British Airways officials at the airport refused to let him board the aircraft on the allegation that Syed's green card was not genuine, the plaintiff charged in his petition.

Following this, a consular of the US Embassy was called at the airport who certified the genuineness of the green card, but by then the flight had left the airport.

Aggrieved by the incident, Irfan, associated with garments business, filed the compensation suit for causing him financial loss and humiliation.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, a former attorney general, Barrister Rafique-ul-Huq and Barrister K Z Alam and others are representing the plaintiff in the case.

### Appointment hailed

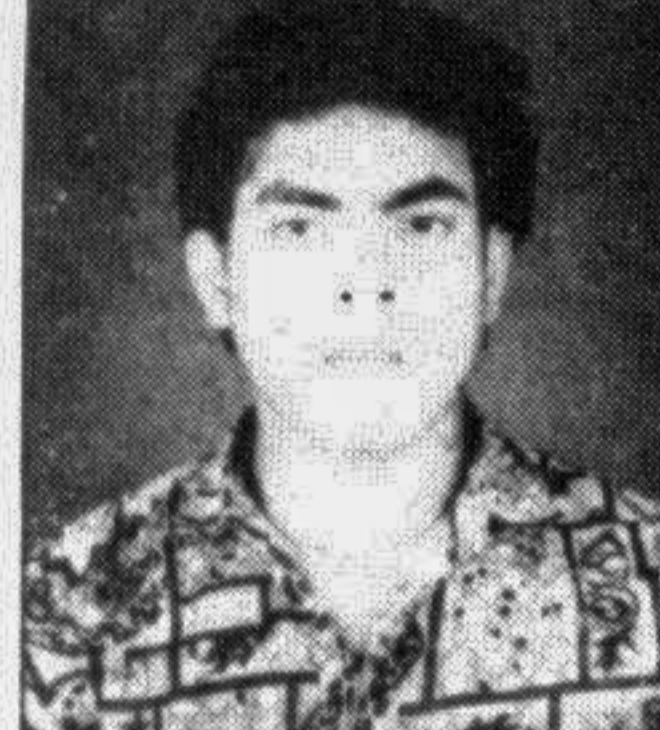
**By Staff Correspondent**  
The BCS (trade) Association yesterday hailed the appointment of Shamsul Islam to the Ministry of Commerce saying that under his leadership country's trade would be boosted up.

In a statement, association President Mojibur Rahman and General Secretary M A Sabur hoped that the minister would give a new thrust to the commerce sector.

### Appeal to save life

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Mohammad Kamal Hossain, 17, a cleaner at the Civil Aviation Dept at Zia International Airport has been suffering from a congenital heart problem and requires an open heart surgery for his survival.

The authorities of the Shurwady Hospital for Cardio-Vascular Diseases has consented to conduct the surgery free of cost, provided the patient, could manage the cost of a few surgical instruments and other things required to conduct the operation.



The amount of money now Kamal needs for the surgery has been estimated, by the doctors concerned, at about Tk 70 thousand which is beyond his personal means.

The family members of distressed Kamal, therefore appealed to the philanthropists and benevolent citizens to come forward with financial assistance.

His bank account No is: SB: 11950/51, Dhaka Old Airport Branch, the Sonali Bank.



The '93 batch of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) brought out a colourful procession on completion of their course in the city yesterday.

### Union parishad chairman's body recovered

Police recovered the body of an union parishad chairman from the river of Bongshi in Savar Wednesday evening, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Jubair Ahmed, 30, acting chairman of Kushura Union Parishad under Dhamrai thana and a leader of the Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Jubair has been missing since last week. He went to Dhaka and didn't return home, police and family sources said.

The body was found floating in the river with hands and legs tied and cut marks on the face. Jubair, who was also a BA student of the Kushura Nabajug Degree College and college unit JCD President was killed due to old enmity, police suspected.

## Tender Notice

বিদ্যুৎ বিল নিয়মিত পরিশোধ করুন

Local sealed tenders are hereby invited by the Bangladesh Power Development Board for procurement of equipment/materials for the following:  
The source of financing will be ADP, 1993-94.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description of materials	Cost of tender documents	Submission of tender date and time	Opening of tender date and time
1.	Pur-222/93	ACSR "WOLF" and ACSR "RABBIT"	Tk. 1,000/=	29-09-93 at 11:00 AM	29-09-93 at 11:30 AM
2.	Pur-224/93	11KV drop out Fuse cutout 11 KV Lightning Arrester	Tk. 1,000/=	30-09-93 at 11:00 AM	30-09-93 at 11:30 AM
3.	Pur-225/93	Down Guy Assembly	Tk. 500/=	3-10-93 at 1:00 AM	3-10-93 at 11:30 AM

A complete set of Tender document will be purchased by interested bidder not before 12/9/93 on submission of written application and upon payment of Non-refundable fee for Taka mentioned above against each Tender in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order favouring Director of Purchase, PDB, Dhaka.

2% Bid Bond of the offered price shall be submitted along with tender. Tender will be received up to 11:00 AM and will be opened at 11:30 AM in presence of the intending bidders or their representatives, if any. No Tender shall be sent by post or sold on the opening date and No. Telex/Fax offer will be acceptable.

Biddut/Jan-820 (7)93-94  
Director, Purchase PDB, Dhaka

## Weather

### Light rain likely

**By Staff Correspondent**  
The sky will remain partly cloudy over the country during the next 12 hours commencing 6 am today (Friday). Met office forecasts.

Temporary light rain or thundershowers may occur at a few places over Barisal division and at one or two places over Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions during this period.

The weather is likely to remain dry over the Khulna division. Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degrees Celsius over the country.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 33.1 degrees Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi while the lowest 22.6 degrees was recorded both in Rangamati and Chittagong.

The sun sets today at 6.00 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.46 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and the maximum and minimum relative humidity records in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday are:

Cities/towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	32.2	25.2	87	78
Chittagong	32.0	22.6	81	82
Rajshahi	33.1	25.2	84	93
Khulna	31.7	25.3	77	77
Barisal	30.2	24.5	85	85
Cox's Bazar	31.4	24.6	73	83
Sylhet	31.2	24.4	87	81
Dinajpur	32.5			88

**JCD submits memo to Eumus**  
The Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday submitted a 9-point memorandum to State Minister for Education Principal Mohammed Eumus Khan at his secretariat chamber, reports BSS.  
Central leaders of the JCD handed over the memorandum as part of its programme on the occasion of historic Education Day.

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Duration of the Course: 18 weeks, 5 days a week, 5 to 7 pm each day.

Admission: From September 12, 1993. (only 30 students will be enrolled in each class)

Entry Requirements: (i) Graduate in any discipline, or (ii) Industry's sponsorship. Admission will be on the basis of interview/test.

Fees: Registration Tk 500/-, tuition Tk 15,000/-.

For enrolment/enquiry, contact between 3-6 pm:

Extension & Continuing Education Centre  
**Independent University, Bangladesh**  
119F, Road No. 1, Banani, Dhaka-1213.  
Phone: 602086, 604129. Fax: 883959

**FEMALE MANAGEMENT CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

**ACTIONAID Bangladesh**

ACTIONAID Bangladesh, an international NGO, is looking for a female candidate to fill the following position:  
**Project Director, Tikkapara Urban Programme**  
The position is based in our Dhaka Mohammadpur office, and will require periodic travel to other districts.

**Requirements:**

- ★ A Masters Degree in a relevant field of work
- ★ At least five years managerial experience
- ★ Direct experience in financial accountability
- ★ Experience in urban poverty programmes or other areas of development work will be an advantage
- ★ Ability to design, supervise and report on activities
- ★ Ability to develop and supervise monitoring and evaluation systems
- ★ Excellent motivational skills and the desire & ability to work with all levels of staff and beneficiaries, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable
- ★ Proven English speaking and writing skills
- ★ Salary: Tk. 16, 831 plus allowances

We are looking for a senior female manager, with or without development experience, to lead our urban slum programme into new directions of involvement, including advocacy, legal rights and coordination with other agencies, in addition to our continued specialisation in the savings and credit field. This will require a strong commitment to the urban slum dwellers, and the empowerment of poor women.

Interested candidates are requested to write a paper between 650 and 750 words (to be strictly enforced), in their own handwriting, giving their views on the following subject:  
**THE NEEDS AND BENEFITS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN BANGLADESH**  
Candidates are then requested to send the paper, and a copy of their CV, with photograph to:  
**ACTIONAID Bangladesh, Country Director, G.P.O. Box number 4031, Dhaka, by 30 September 1993 at the latest.**  
No applications will be accepted at the ACTIONAID Office. All applications must be mailed to the GPO box listed above. This is a re-advertisement. Previous candidates need not re-apply.

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**TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:**  
★ Film Fair Video (Sobhanbag & Dhanmandi)  
★ Candy Floss, Gulshan  
★ Rose Valley, Banani  
★ Swiss Bakery, New Baily Rd.  
★ Pizza Palace, Sonargaon Rd.  
★ Sonargaon Hotel

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**JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY: SONARGAON HOTEL AND MEDICINE CLUB S.S.M.C**

**Venue: SONARGAON HOTEL**  
**Date: 24th & 25th Sept. 1993**  
**Time: 7 P.M.**  
**Ticket: 1000.00 Per Person.**

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