

Dhaka Day by Day

'Paan Banaraswala'

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Looks are deceptive. Just a tray of spicy flavoured paans (betel leaf) on a stool, can hardly be described as a shop or a successful trade for that matter.

Yet Manik's makeshift look-alike paan shop at Dhaka Stadium, has earned a name of its own.

Manik has been in this trade for the last 23 years. Arab Ali, a Bihari vendor who owned the business before the liberation war was Manik's 'guru' (Master) as he describes.

'I was an apprentice of Arab Ali and the name of his shop was then Gazi Paan House. After he left the country I took over the business and with it the famous legend of stadium's misti paan (spicy betel leaf)', says Manik.

In fact, misti paans are so favourite that there are songs written about it. The famous Hindi song: 'Khaye ke paan Banaras walla, khol jaye bandh akil ki tala,' which when translated means that if you taste a small paan from Banaras, India, the rusted lock in your brains will open up.

Now this might sound as an exaggeration but believe it or not misti paans have strange effects on people. Manik bets that his paan is not at all inferior to its counterpart from Banaras.

'During the hot humid days of summer, my one piece of assorted misti paan cooled on ice, is bound to open any locks, even to the hearts,' boasts Manik laughing.

Manik uses a lot as spice, flavours and scents in his paan. Supari (betel nut), scent, which he makes himself with sugar, sauce, a kind of flavour, elachi (cinnamon), coconut colouring and their tabak a silver foil to finally wrap the paan for a pretty look.

These are only few items he uses in his everyday pieces. 'Price depends on the amount of masalas I use. One piece might cost you Tk 10, if I use 20 kinds of masala,' he explains. But usually he sells one piece for Tk 1 and has a profit of 20 paisa on each.

The paans he use are of a special kind, not the usual ones available in the bazaars. He uses sanchi, a natural flavoured leaf. These leaves are exported to Pakistan and a bira (80 pieces) costs Tk 10 to Tk 20. These paans are specially grown in Khustia.

'This is the season when any paans are very much in demands, because this is the time for, marriages, picnics, meena bazaars, engagements and so many other occasions,' he says. 'Every day I have at least three to four orders to meet,' he continues. A maximum of 3000 pieces to minimum number of 50 pieces are almost ordered every day now.

For 19 years Manik was a tea maker in the famous hotel Provincial of Dhaka Stadium, and along with his job he sold paans too. With time and experience his paans were more in demand and ultimately he had to give up his four years ago for this trade. 'By the grace of the Almighty I am now more stable financially, than I was before,' he feels.

Manik has two sons only. His eldest is an SSC candidate this year. His family lives in Pabna. He says that his son would not take up his profession; rather he wants to be.

He had no opponents all these times but lately two of his previous apprentices have set up shops of their own, and has permanent orders of Suhag and Officer's Club. But no one could master the trade properly, he feels.

Betel nut or leaf chewing has a long history and is favourite with many. Infact betel also called areca nut, is a fruit used in combination for chewing or masticatory purposes throughout wide areas of Southern Asia and the East Indies. Betel chewing is a habit of an estimated one-tenth of the world's population. The betel nut is the seed of the areca or betel palm.

The areca palm, cultivated in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines, has a slender, unbranched trunk reaching about 12 or 15m high and about 45 cm in circumference and is topped by a crown of six to nine very large, spreading, pinnate fronds. For chewing, a small piece of the areca's palm's fruit is wrapped in a leaf of the betel pepper, along with a pellet of shell lime or chunam to cause salivation and release the stimulating alkaloids. Chewing results in a copious flow of brick-red saliva, which may temporarily dye the mouth, lips and gums orange brown.

It is a habit mostly of the old people, but spicy and flavoured leaves or nuts are sometimes preferred by younger people too. Manik proudly sitting on the stool says 'If you happen to be in stadium, look for Manik's shop and every one will point it to you. If you taste my paan once, I am sure you'll come again.'

Manik is a Bihari vendor who owned the business before the liberation war was Manik's 'guru' (Master) as he describes. 'I was an apprentice of Arab Ali and the name of his shop was then Gazi Paan House. After he left the country I took over the business and with it the famous legend of stadium's misti paan (spicy betel leaf)', says Manik.

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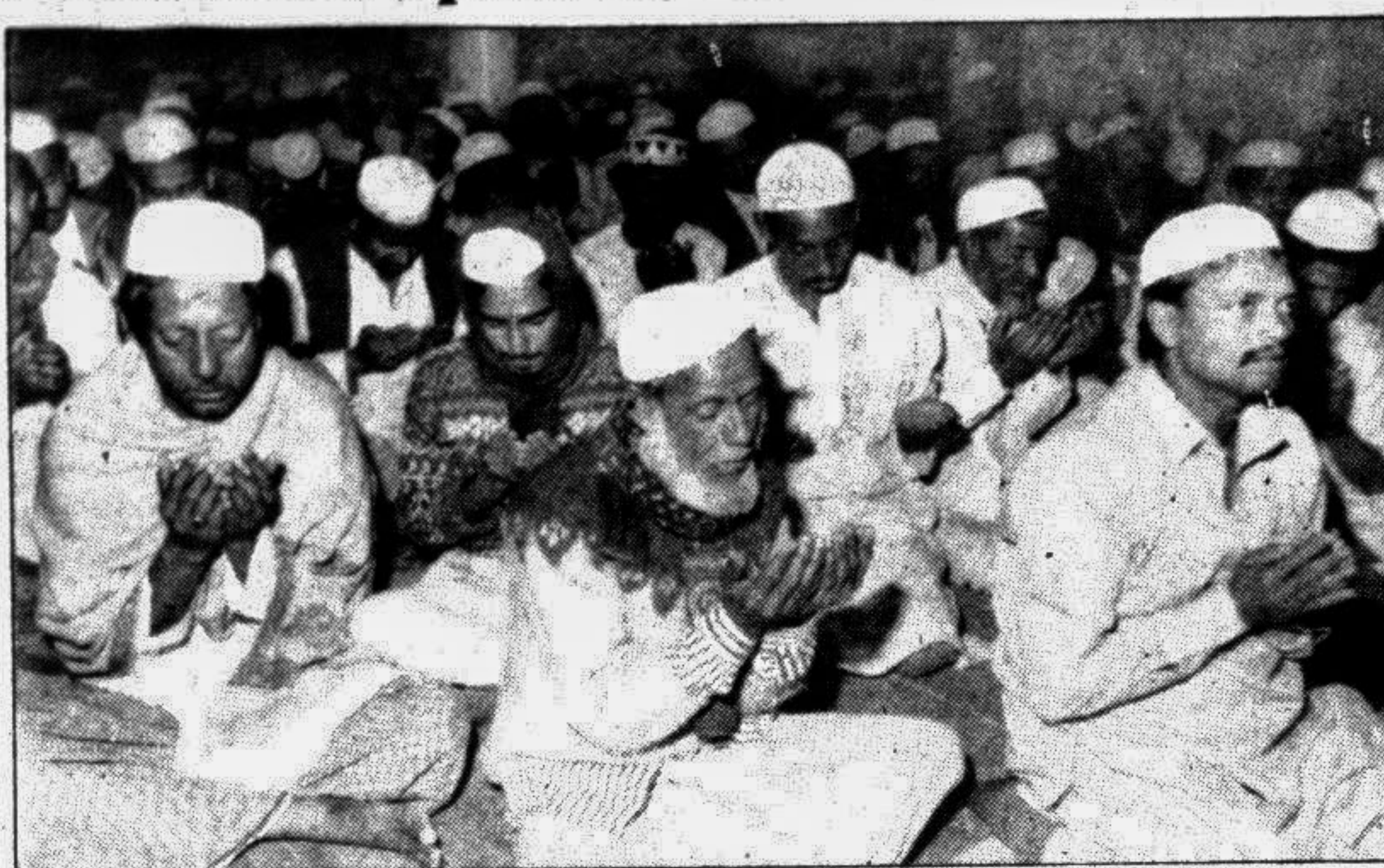
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The holy Shab-e-Barat, night of fortune, was observed Thursday night. Musallis, in the picture, offering munajat after night-long prayers at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque. — Star photo

Akbar tells seminar

Large scale extinction of wild animal species threatens ecological balance

Environment and Forest Minister Akbar Hossain Thursday said that large scale extinction of wild animal species is threatening ecological balance, reports UNB.

'Human beings are taking away a lot many species including tiger, fish as well as baldy vultures causing massive environmental degradation,' he told the ninth national conference of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh, here in the morning.

Addressing a seminar on 'Bio-diversity for Sustainable Environment' at the Department of Zoology, Dhaka University on the second day of the three-day conference, Akbar urged the zoologists to actively participate in the government programmes for protecting bio-diversity through research and creating public awareness.

Presided over by Prof Syed Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Dhaka University the seminar was also addressed by Prof M Shamsul Huq, Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Prof M Shafi and Syed Mohammad Humayun Kabir of DU and Dr Torstein Solhoy of the University of Bergen, Norway.

Referring to large scale depletion of fish species, the Environment Minister said there are hundreds of fish species but a few are now surviving in Bangladesh due to indiscriminate use of pesticides.

Fishes are scarce in the big Chalan Beel due to erection of dams, he said adding that organised farming of fish is needed as national development opportunity is less.

Fish farming could also help reduce the unemployment problem. He observed that at least two crore people could earn their bread from fishing.

Stressing the importance of afforestation, Akbar Hossain said planting and felling of trees should go side by side to keep the balance of nature. 'We should keep core forestry reserved and prevent felling of trees there to maintain ecological balance.'

The minister also called for preserving game forest and game sanctuary for the overall development of the forestry and for balancing the nature.

Akbar urged the experts and scientists to identify different extincted species vitals for the balance of nature, take steps to preserve the animal

species already extincted and also to determine their effect on future bio-diversity.

He called on the wildlife experts and zoologists to save the Royal Bengal Tigers from extinction, saying that there were reportedly 250 tigers in the Sundarbans and 'now nobody knows how many of them are alive.' Crocodiles are also on the verge of extinction, he added.

Later, the minister presented silver jubilee award of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh to Tareq Ejaj and Salma Sayeed.



Solo painting show of Devdas begins

By Staff Correspondent
A week-long solo exhibition of Devdas Chakraborty, one of the senior most painters of the country began at the La Galerie yesterday.

Renowned painter Murtaza Baseer inaugurated the exhibition. Twenty-eight paintings, all done on canvas, and the recent works of one time teacher are on display at La Galerie. The exhibition will remain open for visitors from 10 am to 8 pm everyday till February 4.

Murtaza Baseer talking to the Daily Star after the inauguration said, 'In this era of mutual disrespect for each other, especially of the same profession, Devdas set a rare example by inviting his contemporary artist (me) to open the exhibition.'

Baseer said: 'It reflects the broadness of heart of the artist and his respect for his contemporary and his competitors in the procession.'

The first solo exhibition of Devdas was held in 1962 at the Bangla Academy. Chakraborty did his last solo exhibition in 1979 in Warsaw, Poland.

Devdas Chakraborty is the recipient of Ekushey Padak.

Annulment of Dramatic Performances Control Act suggested

The parliamentary standing committee on Cultural Affairs Ministry at its 23rd meeting Thursday suggested to annul the 'Dramatic Performances Control Act-1876', reports BSS.

However, the committee suggested for a substitute act for controlling any sort of cultural activities contrary to national culture, religious sentiment of any citizen as well as against any national interest.

Held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the meeting was chaired by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan-ara-Begum.

The meeting was informed that the government had formulated a draft policy regarding the allowances for

distressed artists, literatures, journalists and cultural activities. In this context, the state minister advised the concerned authorities to be more careful so that actual needy persons can get the allowances.

It was also informed that the second phase excavation work of historic 'Mahasthangarh' had started recently.

Members of the committee Amanullah Chowdhury, Fatema Chowdhury Paru and Sahin Ara Huq of BNP, Paritosh Chakraborty and Abu Lais Mohammad Mubin Chowdhury of Jatiya Party, Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury of Awami League and Rashida Khatun of Jamaat-e-Islami attended the meeting.

Cultural Secretary Islam Uddin Malik was also present.

Asiatic Society monthly meet Feb 3

The first monthly general meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh for 1994 will be held on February 3 at 4:30 pm at the seminar room of society, reports BSS.

The meeting will be presided over by noted historian Prof Sirajul Islam, president of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

Internationally reputed Indian archaeologist Prof V N Misra will deliver a lecture on 'The Indus civilisation: the current status of research' at the meeting.



Saturday
4:30 Opening announcement
Al-Guram
Programme summary
Cartoon: Peter Pen
News in Bangla
Shargol
Tarunnya
Angikar
Banashari
News in Bangla
Maati O Manush
Geeti Shatodal
News in English
Drama series: Dallas
Khabar/The News
Tomorrow's programme summary
Closing

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent
Mainly dry weather with partly cloudy sky is likely over Bangladesh. Met Office forecasts night temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

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

Cities/ Towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	27.01	14.04	86	72
Chittagong	27.0	14.04	85	66
Rajshahi	26.06	12.0	93	70
Khulna	28.5	12.0	88	63
Barisal	27.8	12.6	89	71
Cox's Bazar	26.0	13.8	76	66
Sylhet	27.0	13.8	79	70
Dinajpur	26.3	12.3	93	79

Indonesian envoy presents credentials

The Ambassador designate of Indonesia to Bangladesh, Had A Wayarab Alhadar, presented his credentials to President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban Thursday, reports BSS.

Accepting the credentials, President Biswas said that the relations between Bangladesh and Indonesia had been developing significantly since the establishment of diplomatic ties.

He said, our country greatly values the cordial and close cooperation with the countries in South-East Asia and is keen to achieve economic development within the framework of a liberal market economy under a stable democratic political environment.

He said that Bangladesh had given due importance on improving the living conditions of its people by turning them into an effective workforce and with this end in view, the government would pursue meaningful cooperation between the two countries.

AMDISA conference begins Feb 4

The four-day third academic conference of the Association of Management Development Institution in South Asia (AMDISA) begins here on February 4, reports BSS.

Over one hundred delegates from SAARC countries, South East Asia, South Asia and Canada are expected to participate in the conference.

The association in cooperation with Institute of Business Administration (IBA) is hosting the conference with partial financial support from Canadian Consortium of Management Schools (CCMS) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

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NOTICE

The annual general meeting of the Netherlands Alumni Association of Bangladesh will be held on January 31, 1994 at 3 pm in the premises of Community Development Library, House No 39, Road No 14A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka (near Abahani Club, Dhanmondi.) All members are requested to attend.

SECRETARY GENERAL



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board
Office of the Director Procurement
Telephone Exchange Building
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207.

Sub: International tender notice for Supply, Installation Supervision of Rural Multichannel Radio Links network equipment in Bangladesh under France-Bangladesh financial protocol 1993.

International Tender Notice

No DP/F-12/IR/93-94/44 Dated, Dhaka the 17-01-1994

Sealed (by gala) tenders are hereby invited from international bonafide Manufacturers/ Suppliers of France for Supply and Installation Supervision of Rural Multichannel Radio Links network equipments in Bangladesh under France-Bangladesh financial protocol 1993. Tender schedule may be purchased on submission of written application on Tenderers/ Representatives' official pad to the undersigned on cash payment of Taka 10,000/= (Ten thousand) only (Non-refundable) between 9-00 AM to 2-00 PM on all working days. No tender schedules will be sold on the opening day of tender.

Tender will be received on 08-03-94 up to 12-00 hours BST and will be opened at 12-05 hours BST on the same day in the above office in presence of the tenderers or their representatives if any. No tender schedule/document will be sold by post. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids/tenders partly or wholly without assigning any reason thereof.

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Dy Director (Foreign Procurement)

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Supply and Inspection

Disposal Notice

The Director, Dept. of Supply and Inspection, 48, Motijheel C/A, 4th floor, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka invites the following tender for disposal of unserviceable vehicle/stores on "As is where is basis."

Sl No.	Tender No.	Description of vehicles/stores	Value of tender (Non-refundable)	Time date of submission
1.	S-Dis/Dip-15/92/93 (USA)	5(Five) old/unserviceable vehicles of USA Embassy in Dhaka.	Tk 60/-	At 11AM on 6-2-94
2.	S-Dis/Dip-13/92-93 (USA)	Toyota Hilux Pickup, Model-1986, Regn No AWO-61-38	Tk 60/-	At 11 AM on 6-2-94
3.	S-Dis/Dip-14/92-93 (USA)	Toyota Land Cruiser, Model-1987 Regn. No. Doot-61-41	Tk 60/-	At 11 AM on 7-2-94
4.	S-Dis/Dip-12/92-93 (USA)	Holden Commodore 'SL' Car, Model-1985, Regn No SAS-65-3055	Tk 60/-	At 11 AM on 8-2-94
5.	S-Dis/Dip-17/92-93 (USA)	Toyota Hi-Ace Microbus, Model-1987, Regn No Doot-61-40	Tk 60/-	At 11 AM on 8-2-94
		Toyota Hi-Ace Commuter Microbus Model-1986, Regn No AWO-61-37	Tk 60/-	At 11 AM on 8-2-94

Abul Kalam Azad

Asstt Director
Deptt. of Supply & Inspection
Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka

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