

Dhaka Day by Day

Where East and West Meet

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Much as Rudyard Kipling may claim that east and west are different and the "twins shall never meet", today the barriers of culture are being overcome on an unconventional ground. Every idea exchanged every thought explored and there was a passionate venture that gave birth to an exclusive international fashion trend, that is now the crown prince in the kingdom of vogue — undoubtedly.

Uddin and co (Bangladesh) is a fashion house, that was established in 1992 to design ladies fashionwear using resources available in Bangladesh. A M Zahir Uddin, one of the managing partners, worked in London as a designer for a number of years, he came back and planned Uddin, "says Naimul Bashar Chowdhury of Uddin.

Uddin is 100 per cent local, a claim that is proved and guaranteed by their production base of 500 looms, which include hand, semi power and power. Their finishing mills, dyeing, hand prints, embroidery capacity, their own accessory line of trained people and of course their six garment factories, all these give Uddin that 'All local' tag. They have taken loss of all these factories, mills and looms on a seasonal basis depending on the launching of their collection twice a year — the summer and the Christmas collection.

This unique fashion house's target market is the West and it is basically an export organization. They bought out their first collection in October, 1992 — 'Mix and Match', a collection of ladies co-ordinated separates in 100 per cent pure washed silk, for the summer '93 season. "We found out the hard way that without a proper base the desired quantity and quality could not be ensured. It took us seven months to build this production base. But side by side, in the first half of 1993, we designed two small collections, one of hand-printed teeshirts, the other of hand-printed silk scarves," explains Chowdhury.

Their Christmas '94 collection of soft silk, silk taffeta and other varieties of silk was introduced to the European market in August '94. The responses were very encouraging, even though they could avail no orders that season yet their experience was worth million dollars. "We were introduced to the European market, buyers, showed their confidence and enthusiasm in our work, which without any

doubt was our first step towards business. Moreover there is always our En'D (Research and development) work, he smiles with a hope for the future.

"The buyers found our designs interesting and appreciated the quality. A number of department stores showed keen interest and have already given us appointments to see our summer '95 collection," he informs confidently.

'Kantha Magic' their summer '95 collection includes more than 50 designs of ladies shirts, blouses, skirts, trousers and dresses in transparent to heavy fabrics of 100 per cent pure cotton and soft silk. Hand printed and embroidered with indigenous motifs in three themes of soft and flowing colours of light shades, these were Expressions, Romantic and Mystery colours." This collection is now shown to the buyers in UK, France and the Netherlands. We have come a long way since 1992. From fabric designing to dress designing to producing the final garment, each and every phase of the process is now monitored and supervised by our staff. Every piece of garment is inspected by our quality inspectors before shipment. Uddin has the capability to produce more than 100,000 pcs of its collection per month, and guarantees quality," Chowdhury relates enthusiastically.

The seductive and very much feminine collection of *Kantha Magic*, of all natural fibres, is not what a young girl listening to hoagy rock music would prefer. "This is not high street fashion, no bizarre designs, all styles depend on the theme. Their again these dresses are not for any certain age group either," says Chowdhury.

"We all know the hundreds of years' old tradition of making a *kantha* and carrying it by a maiden to her new home. A romantic dream, a sketch of life surrounding her or expression of her emotion is embroidered with an innovative and spontaneous, intricate needle work. Every *Kantha* is the artisan's creation of her own feeling and desires, and this realm of creative art is our theme for summer '95," he reports.

Uddin's dresses are all western in style and design but the materials and thoughts and ideas we all local — Eastern. This romantic fusion, that is yet to have commercial success is definitely aggressive and breaking new grounds in international fashion.



Commonwealth Secretary General's emissary Sir Ninian Stephen making a press statement following his meeting with leaders of different opposition parties at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

PM visits the tomb of Mahsuri

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday visited the "makam mahsuri" (the tomb of Mahsuri) leading her to the heart of the legends of the Langkawi Island, reports BSS.

The legend says Mahsuri was reputed to be a maiden so attractive as to have inspired a vengeful accusation of adultery against her. From the knife wound inflicted to kill her, Mahsuri bled pure white blood onto the ground, a sign of her purity and innocence. She was killed in 1819.

At the moment of her death Mahsuri placed a curse on Langkawi's prosperity to last for seven generations. The Langkawi islands were under the Mahsuri's curse for seven generations and now they are emerging from the clutches of the curse.

The visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the tomb of Mahsuri brought the enthusiastic villagers, especially the girls to the place. The girls accorded Begum Zia a warm welcome in a traditional Malay way by singing and dancing.

Begum Zia stayed there for some time and witnessed the traditional way of life and cultures of people of the Langkawi Islands demonstrated by them. The tomb of Mahsuri is situated in a small village, 12 kilometres from Kuah, the capital of Langkawi.

World White Cane Safety Day today

The World White Cane Safety Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today, reports UNB.

Different voluntary and social organisations have planned elaborate programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation (BERDO) will arrange a discussion at the auditorium of the Women's Voluntary Organisation at 3 pm.

The Bangladesh Organisation for Disabled Advancement (BODA) will hold a seminar at the Diabetic Hospital auditorium at 4 pm. Information Minister Nazmul Huda will present as chief guest.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Haroon-Al-Rashid, Deputy Minister for Shipping ABM Zahidul Haque, president of the Diabetic Association Alamgir Kabir and governor, Rotary District 3280 Mosharrif Hossain will attend the seminar as special guests.

Earlier at 8:30 in the morning the BODA will hold a rally which will start from Ramna Tennis Complex and terminate at the Jatya Press Club. Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will lead the rally.

Ananya Award

Renowned writer Selina Hossain has been selected for Anannya Literary Award for this year for her outstanding contribution in the field of literature, reports UNB.

RCDS team leaves

The 11-member team of the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) from the United Kingdom led by Rear Admiral T.J. England, Rn, left Dhaka Thursday night after a week-long study tour to Bangladesh, an ISPR press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The members of the team visited the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur. They visited different places of interest in Dhaka, Comilla and Khagrachhari.

Islamic Foundation's activities reviewed

A meeting of the board of governors of the Islamic Foundation was held in the city Thursday with Religious Affairs Minister Muhammad Keramat Ali in the chair, reports UNB.

The meeting discussed the foundation's activities at its headquarters and sub-ordinate offices in different districts.

The activities of 28 Islamic missions, 43 Islamic cultural centres and 64 district Islamic Foundation offices also came up in the meeting for discussion.

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Hasina condoles deaths in plane crash

Opposition Leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday condoled the death of 86 people on board in an Iranian Airlines plane crash on Wednesday last, reports UNB.

In a condolence message sent to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsazani, Sheikh Hasina said "On behalf of people of Bangladesh,

No fear of outbreak of plague, says Badruddoza

Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday urged the physicians to create mass awareness about plague which broke out in India causing huge economic loss, reports UNB.

The outbreak of plague in India has hurt the country's export and tourism industry. India's economic loss due to the disease was calculated last week at Rs 17,000 crore, said Prof Chowdhury, who is the Chairman of National Plague Prevention Committee.

"There is no fear of the outbreak of plague in our country, but we should take all preventive measures against the deadly disease," he said at a discussion on "Plague Prevention" at Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association.

President of the association Dr Mirza A Sobhan and Secretary General Dr C M Delwar Rana also addressed the discussion meeting attended by some 50 private practitioners.

Chowdhury urged all to keep all their surroundings clean and tidy. He also advised the doctors to prescribe Tetracycline, Steptomycin, Cotrimoxazol and Chloramphenicol drugs for plague prevention and treatment.



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Weather

Dry weather likely

Dry weather is likely to prevail across the country during the next 12 hours till 6pm today, the Met office said, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period throughout the country, the forecast added.

In its outlook for subsequent two days, the Met office predicted little change. No marked change is predicted for another five days.

Country's highest temperature 35.0 degrees Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest 20.6 degrees at Dinajpur. The sun sets today at 5:33 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:57 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperatures in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	5am	6pm
Dhaka	34.5	23.0	71	74
Chittagong	32.6	24.2	81	74
Rajshahi	33.8	21.7	63	
Khulna	34.6	24.4	82	76
Barisal	34.0	24.4	82	85
Sylhet	32.0	22.3	88	77
Cox's Bazar	33.0	24.0	73	73