

Dhaka Day by Day

Disillusioned Miss Bengali '95

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Miss Bengali '95 is a grand title to win. It is a big exposure too. It may also help one to make a regal stride into the world of gifts and fashion. These are all 'chances of a lifetime' sort of things, specially for a Bengali girl.

At least this is what Sanchita Islam, a student of London School of Economics, had in mind when she filled the forms for the contest last September. "I thought this was a chance to break free from the stereotyped image of Bengali girls — short or shy or not pretty enough for such grand titles," says Miss Bengali '94, Sanchita Islam.

For any young girl struggling her way in the highly competitive and glamorous world of modelling, winning this title was a break. She was hoping this would land her on higher grounds. Instead Sanchita is having a difficult time to arrange the fees for her final year in the LSE.

"When I saw the ad in Janomat, a Bengali daily in Manchester, one of my friends suggested me to give a try. Moreover, I thought — since we have such a small number of Bengalis in LSC — I would make new friends, and I enrolled my name for the competition," she explains. But for her, things weren't very organised or systematic. There were three stages of filling forms and interviews and from these processes of elimination, 20 finalists were selected for the competition.

Then began the hard time for the finals. They were asked to buy cos-tun es like evening dresses, cocktail dresses, sarees, mini skirts and of-course accessories and all with their own money. Investing 400 pounds and that too for such beautiful clothes and a title was not such a big deal for Islam but the fact that she didn't get her return was a bother for this bright, young economist in the making.

After winning the title, following the zeroing in the camera focus, interview and press conferences, was the beginning of the ball she was waiting for. However when she looks back

she gets annoyed, "I had to pay even for the transport to attend these things."

"I never got my prize money the promised 1500 pounds and as for the trip to Venice, I found out later that it was just the ticket fare. Other costs were on me," she says, still fighting (in a way) to collect her dues — 1800 pounds. This however includes the ticket. "The promoters of this competition were avoiding me, saying that I have to wait a little longer. But I do modelling to study and I have been waiting since September 20." Islam does not hide her anger.

At present Miss Bengali '94 is in Bangladesh to do some modelling for Bibi Russell, who, she thinks is her guardian angel and who has also done the choreography for the Miss Bengali '94 competition, for free. "I think Sanchita is what the Bengali models should be. She is intelligent and smart and best of all she is extremely polite," Russell says adding that modesty is beautiful.

For any Bengali girl to do anything here or there is difficult because of the height and the competition is very hard. For every shot the models have to project different aspects of their beauty in a tasteful, beautiful way. No two pictures should look the same. This is

modelling there," says Islam to which Russell adds "I am launching Sanchita here in a make up campaign. She will be the 'Cute' girl," says Russell, happy with her find.

Sanchita's father hails from Barisal and has settled in London. Her mother retired from her race relation work but is still a social worker. Third among four sisters, Islam is at the moment writing a film script and completed a cover of a book for her uncle.

"The image of this country would never really change if things are done in such unprofessional way. I would have projected our image much better, but I never really availed of the chance," she says in a disappointed way.



Miss Bengali has the perfect look.

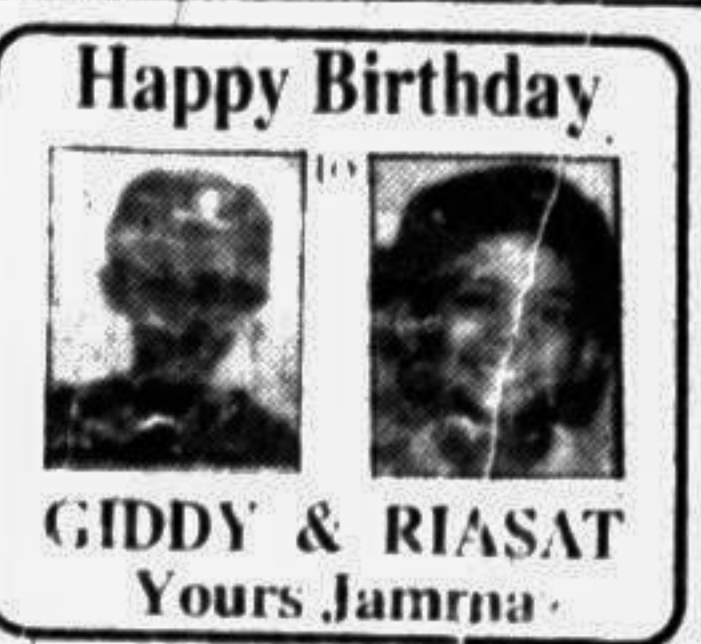


BIONIC BEELINE: A long queue of loaded trucks at a standstill near city's Aminbazar roadside yesterday following the countrywide 24-hour transport strike called by the Bangladesh Transport Workers' Federation. — Star photo

Reception to Rotary Int'l Director

Ashfaq Ahmed Khan, President of Rotary Club of Metropolitan Dhaka, hosted a reception in honour of visiting Rotary International Director Daniel Mooers and his wife in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The reception was attended, among others, by Deputy Speaker of Parliament Rtn Humayun Khan Panni and past district governors of the club.



ASA launches Tk 160cr credit programme

The Association for Social Advancement (ASA), a non-government organisation, has launched a poverty alleviation drive involving Tk 160 cr. The programme will be conducted without any outside fund, says a press release.

The amount will be distributed as credit among 4 lakh landless families, including the old and the new.

This was revealed at a three-day future plan formulation meeting in the city recently.

About 2100 field workers in 270 unit offices in 73 thas will work for this programme. It would be implemented following the Self-reliant Development Model developed by ASA. Annual expenditure for implementation of the programme is estimated at Tk 160 cr which would borne entirely from the service charge.

Call to turn population into effective human forces

President Abdur Rahman Biswas had called upon all to put in their best efforts to turn the country's huge population into effective human forces through proper education, reports BSS.

Bangladesh is not a poor country as it is portrayed everywhere," he said adding, we have rich heritage as well as resources, now the only thing we need is to ensure the optimum use of our resources through educating ourselves.

President Biswas said this while addressing a reception accorded to him by Faridpur Municipality Sunday.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf attended the function as special guest. Leaders of different sections of society including Faridpur District Bar president advocate Sarwar Zahid and union parishads chairmen of the district were present.

Chaired by municipal chairman Fazlul Kabir Chand the function was addressed, among others, by Deputy commissioner K M Nurul Huda.

Referring to the close relationship between democracy and development, the President urged all to keep the democratic process unhindered for the sake of national development and fulfilment of the basic needs of the people.

President paid his regards and respects to all the leaders of greater Faridpur area who led the nation in different movements in our history.

Speaking on the occasion, Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf urged the President to use his good office in constructing the Padma Bridge to connect the country's southern region with other parts of the country.

CONGRATULATIONS

We welcome the British Secretary of state for Foreign and Commonwealth affairs, His Excellency Mr. Douglas Hurd, MP on his visit to Bangladesh.

We are grateful to His Excellency Peter J Jowler the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh, for assisting us in our work.

We are thankful to the British Council, Dhaka for conducting the examinations of the courses run by our Academy.

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Russian Film Festival begins today

A week-long Russian Film Festival begins in the city today, says a press release.

Shamsul Islam, Minister for Commerce and Information, will inaugurate the film festival as chief guest at the Shilpakala academy auditorium at 5.30 pm.

Six Russian feature films — The King's Hunt, Tomorrow, Richard the Lion-Hearted, a Pet From the Grey Hounds Constellation, The Five Lost Monks, They Fought For Their Motherland — will be screened in the festival.

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and the Cultural Department of the Embassy of Russian Federation have jointly organised the festival.

Chief of the Russian Cinema Committee Yurie Dorozkin and famous Russian film director Alexander Pankrato will attend.

On the opening day film 'The King's Hunt' will be screened.

Entry cards will be available at the reception desk of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Russian Cultural Centre and Embassy of the Russian Federation, the release added.

Hossain Ali's death anniversary observed

Former ambassador and veteran freedom fighter Hossain Ali's 15th death anniversary was observed here yesterday, reports UNB.

Milad mahfil and Quran khawani were held at the office of the Hossain Ali Smriti Sangsad. Food was also distributed among the destitute.

Hossain Ali was the first diplomat who defected for the Mujibnagar Swadhin Bangladesh Sarkar during the Liberation War of 1971. He was the Deputy High Commissioner of the then Pakistan, posted in Calcutta mission.

Hossain Ali died in Ottawa on January 2, 1980. He hailed from a respectable Muslim family at Bangura in Pabna district.

Contraband seized in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 2: A special squad of the port police recovered 560 pieces of contraband current net and 2840 pieces of Chinese padlock worth about taka five lakh from a boat at the river Karnaphuli here last night, reports BSS.



LEFT IN THE COLD: A stranded family having a long wait to board a launch at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal during the opposition-called 8-hour hartal in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Weather

Cold wave to continue

Moderate to severe cold wave will continue to sweep over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

A mild cold wave will also continue to sweep over Dhaka division and the regions of Khulna during the period, the Met Office forecasts.

Night temperature may fall by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius over Chittagong division, 1 to 2 degrees over Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Khulna, Jessore and Kushtia.

The Met Office predicts Sylhet and Comilla regions may come under the grip of the cold wave during the period and is likely to continue in the coming week.

Country's lowest temperature 4.3 degrees Celsius was recorded at Ishurdi and the highest 26.3 degrees at Teknaf yesterday.

The sun sets today at 5:24 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:42 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded yesterday at different parts of the country are given below:

City	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	6am	6pm
Dhaka	24.3	8.5	49	55
Chittagong	25.0	13.5	79	82
Rajshahi	21.4	7.0	60	68
Khulna	23.8	9.0	60	63
Barisal	23.6	9.5	68	59
Cox's Bazar	26.0	15.0	60	60
Sylhet	22.7	13.5	85	67
Dinajpur	20.8	4.4	73	73

Session of 'kabi gaan' opens

Minister for Information and Commerce Shamsul Islam yesterday said there is no alternative to reading books for acquiring knowledge, reports BSS.

Inaugurating a session of 'Kabi Gaan' on the second day of the week-long Dhaka Book Fair '95, Islam urged upon all to use books as gift materials.

He said for preservation of the present democratic environment and for continuation of the same a healthy society with educated people and people free from prejudice is a must.

The minister said the present government is making continued efforts for creation of such a society.

Islam said the habit of reading is also essential for flourishing of merit, intellect and cultural consciousness.

Earlier, director of the National Book Centre K.M. Habibullah delivered the address of welcome.

Bangladesh arts festival begins in India

A Bangladesh Festival of Arts in India began at Rabindra Sadan in Calcutta Sunday with a magic show of well known Bangladeshi magician Jewel Aich, reports BSS.

Jewel Aich and his team enthralled packed audience at the Rabindra Sadan for two hours. The audience applauded him punctuating between items with clapping.

Among others, the audience included Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta Jahangir Saadat, diplomats, senior Indian officials, journalists and the city elite.

Doordarshan Calcutta in a special programme Sunday noon telecast a 50-minute show of the magician.

The five-day Bangladesh Festival of Arts in India comprising magic, dance, music and drama performances began in Calcutta and other cities of West Bengal Sunday.

The Bangladesh Festival of Arts in India is being hosted by Indian Council for Cultural Relations of the External Affairs Ministry India and the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal under India-Bangladesh cultural exchanges programme.

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