

Dhaka Day by Day

Harrowing Experience of Eid Shopping

by Saifa Rashid

To go or not to go — that is the perplexing question facing most of the city's inhabitants this month. The reason of this perplexity may be many but all can be summarised into one. Eid is approaching and one must go for shopping.

That sounds innocuous enough itself, but unfortunately, since every other person feels the same way the chaos and confusion at the popular shopping centres are unbelievable. At Gausia Market and Chandni Chawk Market one is simply carried along in an unending avalanche of people. Everyone is pushing, jostling, poking or pulling somebody else. Once in that crowd, it is very difficult to get out and woe betide to the person who wants to go in another direction! If anyone wants to know what an ant in an ant-line feels like, he or she had better come to Gausia Market especially on Fridays.

Another thing that disheartens Eid shoppers is the discourteous behaviour of some of the salesmen. For some

unknown reason during the month of Ramadan they undergo some sort of personality change like Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Instead of the charming, polite soft-spoken people they usually are throughout the rest of the year, during Ramadan they are short-tempered, argumentative and in some cases even abusive. Most probably starvation wreaths their wits on their temper.



Busy Eid shopping — Star photo

Apart from that the Eid shoppers dread the excessive prices that are charged during the month of Ramadan. It seems that the price of everything increases by at least 10 per cent and sometimes even by 100 per cent. There is nothing more frustrating than being forced to buy things that are obviously over-priced. But since everyone has to buy something on the occasion of Eid the shopper can only grit his teeth and pay.

And lastly the most difficult thing about shopping during Ramadan is the fact that most shoppers are fasting. Shopping while fasting is one of the most trying tests of endurance that has ever existed. First of all consider the crowds, the prices, and the behaviour of the salesmen and then think of dealing with all of them with an empty protesting stomach and with a throat that feels as dry as the desert. Horrifying! Then to make things worse, there are many enclosed food stalls where if eating is not visible there are enough hints of eating to inflame the mind and gastric juices. The clink of coke bottles, if heard in the market whilst fasting, is enough to drive a person stark, raving mad!

But in spite of all this, Eid is approaching and one must go shopping. So there is no help. One must girdle one's loins and jump into the fray, the battle, the ultimate test of endurance commonly known as Eid shopping.



Poet Begum Sufia Kamal speaking at a civic memorial meeting on Kalpana Datta in the city yesterday. — Star photo

'History predating '47-'71 be properly documented'

By Staff Correspondent

A civic memorial meeting to pay homage to Kalpana Datta, the famous anti-British revolutionary was held at the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday.

The memorial meeting was presided over by poet and women's activist Begum Sufia Kamal. Eulogies to Kalpana Datta's valour, courage and foresight as a freedom fighter of the Indian subcontinent were given by Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Sardar Fazlur Karim, Faiz Ahmed, Hasan Imam and Mazharul Islam.

Kalpana Datta, nicknamed 'Bulu', was from Kharandip of Boalkhal thana of Chittagong. She was a woman ahead of her times, the first matriculate woman of her division and the only female student of her college in Chittagong. She was a close associate of Biplobi Dal leader Surya Sen. And along with her compatriot Pritilata was directly involved in the great Chittagong armoury 'bomba' where the armoury in Chittagong was seized by her

band of anti-colonialists. The memorial was opened by Chiron Sanskritic Kendro who rendered songs inspired by pre-partition days, hailing the accomplishments of Surya Sen 'Master Da', Kalpana Datta, Pritilata and the forerunners of the struggle for freedom from the British. 'Mone Rekho', a poem by Sabyosachi Dey was recited by Laila Afroz. Rokeya Kabir gave a brief history of the life and times of Kalpana Datta.

Kalpana Datta was a Bengali first and foremost, and a great supporter of Bangladesh's independence. She died of a prolonged illness on Feb 8 this year. She was 83.

Speakers at the memorial elaborated on Kalpana Datta's great legacy as an anti-colonialist and women's leader. The speakers emphasised that Surya Sen, Kalpana Datta and their associates' struggle be properly documented. Their courage and sincere love of freedom of country is a universal lesson and very much relevant to our times. Many of the speakers expressed their disappointment at the tepid media coverage of Kalpana Datta's death and her accomplishments. Also stressed was the growing need for a methodical and true documentation of the history of Bengali people that predates 1947 and 1971. It was also said that the Bangla Academy, which is publishing a series on the life of prominent Bengali personalities, should include a biography of Kalpana Datta in their publications.

Kalpana Datta's struggle throughout her life, speakers unanimously felt, should inspire women in Bangladesh to come forward and fight the injustice that is plaguing our society today.

Begum Sufia Kamal ended the memorial with a brief speech expressing, 'Let the souls of martyrs of Bangladesh in this 'Ekushey month, add the soul of Kalpana Datta, a great woman, be freed and have eternal peace.'

Udichi Shilpi Goshthi

By Staff Correspondent

A gathering of artists and literatures was held at the Bishwa Sahittiya Kendra auditorium on February 20 under the aegis of UK unit of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, says a press release.

Selina Hossain, deputy director of the Bangla Academy, delivered welcome address at the meeting, which was inaugurated by actor Sayed Hasan Imam, a member of the Udichi's advisory council.

The meeting was followed by a puppet show and a musical

Kanthashilon's new drama

By Staff Correspondent

The curtain raising show of *Brittarajakanta*, a new drama of the theatre troupe 'Kanthashilon', will be staged at 10:30 am today at Mahila Samity auditorium, says a press release.

Poet Begum Sufia Kamal will open the inaugural show.

The drama directed by Khaled Khan, is adapted from an Arabic original written by Egyptian playwright Yusuf Idris. Shamsuddin Chowdhury translated the play in Bangla.

The second show of the drama will be staged in the evening at the same venue.

Biswas, Khaleda greet President, PM of Estonia

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday felicitated Lennart Mery, President of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of his country's independence day, reports BSS.

In his message to the Estonian leader, President Biswas said, "It gives me much pleasure to convey to your excellency our sincere greetings and felicitations on the happy occasion of the independence day of the Republic of Estonia."

In another message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated Andres Tarand, Prime Minister of Estonia.

Begum Zia expressed the hope that the existing friendly relations between "our two countries" would be further developed in the years to come.

New IFRC chief in Bangladesh

Eder Ott Bjorn yesterday took over as the head of delegation of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Bjorn, who replaced La Liberte, was the head of the disaster relief department of the Swedish Red Cross Society in Stockholm.

Immediately after taking over, the new IFRC chief called on the chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal MP and assured him of his best cooperation for strengthening the relations between the two organisations.

LDF's hunger procession tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

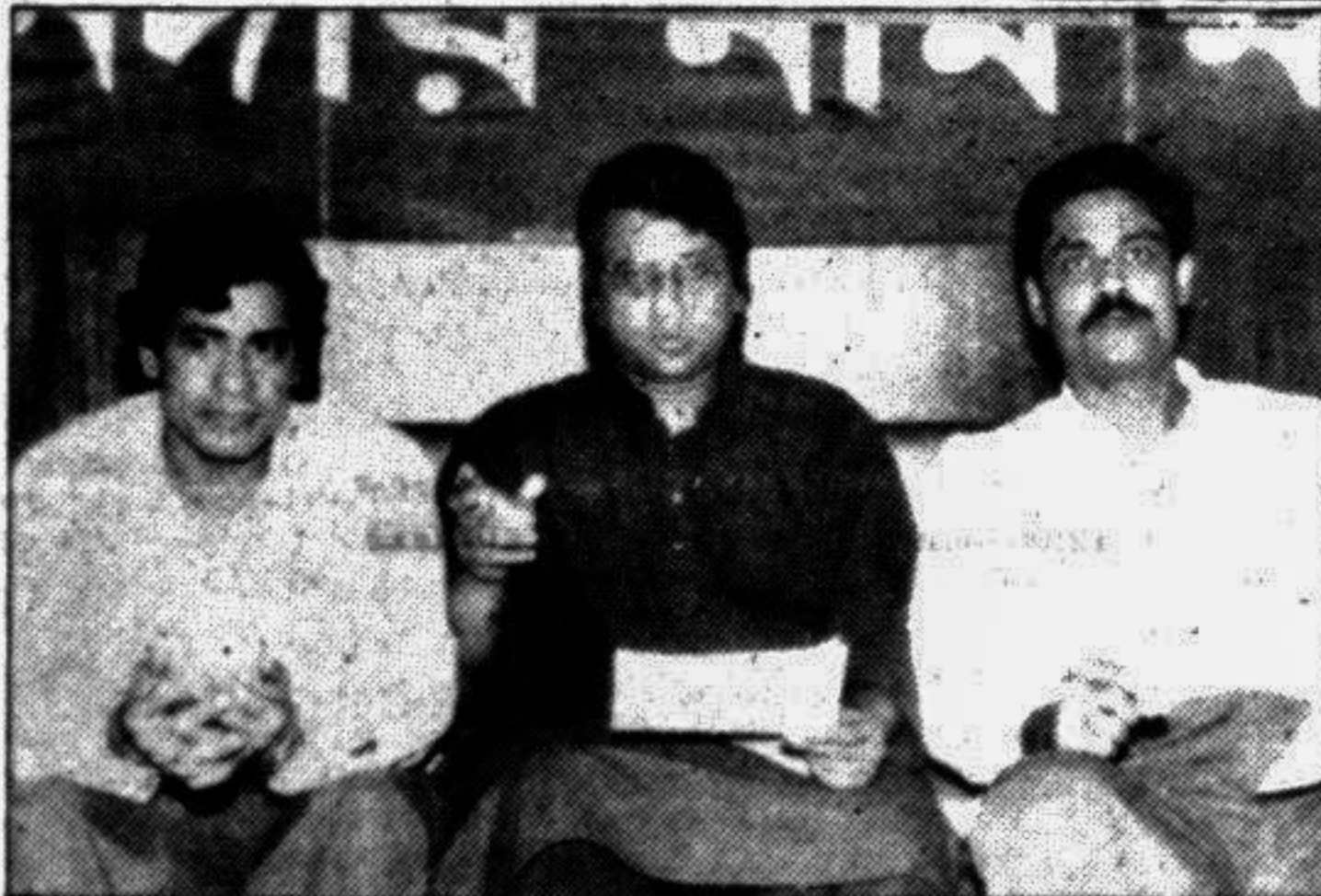
The Left Democratic Front (LDF), an umbrella of 10 left-leaning political parties, will organise a hunger procession towards Prime Minister's Hare Road residence in the city tomorrow demanding decrease of the price spiral of essentials.

To register its protest against spending of public money in the name of left parties the LDF will also hold a rally prior to the procession at the Jatiya Press Club premises at 3 pm.

The LDF is also demanding for right of franchise for slum dwellers.

Diabetic Assoc's lottery draw

The draw of the Bangladesh Diabetic Association lottery will be held today at the association's outdoor at 9:00 am. BNS reports quoting a press release.



Tanvir Mokammel (C), director of the film 'Nadir Nam Madhumoti', addressing a press conference in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Present film censoring policies censured

The existing film censoring policies of the country are not suitable for a modern and democratic society, observed film-director, Tanvir Mokammel at a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

Mokammel, the director of the film 'Nadir Nam Madhumoti', based on the Independence War of 1971, also observed that "the said thing is, the Film Censor Board for several years have been reluctant to give certificates to films about the Independence War."

How is it justified that a government censor board of an independent country objects to a film about that country's own independence? This question was raised by the participating members of the conference.

'Nadir Nam Madhumoti' has remained unreleased since July last when it was first presented to the Film Censor Board for approval.

Several appeals were made to the Censor Board, but all were rejected, Mokammel told the press.

The board refused to certify the film on account of ten separate objections to scenes and dialogue. The list of objections, recounted by Mokammel, in-

clude the dialogue, "What are we Hindu or Awami League, that they will kill us?"; a scene where a cigarette is being smoked during *azaan*; a sign outside a Hindu house saying, "site for mosque"; and a controversial scene where blood comes into contact with a freedom-fighter's foot.

Leading stage-actors, Montajuddin Ahmed and Abul Khair, also spoke at the conference, while Tawkir Ahmed and Sayed Subab Ali Arzu, musical director of the film, were present.

Montajuddin Ahmed, stating the present government do not value the heritage of Bangladesh which reaches back over 2000 years.

Abul Khair, however pointed out, "since 75 many film-about Independence have faced similar problems."

'Smreeti '71', another documentary of Mokammel has also been held back by the Censor Board for the last two years.

Participants at the conference urged the government to remove the ban on both the films for the sake of allowing the people of the country to know the history of our fight for independence.

Weather

Rain, gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today. UNB reports quoting a Met-office press release.

The Met Office forecasts night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

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

City/Town	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Min	Max	6 am	6 pm
Dhaka	21.3	25.5	89	74
Chittagong	17.9	28.6	89	82
Rajshahi	16.4	24.4	96	81
Khulna	20.4	30.2	88	—
Barisal	20.2	29.6	93	78
57th	15.6	21.2	100	86
Cox's Bazar	18.0	29.3	80	71

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