

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Welcome Baishakh

by Rahnuma Muneer

A few days before Pahela Baishakh, the saree shops in different shopping malls of the city are seen crowded with women. Tangail cotton sarees are specially in high demand. The young women of Dhaka city have found another occa-

sion to add an extra attire to their wardrobe. The same goes with men. They are tired of wearing their collection of thin punjabis. Most men would prefer khaddar punjabi on the occasion. All these preparations tell us how important this particular event is to the Bangladeshis. The morning of 1st Baishakh itself starts very early for the Dhakaites. The roads are full of pedestrians, whose destination is the Batumi, in Ramna Park. No one wants to miss the opening song of Chhayanaut, "Esho he Baishakh esho, esho", and the one after that "Baishakh o he, mount tapash", and so on and so forth.

As the sun rises up gradually from the eastern sky, Ramna Park becomes more and more crowded. The ones who come late, fail to go anywhere near the stage and so have to settle down on bedspreads, newspapers or even on the grass — away from where the melodious soiree fills the morning air. They have to be satisfied with what they hear on the microphone.

After a few minutes their grumbling stomachs remind them that they have missed breakfast in a hurry. No problem! The fenced huts serve as temporary restaurants which offer *panta bhat* in earthenware plates, topped with onion, *kancha marich* (chilli) and *shutki* (preparation from dried fish). If that's not to your taste, you can always try the temporary

fast food chains which sell burgers, *chatpatt* and cold drinks.

By the time you have finished your breakfast-cup-lunch the function is over and you can head for the Art Institute to join the

"Pahela Baishakh Rally". Getting out of the place may seem to be an uphill task, but there are always volunteers who are willing to escort you out.

On your way to the Art Institute, you can stop in front of the Shishu Park, where "Rishij Shilpi Goshthi" holds its function every year. It welcomes the Bangali New Year mostly with folk songs, but of course the Tagore song "Esho he Baishakh" is a must.

Meanwhile, the group assembled at the Art Institute waits wearing headpieces, masks and holding colorful banners and life-size replica of different birds and animals made from papers and cardboard. As the rally begins, the young men start dancing around the Royal Bengal Tiger on wheels. The rally ends after going around the Suhrawardy Uddyan, Shaheed Minar and TSC.

After the rally is over, it is wise to return home or at least to find a place to sit, where you'll be sheltered from the scorching sun, if not the heat.

Later in the evening you can visit the Baishakh Mela. If you want to avoid the crowd, the mela always remains open for a week from 1st Baishakh. Housewives shouldn't miss this chance to buy household utensils like *boti*, *piri* etc., or even earthenware show pieces for their living rooms.



Yusuf S Alyan, Publisher of the Kuwait Times yesterday paid a courtesy call on The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam at the Dhanmandi office of the newspaper. They discussed issues relating to the media. Senior Staff of the paper were also present. — Star photo

Kuwaiti PM accorded reception

By Staff Correspondent

Kuwait-Bangladesh Brotherhood Association and Anjumaney Ittehadul Muslemin accorded a reception to Kuwait Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Abdallah Al-Salem Al-Sabah upon his arrival at Zia International Airport in the city on Wednesday. Says a press release.

President of the organisations Al-Haj Moulana Shah AFM Wahid, Peer Saheb of Kasemabad, congratulated those who gathered at the airport yesterday to accord reception to the visiting Kuwaiti premier.

Exhibition

By Staff Correspondent

A week-long duet water-colour painting exhibition by Rawjatul Jannat Champa and Monirul Haque Bappy will begin at the Gallery Tone, Dhanmandi today at 5 pm.

Mir Shawkat gives relief in Islambagh

Labour and Manpower Minister Mir Shawkat Ali yesterday distributed relief materials among the fire victims of Islambagh area in old Dhaka, reports BSS.

Financial assistance

The government has taken steps to provide financial assistance to the retired teachers of non-government high schools, reports BSS. Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar said this yesterday.

4 double-deckers for Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 13: Four double-decker buses (express service) of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will start plying in three routes of the port city from April 17 next, reports BSS.

JSS team meets Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday urged the journalist community to project development activities through their writings and help the government with constructive criticism and positive suggestions, reports BSS. The present government

has ensured freedom of press and it should be exercised with utmost neutrality safeguarding the interest of the people and the state, he told a 43-member journalists delegation of Jalya Sangbadik Samithi, JSS at Bangabhaban.

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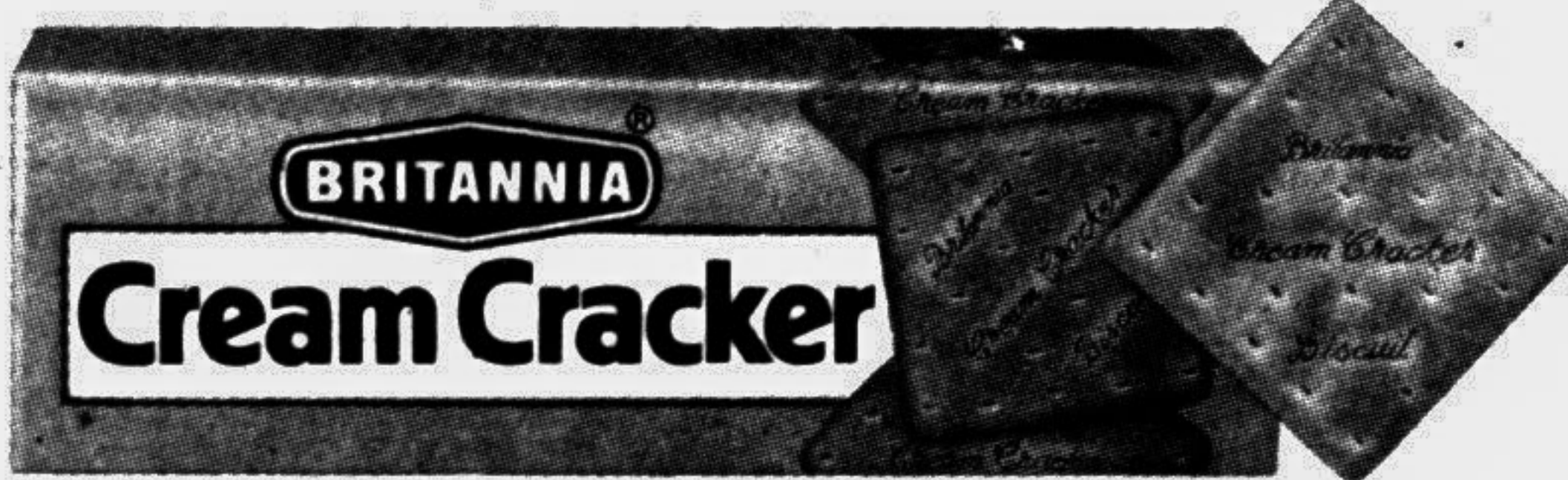
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