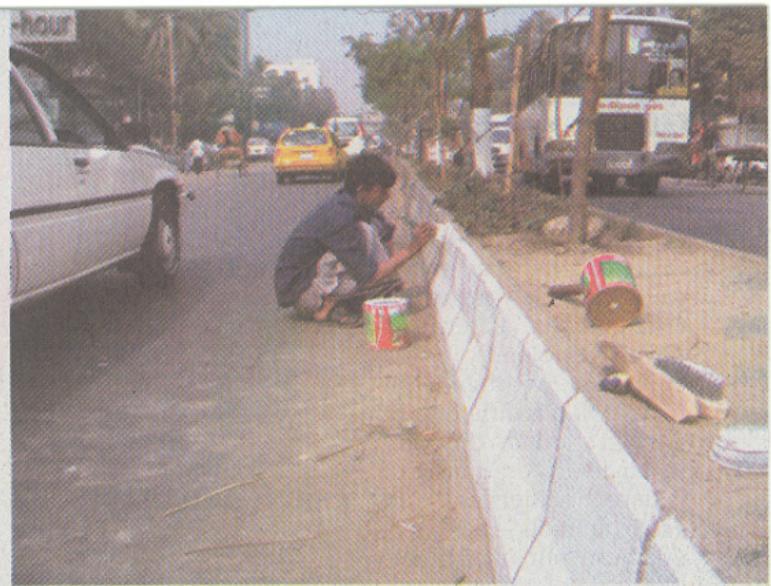


such as Words-n-Pages in Gulshan. Places like these at least give people more options to spend their free time and escape the hustle and bustle of the city.

The introduction of a few standard gyms has been another novelty city-goers have welcomed the past year. Dhaka residents are becoming more and more health-conscious these days and the impressive turnout at gyms and fitness centres that have popped up around the city over the last year bears testimony to this trend. The rising popularity of these health centres is excellent news for the enterprising owners of the gyms. Membership is increasing by the day. "After dropping off my child at school, I had nothing better to do in the past other than chatting with fellow parents. But joining the gym has made me feel more refreshed and it is also a constructive way to pass time," enthused Shaila Rahman, a city resident, about her frequent jaunts to her local gym to work off a few calories.

Music has also been a good reason to reflect the last year with optimism. The recent induction of formerly underground bands into our mainstream music has a real thrill for music lovers of the city. New contemporary vibes came in with the likes of Habib (Krishno), Artcell, Aurtherhin, Black, and Cryptic Fate -- with enriched compositions and mind-blowing fusion works, these bands took us to an international level of



music making. Their projects resulted in the output of really top quality concerts and gigs all around the city. Suddenly the freedom of youth was felt and a new revolution sparked with rocking music, bandanas, and singing your heart out.

This stirring atmosphere also resulted in opening new practice points, popularly called jamming pads. With cool lighting and decorations and rocking atmosphere, these joints provide the ultimate hangout place. New bands are forming with a different taste of music blending in to our culture.

Ashulia has been another great place of entertainment. Motor-ski, boat rides, and even sitting beside the river have become an excellent way to pass time. The theme parks like Fantasy Kingdom and Nandan Park are amongst the other family places where the Dhakaites can at least have some recreation. The air, the atmosphere, the smell -- all has been an enchanting treat from these parks after a heavy week's work.

As dusk comes down with the sense of insecurity from the city streets, the more privileged ones among us can actually go out on long drives and even to costly rooftop restaurants. As the gleaming lights of the city reflect through the windowpane from the 21st floor of a posh eatery, even if it does not seem like the Queen's Necklace, as the lights on Marine Drive in Mumbai, the sight is still a welcome one that stirs the soul and kindles the fire of possibility in one's heart.

For the youth of Dhaka city, the metropolitan excitement of the capital seems infused with infinite possibilities, and we look forward with eager anticipation to the commotion and exhilaration that we

