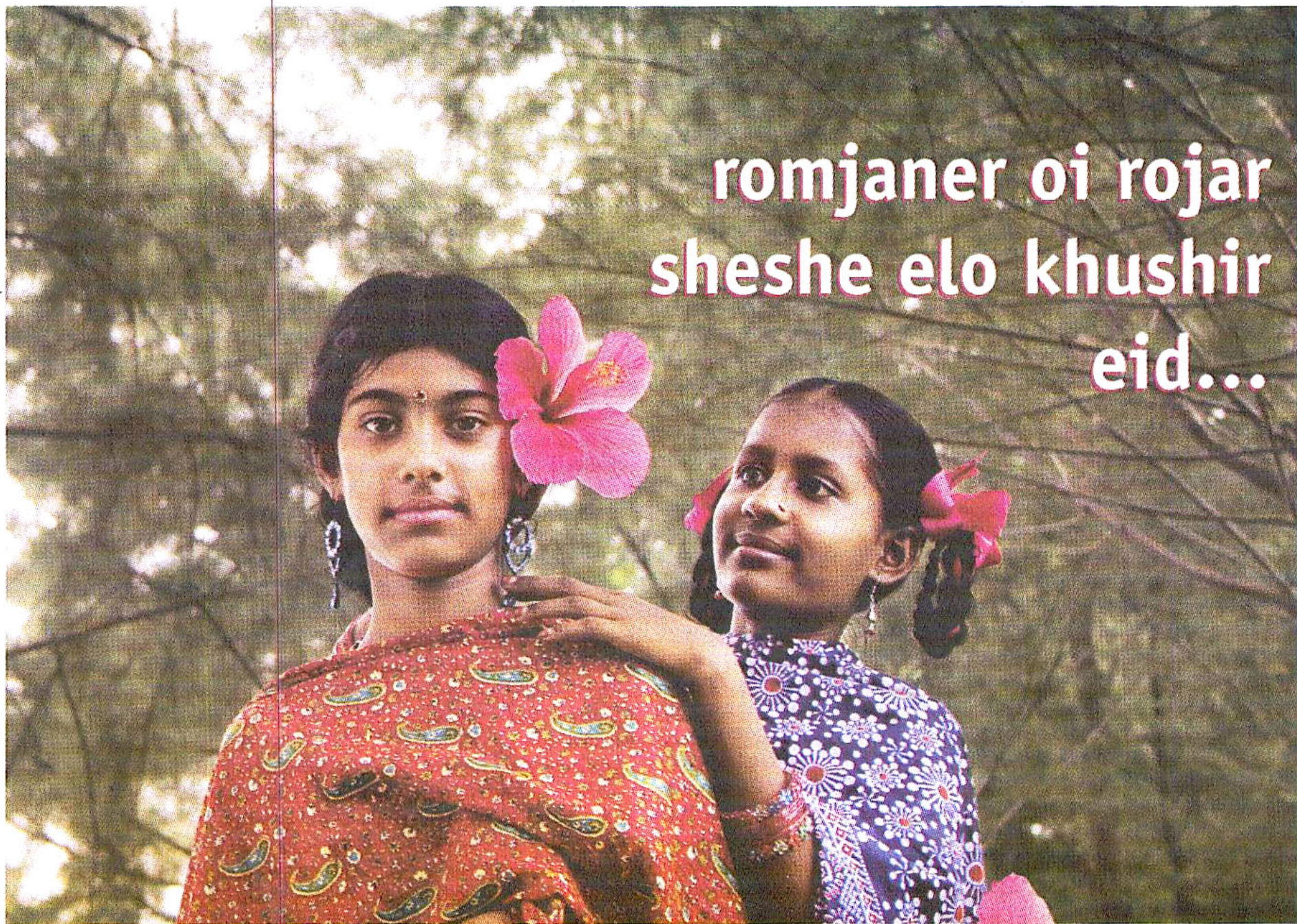




# romjaner oi rojar sheshe elo khushir eid....

## Eid for the under-privileged

Ramadan is en route to Eid and Eid is jubilation, the celebration of rejuvenation after a month long fasting and mostly a ceremonial reunion after every year. Eid is special because Eid is for all, rich or poor, young or old, men or women. Today Eid is special also because it is a reason for showcasing a new fashion statement by the fashion houses, new recipes by international chefs, advertisements and dramas by TV producers or in the least an exclusive holiday package for the rich and so on. However, for many in Bangladesh, Eid is also a day that comes all of a sudden with promises full and rich aroma of tantalizing foods but do not last long! Today, Lifestyle goes up close and confidential with these people for whom Eid is "some-

work really hard in the Ramadan days and also in the first few days of Eid.

In stark contrast to Abdus Salam, who lives almost on day to day basis, there is Shahid, aged around 20 (single) and who works for a well known cyber café at the heart of the city. Shahid earns pretty well and is perfectly well-dressed but he seems quite disinterested to discuss his Eid plans. He seems not to enjoy Eid much and rather finds it boring and formal, as he says: "I don't have any specific plans; I will go on doing everyday things!". He will also buy gifts for the family members as per his Eid rituals. Then again, a boy who works in the same place was utterly excited when asked about his holiday plans in Eid. The swift sparks in his young bright eyes showed how

and his country folks has not grown pale and now is rather more animate with nostalgia. This love is irresistible but the pressing needs of life do not allow prolonging his Eid holiday for more than 4-6 days. Still he confirmed that celebrating Eid in village is always the best thing to do where he is awaited by loved ones with open arms.

Jhonar Ma Bua, a representative housemaid, pays a visit to her village home every year during Eid. This leaves her Apas and Khalammas (housewives she serves in the city) quite perplexed. However, it is interesting to notice that her preparations for Eid are no different from the households she serves in. The essential budgeting for every member of the family, some time allotted for decorating the house, some preparations for the

for cheaper ways to go home and often risk their lives in such ventures.

On a serious note, we find that celebrating Eid is becoming more of a challenge for the people who are considered poor by socio-economic standard. With high ticket prices it is practically difficult to reach home and the very many attractions that lurk at every corner of the city with the advent of Eid are morally embarrassing for the low income groups who cannot afford them. However, on reaching home these people cherish Eid wholeheartedly eating sizzling *shemai*, chatting with family, going to Eid Jumma, meeting friends and exchanging *kolakuli*.

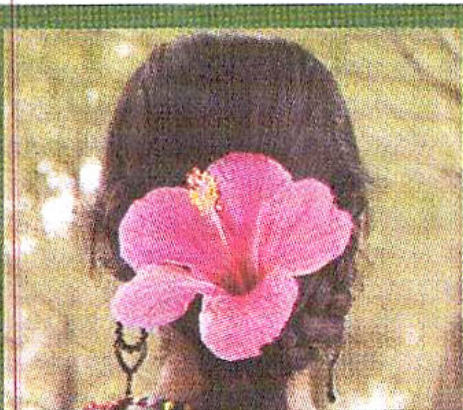
## The Spirit of Eid

Those of us who are fortunate enough to plan for an extravagant Eid should be empathetic towards our fellow comrades who are equal of us by rights if not by fortune or privilege. The celebration of the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr is itself a model of an egalitarian Islamic society, and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) best explained this model by his personal example. It is said that he used to wear a special dress to grace the occasion, but it was never a costly one and was always within the reach of everybody. The result was that all his companions dressed simply on this occasion and consequently this simplicity became a symbol of the Islamic society. We are to celebrate this simplicity of Islam, spare ourselves from being extravagant and share a common ground with all our fellow country-men this Eid.

The spirit of Eid is to bring all the Muslims under the same umbrella of brotherhood and leave behind our petty prejudices of social class and caste distinctions and share our fortunes with those who are less fortunate. With the change in our attitude towards our fellow country-men we will be able to restore harmony in our society and consequently will emerge as a friendly nation in front of the world. Therefore, let us take the chance to celebrate this Eid with everyone irrespective of any social distinction. Let this Eid become a reunion of hearts which will sing together-

*O Mon Romjaner Oi Rojar Sheshe Elo Khushir Eid  
Tui Apnake Aj Biliye De Shon Asmani Tagede...*

By Fatima Tuz Zahra  
Photo: Tanvir Ahmed



thing" but nothing like what is revealed through the fashion magazines.

## Country road take me home.....

One of the representatives of the people to look into is Abdus Salam, a rickshaw puller aged 42 and a father to three daughters. When he was asked what are his plans for Eid he seemed fairly interested to share them. He said, "To be frank all I am doing now is keenly looking forward to this Eid as my family and I always do". Apart from his regular job he is also doing some meat business once a week which earns him extra 800-1000 bucks to save as Eid bonus since pulling rickshaw alone does not help to combat the price hikes, Abdus Salam informs. Since he is the only bread earner in his family (his wife being a home-maker) he will

ardently he is planning to get back to his family this Eid and enjoy it to the fullest with those friends he left behind for a job in the city.

## Far from the maddening crowd

Back in the village, rich or poor, privileged or underprivileged everyone is supposed to mingle and exchange *kolakuli* on Eid day unlike in the cities where class distinctions never fade away. This is revealed in a conversation with Jhonu Miah, the vegetable seller in the residential area of Purana Paltan Lane. Though business is not well these days he is mostly looking forward to celebrating the upcoming Eid with his four boys at village and with relatives and friends. He was 10 when he came to Dhaka City and now after 40 years of his residence here, his love for his village

Eid menus are also on Jhonar Ma's hit-list this Eid like any other housewife.

## To be (at home) or not to be that is the question:

From the encounter with the people from different strands of life, one will see that for them Eid is a reason to achieve "reunion" with family and friends at home. During the Ramadan days there is a sudden growth in the number of rickshaws in the city. They are basically poor people coming to city from village for some extra income prior to Eid. However, everyone's motive is to get back home for the "reunion" but high ticket prices ahead of Eid push these low income passengers to prefer alternative modes of transport such as trucks, and the rooftops of conventional vehicles. They search