

Jabbarer Mela a testimony to rich heritage

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The historic Jabbarer Baishakhi Mela concluded in the port city on April 26 reminding the people of rich heritage of Chittagong.

Amid traditional fervour and huge enthusiasm, thousands of people from all walks of life thronged the fair spanning a two-square kilometre area of Laldighi, Badarpati, Anderkilla and Kotwali intersection throughout the day and night, prompting the authorities to stop plying of vehicles through the area for three days.

Though the fair was scheduled to begin on April 24, hundreds of sellers from different parts of the country started arriving the fair ground from April 22 and stayed with their products after two days of the scheduled date of ending the fair on April 26.

The traders rushed with huge varieties of products like potteries, household items, handicrafts, handlooms, textile garments, showpieces and nice toys. Home made traditional sweetmeats and seasonal fruits were also there in plenty for sale.

Mohammad Aslam, who came from the capital with seven trucks of the potteries, told this correspondent that the fair has different appeals that draw huge people there every year while its 100th year also created much enthusiasm among the people.

"I brought huge products this year and all the items have almost been finished," Aslam, who attended the fair for sixth times, said on Tuesday.

Abu Yusuf, a sweetmeat trader from Comilla, said he was waiting to sell a little number of sweetmeats that remained unsold till last day. He,

however, was happy with the turnout and profit this year.

Zahirul Islam, a buyer who bought eight hand fans from the fair, said he was waiting for the fair for around six months as these are not available at the common shops in the port city.

The main attraction of the fair Boli Khela (wrestling competition) was held on Saturday, the second day of the fair, at the historic Laldighi Maidan where thousands of onlookers enjoyed it.

The defending joint champions Marma Sing Tripura and Didarul Alam

Didar again jointly clinched the title of the competition for fifth times this year.

A total of 94 wrestlers of different ages from different areas, particularly those from the coastal areas of Anwara, Banskhal and Swandwip in Chittagong and Ukhiya,

Teknaf, Chakoria, offshore islands of Moheshkhali and Kutubdia in Cox's Bazar, participated in the competition.

Mobile phone operator Banglalink sponsored the competition while satellite television Channel i telecast the event live.

"Abdul Jabbar Boli

Khela and Boishakhi Mela Uddapan Parishad" organises the event every year.

The Parishad Chairman and local Ward Councillor Zahar Lal Hazari said the fair this year had different appeals for its 100th show and everything completed without any major problem.

"We are trying to keep alive our fading traditional wrestling through the competition and to support the wrestlers financially so that they can practise this throughout the year," Zahar said.

"We are determined to keep the historic event on any how in the future and

financial organisations should come forward in this regard," he added.

A prominent local merchant - Abdul Jabbar Sawdagar of the city's Badarpati area, introduced the wrestling as a traditional event in 1909 (Bangla 1316). The aim was to organise and inspire the youths for anti-British movement.

Since then the wrestling competition is being held on Baishakh 12 every year.

The history of this popular sport event dates back to the Muslim and Arakani rules when aristocratic and rich families, particularly the "Zaminders" (landlords), used to employ healthy and strong wrestlers to counter their rivals.

According to Historian Abdul Haq Chowdhury, there were 22 families of wrestlers hailing from 20 villages on the alluvial plain between the river Karnaphuli and Shankha in South Chittagong.

Long before the partition of this sub-continent some two lakh people of Chittagong expatriated to Burma (now Myanmar). With huge savings they used to return home to organise wrestling competition in the month of Chaitra or Baishakh every year. Beating drums or tins they made publicity of the competition when people from all the neighbouring localities came in groups and gathered at the wrestling venue with band parties and along with the wrestlers.

The descendants of Abdul Jabbar Sawdagar with the support of local people, particularly those from Badarpati and Bakshirhat, have succeeded in keeping up the glorious past of the wrestling through holding the Boli khela and Baishakhi mela till date.



1) Laldighi Maidan turns into a human sea during the Jabbarer Mela (fair) that ended on April 26.

2) Judges declare both Didarul Alam Dedar Boli and Marma Singha Tripura joint champions of 100th show of Jabbarer Boli Khela, main attraction of the Baishakhai fair.

3) A potter gives final touches to vases before putting them on display at the fair.

4) Pottery of different colour and design attracts visitors to the fair.

5) Wide variety of handmade sweetmeats on sale at the fair.

6) Visitors admire wooden handicrafts at the fair.

Photo By Zobaer Hossain Sikder



the week that was

Housing society seeks security

Leaders of Chittagong Cooperative Housing Society called on Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Md Moniruzzaman on Sunday at the latter's office at police headquarters.

The leaders briefed the CMP commissioner about the activities of criminals and illegal occupation at different housing projects of the society and sought his immediate help to get rid of the problems. They also urged him for providing security to society's Khulshi project.

The CMP commissioner assured them of his all out cooperation.

Society President and Daily Purbokone editor Taslimuddin Chowdhury led the delegation. Vice President Ahmadur Rahman Siddiquee, General Secretary Sirajul Islam, Treasurer Md Shahjahan and members KBM Shahjahan and Mohammad Idris were present among others.

Mahila Parishad conference held

Speakers at the district conference of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Chittagong urged the government to ensure equality of men and women in the society.

The conference was held in front of Chittagong Press Club on Friday. Writer Begum Mushtari Shafi inaugurated the conference while

Parishad's central General Secretary Dr Maleka Banu hoisted the national flag.

District President Noorjahan Khan presided over the conference. General Secretary Sugata Barua submitted her report in the organisational session. Later, a new committee of the organisation was formed with five advisers and 35 members while Prof Latifa Siddiquee and Sugata Barua were elected president and general secretary.

Call to ensure child rights

The speakers at a workshop here on Sunday called to forge a social movement for implementation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A non-government organisation ISDE organised the workshop titled, "Implementation of UN Child Right Convention and our obligation" under the auspices of child right forum of BSAF and TDH Netherlands at CSDF auditorium of Chandgaon Residential Area.

Speakers at the workshop said though a long time has been elapsed since the introduction of the UN convention, child rights are being violated at every stage of the society here.

Repression on children and women are being reported while eve teasing leading to suicide of many adolescent girls, they said.

Social resistance is yet to be built up against the increasing number of such incidents, observed the speakers calling for forging a movement for

implementation of the UN charter to safeguard children's rights at family as well as society.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (North) Banaj Kumar Majumder was the chief guest at the workshop presided over by ISDE Executive Director SM Nazer Hossain.

Social Welfare Officer Sultana Tahmina Khanam of Department of Women Affairs, Chandgaon Police Station Officer-in Charge (OC) Mahbubul Haq, District Children Affairs Officer GM Abdus Salam, District Social Initiative Council President Afser Khan, and Teachers Samity regional president Abdul Wahab Chowdhury also spoke at the workshop.

Sonali Bank best clients honoured

Sonali Bank Limited in observance of its month-long service accorded reception to its 14 best clients in Chittagong division on Thursday.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director of the bank SA Chowdhury was present as the chief guest at the reception and handed crests to the best clients.

General Manager of Chittagong division Tapan Kumar Ghosh chaired the function at chamber house in the Agrabad Commercial Area.

The clients in their speech praised

the bank saying that its service to clientele has been improved after the bank becomes a limited company.

The chief guest in his speech apprised the clients of the bank's more initiatives and the newer efforts to make the bank more client-friendly. Later, he inaugurated the computer lab of the bank's Agrabad branch.

'Run business with patriotism'

Privatisation Commission Chairman Dr Mirza Abdul Jalil urged the private entrepreneurs to run the commercial activities with patriotism for the over

all development of the country's economy.

He was addressing a view exchange meeting with the leaders of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI) on Monday.

Dr Jalil sought cooperation of businessmen for establishing the country's economy on a strong base.

CCCI President MA Latif MP gave a proposal to the commission chairman to set up a specialised industrial park on a vast area on both the sides of the Shankha River to create huge employment side by side boosting the regional economy.

Speakers urged the government to take immediate steps in solving power, water and gas crises that hinder the industrial growth.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner MAN Siddique, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Farid Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, CCCI Senior Vice President MA Salam, SM Abu Tayab, Md Emdadul Hoque Chowdhury, Wasirur Rahman Chowdhury, Md Shouib Riad, SM Mahbubul Islam, Benojir Chowdhury Nisan, Alamgir Parvez, Privatisation Commission Member Sheikh AK Motahar Hossain were present at the meeting.

'Save coastal people'

Speakers on Tuesday urged the government to make embankment along the coastal areas to save the people from the danger of tidal upsurge and cyclone.

They were addressing a discussion commemorating the victims of the deadly cyclone of April 29 in

1991.

Sandipan Sangskritik Forum organised the discussion at its office at Dost Building with Freedom Fighter Jadu Gopal Baishnab in the chair.

Prof Dr Jinobodhi, researcher Ishak Chowdhury, Belayet Hossain, Sawkat Ali Selim, Milon Kanti Devnath and Babul Das spoke at discussion.

Port Day programme ends

The three-day programme chalked out by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) marking the 122nd Port Day ended here on Sunday.

On the concluding day, a blood donation programme was held at the Chittagong Port Hospital.

CPA Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed as chief guest inaugurated the programme through donating blood.

CPA Chief Medical Officer Dr Mir Md Shafiuallah chaired the discussion where CPA Member (Engineering) Captain Zobaer Ahmed was the special guest.

CPA Chairman in his speech urged all to inspire others for donating blood since it could save lives of people in need.

A total of 60 officials donated blood at the programme.

Earlier, a Volleyball competition was organised by CPA Sports Association on the second day on Saturday at Shaheed Shamsuzzaman Stadium.

RU Ahmed distributed prizes and certificates among the participants.



Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Sonali Bank Ltd SA Chowdhury hands over crest to one of the 14 best clients at a reception at chamber house in the port city on Thursday.