

Eid shopping frenzy in Chittagong

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With Eid only a few days away, shopping gains momentum in Chittagong.

Around 200 markets including 15 posh shopping malls, arcades, different fashion and boutique houses as well as the makeshift stalls on footpaths at different parts of the city are bustling from morning to late night.

Eid shopping in the port city this year was relatively good from the very beginning of the holy month of Ramadan in comparison with the previous years.

As Durga Puja -- the major religious festival of the Hindus -- will follow the Eid-ul-Fitre this time, almost all the shopping malls are experiencing huge crowd of consumers from both the communities from morning to late night.

When markets are gripped by Eid shopping fever, price hike of products is frustrating most of the middle and low income

buyers and forcing them to cut their budgets and to shorten their lists.

People of well-off section who are in search of latest fashion in design and colour are thronging the posh shopping malls like New Market (Bipani Bitan), Amin Centre, Sanmar Ocean City, Yunusco Centre, VIP Tower, Central Plaza, Mini Super Market, Highway Plaza, Central Plaza, Chittagong Shopping Complex, Moti Tower, Moti Complex as well as some popular outlets like Pride, Aarong, Anjan's, Mia Bibi, K-crafts, Westecs, Revlon, Cat's Eye, Matra, Nari and Menz Club.

Middle class customers usually like to shop at Reazuddin Bazar, Lucky Plaza, Chawk View Market, Terri Bazar, Tamakumandi Lane Bazar, Bay Shopping Centre, Singapore-Bangkok Market and other markets since necessary items are found at reasonable price here.

Jahur Hawker Market and makeshift shops set up by hawkers at a number of city points, however, remains

the most popular outlet for the lower middle class and the poor.

Among the Eid-attires, sarees are in top demand for the female customers this year while Punjabis, as usual, for the male.

Keeping consumers' demands in mind, traders showcased both the local and Indian sarees including cotton, silk, synthetic, georgette, katan, benarosi, zamdani, zardousy and tissue.

Saree with brand name 'Moha Utsab' are selling at Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000 while chiffon sarees are available at Tk 5,000 to Tk 10,000.

Traders at Terry Bazar are selling Moslin-Benarosi brand saree, a fusion of the two popular products, at Tk 3,000 to Tk 7,000.

Three-piece decorated with different artistic patterns, with brand names like Masakkali has become craze among the young and teen-aged girls this year.

Masakkali for the children are selling at Tk 3000

while the same brand made for the teen-aged girls are selling at Tk 3000 to Tk 18,000.

Other popular brands of three-piece drawing attraction are Sania Mirza, Saregamapa, Delhi Silk and Girl Friend.

Farzana Abedin, a varsity student, managed to buy a Masakkali brand three-piece at Tk 2500 from Sanmar Ocean City after bargaining with the trader. She said traders are charging higher rates for products taking advantage of the frenzied mood among the shoppers.

Male persons both children and adult are looking for short panjabis than the taller ones. Decorated Dubai Panjabi is selling at Tk 2000 to Tk 4000 while younger section is gathering at popular outlets like Khadighar and Parisi than that showcased attractive and colourful panjabis.

They are also thronging the fashion houses and popular posh outlets for T-

shirt, pant, shirt, kameej and other dresses.

Handibazar, a popular outlet, is offering shirt for males ranging from Tk 1950 to Tk 3000, T-shirt at Tk 600 to Tk 700, panjabi at Tk 750 to Tk 950 and pants at Tk 850 to Tk 1050.

Short panjabis are selling at these outlets at Tk 1200 to Tk 2800 while Indian Dhutian Panjabi is selling at Tk 3,100 to Tk 5,500.

Amin centre, first air-conditioned market in the port city, is drawing attention of the consumers by offering prizes against buying of products.

Traders Association leaders of the market said they have arranged uninterrupted electricity supply only to serve the customers.

Taking permission from the authorities concerned around 20,000 hawkers have set up makeshift shops on footpath again at different city points offering a scope for thousands of buyers from lower middle class and lower class.

20,000 acres of CHT land brought under rubber cultivation



STAR PHOTO

A rubber garden at Panchmail in Khagrachhari district headquarters.

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

At least 20,000 acres of land have been brought under rubber cultivation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) has raised a rubber garden on some 15,000 acres of land while rubber cultivation is going on some 5000 acres of land under private initiative, sources said.

CHTDB sources said trees of the garden grew over the last 29-30 years since 1979-1980 and are not matured enough to yield full production.

It has about 26 lakh rubber plants on 13200 acres of land with some 200 rubber trees on each acre of land under the project while rest of the land is being used for other purposes. Production started at the CHTDB garden in 1992 and earned Tk 5 crore annually on average.

Some 5 lakh rubber plants are also growing on 5,000 acres of land under private initiative, sources said.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided Tk 52.5 crore in phases from 1979 to 1995 and the government allocated Tk 13.5 crore after CHT peace accord was signed in 1997.

Some 3,300 stakeholder farmers of the project said they are not getting 60 percent of the income as per deeds they signed with CHTDB. The

authorities also deprived them of their due share for many years through producing a false data of production and income, they added.

CHTDB sources said many farmers have been solvent through rubber cultivation while farmers and agriculturists term it non-profitable and hazardous to health.

About 50,000 people, who have been living in rubber garden areas or engaged in rubber production, are facing differing health hazards, sources said.

The farmers and workers hardly got profit from the hazardous work in last 30 years due to mismanagement, irregularities and corruption by the officials concerned, sources added.

Binoy Bhushan Chakma, a farmer of Bhaibonchhara area under Sadar upazila in Khagrachhari, said most of the farmers are suffering from different diseases as they are unaware of the health hazard due to rubber cultivation for years.

Amiya Kanti Roaza, assistant general manager of the CHTDB Rubber Gardens project, said there is no bad effect of rubber garden. If the gardens are harmful to human body, government would never initiate such a project to financially benefit some 5,000 people, he added.

Khagrachhari District Horticulture Officer Mohammad Mizanur Rahman said those working

in rubber gardens mostly suffer from various skin diseases. He said most of the farmers are not getting proper benefits due to mismanagement and irregularities by a section of corrupt officials.

General Manager of Rubber Project Mohammad Ali Hydar said most of the rubber cultivation has been continuing on the unused fallow land where no other crops can be cultivated. Many farmers have been benefited it, he said.

He said there is no impact on environment or health hazard following rubber cultivation as the rubber trees are green.

Deputy Director of District Agriculture Extension Mohammad Abdul Malek said government should start fruit orchard on the land where rubber cultivation is going on as the farmers can be benefited from fruits orchards in 5 years.

He said 'even birds or animals do not eat the fruits or green leaves of rubber for its bad affect while no birds make nests inside rubber gardens.

"Rubber is an industrial, labourious and long desired product. Without hard labour farmers can't be benefited while they can easily be benefited from any fruits or woods garden in a short time, he said.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ali Kabir said the project could not serve its purposes due to lack of a proper management, he said.



STAR PHOTO

The shopping malls and markets get overcrowded with Eid shoppers. The photo was taken from New Market in the port city on Monday.

the week that was

2 more deptts at Premier varsity soon

BSC Nursing and BSC Medical of Public Health departments will be opened at Premier University run by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

The board of governors of the university took the decision at a meeting on Wednesday in this regard.

Presiding over the meeting CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also the president of the board of governors, said the two new departments would help the unemployed youths acquire technical knowledge and contribute to the economic development.

The meeting also decided to construct a permanent campus of the university where some 7000 students are studying in ten departments.

Premier University Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Anupam Sen, Professor Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Chittagong University (CU) Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf Alam, Engineer Mahmud Ul Islam, CCC Chief Executive Officer Md Imtiaz Hossain Chowdhury and Chief Education Officer Prof Rawshan Ara Hanif were present at the meeting.

Memo to CU VC

A delegation led by Professor Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam

submitted a memorandum to CU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Abu Yusuf Alam demanding a music department at the university.

Prof Yusuf received the memorandum at a courtesy meeting at his office at the CU on Wednesday.

They lauded the present CU administration for celebrating the Pehela Baishakh with grandeur, reopening the drama department at the Arts Faculty, introducing Master Da Surya Sen Memorial Speech Competition and taking steps to preserve memory of the freedom fighters.

They said such steps would help remove the cultural stagnancy at CU and requested the VC to introduce the drama department to boost cultural activities at the university.

Prof Yusuf assured the delegation of taking measures after discussing the matter with the authorities concerned. Prof SM Anser Ali, Prof Nasima Banu, Prof Tapan Jyoti Barua, Prof Dr Rashida Khanam, Engineer Delwar Majumder, Artist Swarnamoy Chakraborty and journalist Samir Barua were, among others, signatories to the memorandum.

BFRI to be updated

With application of research and technology based knowledge, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) would be developed as an institute of 21st century to cater the need of the time.

Environment and Forest Secretary Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder said this while

he was addressing the 16th meeting of the BFRI advisory committee at BFRI here on Tuesday.

He underscored the need for research on forest and forest resources to ensure sustainable development and save environment and introducing research outline following vision for at least up to 2030.

Dr Mihir also emphasised holding increasing number of scientific seminars and symposium to highlight research findings of scientists from home and abroad.

BFRI Director Md Abdul Latif moderated the meeting. Bangladesh Forest Industry Development Corporation Chairman Md Saheduzzaman, Chittagong Regional Conservator of Forest Anwar Hossain, Department of Forest (DoF) Chittagong Divisional Director Md Abdus Sobhan and Prof Dr Kamal Hossain of Chittagong University Forestry Institute also spoke at the meeting.

Muajjins, priests receive honorarium

Muajjins and priests engaged in switching on and off the streetlights of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) received Tk 13.33 lakh as honorarium here on Thursday.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury handed over the money to muajjins and priests at a simple function for manning 1111 switching

points in the city streets alongside conducting prayers and religious activities at the mosques, temples and churches.

Mohiuddin said there were streetlights in only 18 wards before all the 41 wards could be provided with streetlights in 1994.

Earlier, technicians were recruited each with a monthly salary of Tk 4320 and one person had to work at several switching points, causing wastage of power for two hours a day.

Manning of the existing 1111 streetlights by the technicians could have cost the CCC several times higher than what spent as honorarium to the muajjins and priests, said the sources.

Call to recognise contribution of construction workers

In recognition of construction workers' contribution to the society, Mostafa-Hakim Cement Industries Limited, an affiliated company of Taher Group of Companies, distributed prizes among 150 workers at a function in the port city on Saturday.

Addressing the meeting as the chief guest Deputy Commissioner (DC) Farid uddin Ahmad Chowdhury of Chittagong said workers contribute a lot to the development of the society as well as the country.

He called upon the entrepreneurs to recognise the contribution of construction workers and think about their welfare.

Taher Group Chairman MA Taher presided over the meeting at Karnaphuli Community Centre where Managing Director M Manzur Alam Manzu, also the former acting mayor of Chittagong City Corporation, made the address of welcome.

Photo exhibition on traditional mosques

A three-day exhibition of photos of traditional mosques of Chittagong ended at Kadam Mobarak Islamabadi Memorial Hall on the Cheragi Pahar intersection in the port city on Friday.

Inaugurating the exhibition as the chief guest at a meeting on Wednesday Chittagong Divisional Commissioner MAN Siddiqui said mosques had a great role in establishing peace and stability through removing disorders in the society.

Prof Md Anwarul Azim Arif presided over the meeting where Prof Dr Manzoor Morshed Mahmud, political leader Ashraf Khan, Photographer Sohail Md Fakhruddin also spoke among others.



ZOBAR HOSSAIN SIKDAR

Ahead of Eid most households in the city's Chaktai Chamrergudam area become busy making vermicelli. Vermicelli hanging from bamboos in the sun is a common sight at most of the rooftops of this area at this time. Mostly the poor people of the city and those coming from villages are main consumers of the vermicelli produced in an unhygienic condition.