

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Sukanta and a craftsman.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Crafting Metal at Dhamrai

A Broken lock, a rickshaw bell, a water tap, a key - in the jumble of metallic junk, these catch my eye. A worker is carefully sifting through the pieces, mixing them in correct proportion into containers before weighing them. They will be melted and used to make intricate metal sculptures and art objects treasured by collectors worldwide.

I am visiting Sukanta Banik of Dhamrai Metal Crafts, about 25km from Dhaka, on this cool Saturday morning.

When a friend introduced us six years ago, I was impressed by the fine craftsmanship of Sukanta's artistic pieces: statuettes, animals, boats and everyday objects. With the confidence of a mature artist, he had showed me all aspects of his craft.

Today, Sukanta is just as welcoming. "Feel free to look and take pictures," he says. At 8am several craftsmen are already at work.

His process for making sculptures is called Lost Wax Casting. It takes several steps.

First, a wax model of the sculpture is made with fine details. This is the most time-consuming step.

Once the wax model is ready, it is covered with several layers of a *doashala* - clay found in the riverbanks of Dhamrai.

After the clay dries, the model is baked in an oven. The wax melts away, leaving behind a clay mould. Molten metal is poured into this mould, and, when it cools, the mould is broken to retrieve the sculpture. Finishing touches are now applied.

Each piece is unique: one mould yields one sculpture.

"Dhamrai has a rich history of craftsmanship, going back 500 years"

says Sukanta. His family is one of a handful that maintains this tradition. His ancestors have been involved with metal craft through five generations, 200 years. Starting out as traders in art objects, they eventually became artists and manufacturers.

I ask Sukanta how long it takes to make a piece.

"A smaller item takes two months, but a large, intricate piece such as a big statue can take up to a year," he says.

Each piece is unique, he says, and can be sold in the international market.

Bronze and brass everyday items, such as glasses, plates, *kolshis*, *bodnas*, were once used heavily. Nowadays, these items are mass-manufactured from plastic and melamine, so the market for handmade metallic utility items has shrunk. The craftsmen now focus mostly on art objects.

"Who are your customers?" I ask Sukanta.

"Mostly overseas collectors of religious and folk icons," he says. "I also sell to temples in Bangladesh."

Sukanta says a large export market awaits the products because, unlike mass-produced metal-craft from India, every item is unique. Yet there are hurdles. He recommends the following actions: speeding up (export) customs inspections for verifying metal crafts are not antiques; government support for metal craftsmen to attend trade fairs and exhibitions; and easing the prices of metal by increasing supply and clamping down on smuggling.

Before leaving, I take a last look at his sculptures. Indeed, they could be a tasteful addition to many collections worldwide.

www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir



Management Net, an organisation of the former students of Department of Management Studies of Dhaka University, celebrates its annual reunion, 2011 with day-long programme at Teacher Student Centre on the campus yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

2007 STUDENT UNREST

Execute JS body suggestions

Student leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of former and current student leaders yesterday urged the government to execute the recommendations made in parliamentary standing committee on the education ministry's report regarding the student unrest in August 2007.

On August 20 that year, Dhaka University students resorted to demonstration after some army personnel beat up a student during a football match on DU central playground. The demonstrations continued for three days, triggering nationwide protests.

Hundreds of Dhaka University students and several teachers were tortured by the

law-enforcers during and after the unrest.

The standing committee's report has proved that leaders of the then caretaker government and the army were responsible for the torture and repression against the students during the unrest.

Welcoming the report, the student leaders, in a joint statement, said the student community took to the streets back then protesting injustice and repression.

Manabendra Dev, Aparna Pal, Sheikh Sohel Rana Tipu, Sazzad Sabik Badsha, Siddique Nazmul Alam, Hasan Mamun, Saiful Islam Feroz, Rafiqul Islam Sujan Samsul Alam Sazzan, were among the signatories in the statement.

Razzak's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Letters of condolence started to pour in just as news of the veteran AL leader Abdur Razzak's death reached the nation yesterday.

Apart from praying for salvation of the departed soul and conveying sympathy to the bereaved family, the letters commemorated the role Razzak played in organising the War of Liberation and strengthening movements for democracy.

The shell-shocked cabinet ministers, lawmakers, university teachers, organisations of workers, journalists and doctors and different political, socio-cultural and professional organisations expressed their deepest regret at the loss of the revered leader.

Countrymen would forever cherish the contributions of this leader to our independence struggle and in building the country, said Speaker Abdul Hamid.

The nation suffered an irreparable loss at a time when the country is still facing a multitude of critical situations, said Bangladesh Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul

Haque Inu said Razzak's contribution in building a non-communal Bangladesh will shine forever in the hearts of the people. Jatiya Party Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju said Razzak is a legend at both student and national level politics.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said this is a sad demise of a patriotic politician. The working class lost a friend of theirs, said a letter from Jatiya Sramik League.

Others who expressed their condolence include Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology VC Prof Dr SM Nazrul Islam, Institute of Engineers President Nurul Huda, Bangladesh Medical Association President Dr Mahmud Hasan, journalist Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Peshajibi Samannaya Parishad President Justice AFM Mejbahuddin also condoled the death.



Gonosanghati Andolan brings out a procession from Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding the government to withdraw the price hike of electricity.

PHOTO: STAR

Harmful 'Parthenium' plants grow in Rajshahi

Australian weed specialist suggests wiping out as it is threat to human health, environment

BSS, Rajshahi

Parthenium, a harmful plant for human beings, livestock and cash crop fields, has appeared in the district creating massive apprehension among the agriculture researchers and others concerned.

Besides the roadsides the plant is spreading rapidly in the crop fields as weed which is still beyond knowledge of the public in general.

Dr Israel Hossain, Principal Scientific Officer of Regional Wheat Research Station, apprehended that the plant has apparently appeared in the country from India with wheels of the goods-laden trucks running from the Sonamasjid and Benapole Land Ports.

Referring various research findings, he said the plant causes allergy, asthma and skin diseases in human body even from 10km far away which is a matter of grave concern relating to the overall public health.

He underscored the need for awareness on ill effects of parthenium as it's destructive leading to disappearance of many shrubs and herbs in the roadside area and posed threat to survival of chlorophyll tuberosum used in health tonics.

Weed Specialist Prof Dr Steve Adkin of Queensland University of Australia had witnessed the plant along the roadside and crop fields on his three-day research tour in the area.

He also addressed a seminar organised by Shah Agriculture Information Library at Manda in Naogaon on Wednesday.

He deliberated on various issues of biodiversity and environment and felt that there is a need for committed social movements to create public awareness on the ill effects of parthenium on human health and environment.

Revealing various bad impacts, he said adverse effects of Parthenium not only on human beings but also on animal health have been well documented.

It is known to cause asthma, bronchitis, dermatitis and hay fever in human beings and livestock. The chemical analysis has indicated that all the plant parts, including trichomes and pollen contain toxins called sesquiterpene lactones.

Dr Steve said the major components of toxic being 'parthenin' and other phenolic acids such as caffeic acid, vanillic acid, anisic acid, p-anisic acid, chlorogenic acid and parahydroxy benzoic acid are lethal to human beings and animals.

He, however, said the problem can be solved by educating the common people about the harms of this weed immediately.

Taking part in the discussion other researchers underscored the need for combating the menace through collaborative efforts involving government agencies, NGOs and others stakeholders.

Death anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Faridpur

Today is the 14th death anniversary of journalist Munshi Mohiuddin, a well-known artiste and playwright.

He passed away in 1997 in the capital due to cancer.

Mohiuddin received national award as best playwright in 1991.

He directed "Titas Ekti Nadir Naam" with Rithik Kumar Ghotok in 1972.

Chehlim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chehlim of Abdul Wadud Khokon, former general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League of Dhaka University unit, will be held today.

On the occasion, a memorial meeting and milad mahfil will be held after asr prayers at his Kataban residence's Concord Imperiam auditorium in the city, said a press release.

Live Music By

PENTAGON BAND,
RUPOM,
KONA,
ROMA.

Live Dance Show By

Mim & Memo,
Eagles Dance Group

Fashion Show By

Top Models of BD
(Choreography By Shumon)

DJ Shows By

DJ RAHAT
DJ SONICA
DJ EMON
DJ HRIDOVY
DJ LITON
DJ JMN
DJ G

Ticket outlet:

- Spice Station, Baily road.
- CapryCorn, Bashundhara City.
- H2O, Dhammendi.
- WegaZone, Banani.
- M/S. Rifath Enterprise, Narinda.
- Genius Shopping Center, Bashundhara (Baridhara).

WESTIN exit lounge (28 Dec ~ 31 Dec)

Hotline: 01949754130, 01949754132, 01949754134, 01949754136, 01949754137

NEWS IN brief

Five Shibir, one Jamaat men held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Six people, including five activists of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir of Joypurhat Government College, were arrested from Joypurhat yesterday on charge of preventing police and doing vandalism on the campus this September.

The arrested are accused in a case filed by police on September 19.

Police also held a worker of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Shah Alam, 37, of Kalai upazila, Joypurhat yesterday.

The Shibir men are Ibrahim Bokhs, Abu Hanif, and Aminul Islam, Anisur Rahman, and Farukh Hossain.

Apparels gutted in Ashulia

BSS, Dhaka

A devastating fire gutted huge readymade apparels, furniture and other essentials of Anjil Apparels Ltd at Bipal in Ashulia yesterday morning.

Fire service source said the fire originated from a boiler of the factory with a big sound.

Fire service personnel doused the flame at about 10:00am.

Launching of forensic training institute Dec 29

BSS, Dhaka

Police is set to inaugurate the first-ever forensic training institute on December 29 to create experts to ensure scientific and authentic investigations.

Inspector General of Police Hasan Mahmood Khaniker will inaugurate the institute, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of CID Saiful Alam told the news agency yesterday.

The institute will be set up on the first floor of newly constructed headquarters of CID at Malibagh in the city, he said.

HSTU admission test now Dec 26

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hajee Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) authority at an emergency meeting deferred its 2012 honours admission examination to December 26 as the transport workers of Rangpur division called a 48-hour transport strike yesterday morning.

The examination was scheduled to be held on December 24.

WEATHER TODAY

Cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during mid night till noon, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and it may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:18 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am.

Country's highest temperature 25.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 06.5 degrees at Rajshahi.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	17.0	11.0	90	80
Chittagong	16.4	12.2	95	91