



Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan visiting stalls after inaugurating the international tourism fair--United Airways Monitor Dhaka Travel Mart 2012 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: COURTESY

ODOMMO CHATTAGRAM 4 events begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four events marking the 12-day "Odommo Chattagram" (Indomitable Chittagong) festival, an initiative of The Daily Star, begin in Chittagong city today.

CONFERENCE

The inaugural session of a two-day conference, "Future Bangladesh, Future Chittagong: A Global Port Needs A Global City", begins at Ichamati Hall of Hotel Agrabad at 10:00am.

Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam will deliver the welcome speech. Environment and Forest Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud will attend as the chief guest.

Afterwards two roundtables, "Infrastructural Challenges" and "Regional Economic Hub Challenges", will begin at the CCCI conference room at 1:30pm and 4:00pm respectively.

The second day will witness three roundtables, "Business Climate Challenges For Growth", "Challenges to Quality Higher Education" and "Challenges to Quality Health-Care", at Mahbub Ali Hall of BGMEA Bhaban. They will begin at 9:30am, 11:30am and 2:00pm respectively. Mahfuz Anam will chair the concluding session from 4:15pm at the hall, where Commerce Minister GM Quader will attend as the chief guest.

BRANDS EXPO

A four-day "Brands Expo" will be inaugurated at Chittagong MA Aziz Gymnasium at 5:00pm.

The exposition, to be open from 11:00am to 9:00pm, will bring forth renowned brands which originated from Chittagong to showcase their corporate activities and products.

Every day a video session, "Corporate Presentation", will showcase their present activities and past and future plans.

Another session, "The Daily Star-Odommo Chattagram Career Fair", supported by Prothom Alo Jobs, will enable the companies to highlight their job opportunities and offer employment to eligible candidates.

On April 9, a "human resource session" will be held where representatives of renowned companies will hold a direct question and answer session with the audience.

CULTURAL SHOW

A three-day cultural show, "Ananda Sandhya" (evening of entertainment), will begin at the DC Hill park premises at 4:00pm.

The first day will feature renowned "dhol" player Babul Jaladash and "Kawali" (spiritual songs) by local artists.

The next day, some prominent artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, including Mrinal Bhattacharya, Sumit Roy and Bani Kumar Chowdhury will perform instrumental and modern songs and Rabindra and Nazrul Sangeet.

The show will end on the third day with performances on indigenous songs and dances.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

A four-hour Children's Festival will be inaugurated by Monsur Ul Karim of the Institute of Fine Arts of Chittagong University at the Fulki auditorium at 3:00pm.

A total 780 students from 30 schools in the city will take part in recitation and drawing competitions. A magic show will then be presented.

Sampan Baich paddles Ctg vibe

ZAHANGIR ALOM AND MINHAJ UDDIN, from Chittagong



The cheering of thousands of spectators lining the banks of Karnaphuli river from the South Ghat to Firingi Bazar Bridge Ghat was deafening yesterday as 15 Sampans (small boats) prepared to outrun each other.

With the sun gleaming through the clouds after a spell of rain, each vividly coloured Sampan with a nine-member crew dressed in red and yellow took off with the whistle at 3:00pm, just between the high and low tides.

The "Sampan Baich" (boat race), traditionally known as "Baisa Khela", an event being held as part of The Daily Star's 12-day "Odommo Chattagram" (Indomitable Chittagong) festival, had begun.

The 850 metre adrenaline-packed dash of the 12-by-5 feet Sampans lasted for around 10 minutes and the drummers ecstatically beat their traditional drums to receive the first three boats.

The "Karnaphuli Sampan Chalok Somobay Samity Limited" team led by Hazi Moinuddin Bokul, which came up first, won a refrigerator. The first and second runner-up teams, "Wahed Ali Shah" guided by Saber Saudagor and "Sujan Majhi" led by Sujan, won 21-inch and 14-inch colour televisions respectively. Transcom Electronics sponsored the prizes.

The other teams were "Mukta Bihanga", "Engij Islam Ahmed", "Madrasa Para", "Gaizer Ghat Khaza Committee", "Futanta Golap", "Tailen Group", "Sutki Chan Bebsai", "Rajur Baich", "Shah Somi Uddin", "Haj Kechi Baji", "Ear Khan" and "Shah Amanat".

Prior to the prize distribution, a discussion and cultural event was held at Firingi Bazar Bridge Ghat.

The atmosphere there resembled a fair with hundreds of visitors going through makeshift shops selling sweet and sour delicacies and wooden toys while others were enjoying a ride in a rickety merry-go-round.

Addressing the discussion, the chief guest, Chittagong Development Authority Chairman Abdus Salam, said, "Chittagong can never be dominated."

"Neither the British Raj nor the Pakistani occupational army could do so. I thank The Daily Star for choosing Odommo as the festival's title. It sounds appropriate for Chittagong."

In his speech, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said, "You (the attendees) are the inhabitants of Chittagong while I am its admirer. The best way to be friends with you is to know your opulent culture, tradition and lifestyle."

"The Sampan Baich is such an initiative. We would like to bring back the past glory of Chittagong for the country's overall development."

Afterwards, Mohammad Yousuf from Patiya and Abdul Mannan from Anwara performed "kobigaan" (a light song in the form of question and answer).

They were followed by Prem Sundar Vaishnab, son of Shyam Sundar Vaishnab, and Susmita who performed traditional folk songs and Talukder Halim who presented skits in Chittagong dialect.

The Daily Star's Defence and Strategic Affairs Editor Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahedul Anam Khan, Resident Editor of Prothom Alo, Chittagong Abul Momen, Bureau Chief of The Daily Star, Chittagong Raisul Huq Bahar and Councillor Lutfannahar Dovas Baby were present.

AL wants healthy process of democracy: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Criticising the recent "violent activities" of the opposition BNP, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Awami League wants to see a healthy and peaceful process of democracy.

"They are trying to stage various incidents... it is the government's responsibility to protect people's life and property and we will do whatever is necessary to ensure this," she said.

Hasina, also the president of Awami League, was addressing the party's central working committee meeting at Gono Bhaban in the afternoon.

She recalled the violent activities including arson and bomb blasts allegedly carried out by BNP in Dhaka on December 18 last year. "After such incidents, BNP should not have been allowed to hold its March 12 rally in the capital."

However, she said the government

allowed them to hold the rally without interfering with their political rights.

Hasina said the government took steps so that any explosive material or illegal weapons could not be used on that day under the cover of Dhaka "siege".

She said BNP tends to put a question mark on whatever the government does because the government is holding the trial of their (opposition's) associates on charges of war crimes, corruption and embezzling money of orphanage trust.

Referring to the opposition's return to the last session of parliament, Hasina said they came to the House to "protect their seats and salaries." The opposition leader came to the present parliament only for seven days and spoke in the House for six days, she added.

Hasina, also the Leader of the House, deplored the vulgar words and language used by some BNP members in parlia-

ment. She said the Speaker could call in Sergeant at Arms to oust them from the House but he did not do so as he wanted them (opposition) to stay in the House.

About Bangladesh's win in the maritime boundary case against Myanmar, Hasina said although the opposition leader congratulated the government on this victory, but her party leaders are now speaking inconsistently on this issue.

She said while in power the BNP government allocated offshore blocks without demarcation of the maritime boundary. She said the verdict in the maritime case against India will be given by 2014.

Hasina said, "If people voted for Awami League in the next election, Bangladesh will also win the case against India."

However, she said this is a win-win situation and Bangladesh's victory would not affect the bilateral ties with Myanmar.

Chittagong has been the key producing ground for renowned brands. The Daily Star-Odommo Chattagram Brands Expo is a platform to add value and bring future prospects to the businesses, highlighting the brands to the widest possible scale.



The highlights of the Brands Expo are:

More than 20 renowned companies representing successful brands of the nation

Corporate Presentation: Top companies will be presenting their corporate profile

The Daily Star Odommo Chattagram Career Fair: supported by Prothom Alo jobs

HR session: HR personnel of the top companies will hold a direct question and answer session with the audience



The Daily Star cordially invites you to The Daily Star-Odommo Chattagram Brands Expo inaugurating today at M A Aziz Stadium Gymnasium from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

*Entry for the event is free for all



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