

FYI

Know your kites

Shakrain, the festival which marks the end of 'Poush' in the Bengali calendar, is celebrated with much gusto in many neighbourhoods of Old Dhaka. This festival, one may muse, is a celebration which is held in the skies: paper lanterns, fireworks, and of course kites are some of the major elements with which Shakrain is observed.

The rooftops become very crowded during the celebration. And so does the sky, with hundreds of kites taking flight and battling it out with each other, for domination and bragging rights for the next year. It is really an outpouring of colours!

Kites do not just come in different colours, but in different designs and names. How many types of kites do you know of?

Sure, there are your regular or standard kites, each a different vibrant hue, to stand out against the clear blue sky's backdrop—shades of red, turquoise, yellow, magenta, green, purple, orange, and even stark white and blacks - you name it, they make it.

Beyond this basic plain bright coloured kite, there are several typically well-known



designs. You may sometimes spot a heart in the centre of the kite, or two halves of a heart on either sides of the middle frame joining together. This is called 'paan dhar', presumably because the shape resembles a betel leaf.

On the other hand, a 'chokh dhar' is a

kite with two eye-like shapes painted or pasted on them. And the 'char boa dhar' features four semi-circles on the four sides of the kite. A variation of the same is 'dui boa dhar', where there are two semi-circles.

There are a few modern-day innovations,



such as kites featuring Bollywood posters! But these are relatively rare.

You also have the chance to show off your own creativity by

having kites custom-made

according to designs of your choice!

Shakrain in the old town is celebrated with a lot of passion and fanfare. The types of kites are just one side of the story. This year, Star Lifestyle team went to the festival and captured snippets of the fervour of Shakrain in frames. From intense kite-fights to the 'after-party', we have covered it all!

Visit The Daily Star's YouTube channel, Star Live, for our full story on Shakrain.

By MH Haider

Photo: Intisab Shahriyar

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