

Spring arrives early at Boi Mela

Fair gains momentum ahead of Pahela Falgun, Valentine's Day

DIPAN NANDY

It's that time of the year again, when the first day of spring and the occasion to express one's love coincide with the passion of bookworms, creating a festive atmosphere at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela.

With Pahela Falgun and Valentine's Day being observed across the country today, publishers at the book fair are hoping that the presence of bookworms will light up the fair premises, increasing sales in the process.

However, spring came a day early for many, as the fair took on a festive look yesterday. Hundreds of young girls and boys in colourful, mostly yellow and orange, traditional dresses, thronged the place. Some adorned themselves with floral ornaments.

They came in numbers – friends, families, siblings and couples – to check out the books, take photographs and be a part of the celebrations. Many were buying books for their loved ones.

Pahela Falgun had been celebrated on February 13 in Bangladesh until 2020, before the occasion moved to February 14. But for many festival-loving Bengalis, February 13 is still being celebrated as the first day of spring, visitors told this correspondent yesterday.

Spring was also the recurring theme of the day at

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It seemed that spring came a day early for bookworms yesterday, as one could spot many splashes of yellow amid the crowds at the fair. This photo was taken at Suhrawardy Udyan.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

MISSING CASE

PBI submits probe report to court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police Bureau of Investigation submitted the investigation report of the case filed over a woman's disappearance yesterday to the court. Earlier, PBI disclosed to have found that the supposed abduction was orchestrated by her daughter.

In a press briefing at PBI's Khulna office yesterday, PBI Superintendent Syed Mushfiqur Rahman said, "After completing the investigation of the case, we have submitted the probe report to the court." He also said the daughter, Moriom Mannan, orchestrated the abduction of her mother Rahima Begum to frame their neighbours of kidnapping, with whom they had a land dispute.

In the report, PIB found that Rahima and her daughters Moriom and Aduri Akhter were involved in the plan and recommended the court take legal action against them.

The official said, "According to the rules, we have already verbally informed Aduri Akhter – Rahima's daughter and plaintiff of the case filed over her disappearance – about the findings of the report given to the court. We have also informed them of our recommendations."

KHULNA SHIPYARD ROAD

In disrepair for a decade



PHOTO: COLLECTED

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Shipyard Road, one of the busiest entrances to Khulna city, is becoming unusable for vehicular movement, as it has remained unrepaired for the last 10 years.

The thoroughfare, stretching for around 4 kilometres from Khanjahan Ali Bridge (Rupsha Bridge) to Rupsha intersection, has been in disrepair as authorities concerned are turning a blind eye to this situation, alleged locals.

Residents have long been staging demonstrations demanding urgent renovation, but to no avail.

Due to its dilapidated condition, vehicles often get stuck in large potholes and overturn on the road. When it rains, the road becomes impassable, and during the post-rain period, sand and dust engulf the entire area.

Officials said the road had been under Khulna City Corporation (KCC). However, KCC handed over the authority to Khulna Development Authority (KDA) in 2013. Since then, KDA has not repaired it.

The Ecne in May 2013 approved "Khulna Shipyard Road Widening and Development Project" to

implement it within June 2015.

Later, the project implementation period was extended to June 2018, June 2020 and June 2022. On November 8 last year, the Ecne approved the latest extension to June 2024.

On January 12 last year, the work order was given to Ataur Rahman Limited and Mahabub Brothers Private Limited (JV) to reconstruct the 3.778-km and 60-foot wide road, install drains on both sides and a culvert on Matiakhali canal, and build a bridge on Labonchhara canal in 14 months.

The cost of the project has increased from Tk 98.90 crore to Tk 259.21 crore, according to KDA sources.

During a recent visit, The Daily Star found big potholes in the middle of the road filled with bricks. Vehicles were struggling to move forward. Three-wheelers and other light vehicles were seen plying the road amid the dust.

The part of the road in Banda Bazar area was even worse.

Nurul Huda Monir, a resident of ward-31, said, "During monsoon, the road turns into a canal, and in the dry season, it becomes a dust zone."

"It is the only road for the movement of thousands of people in ward-31, which includes Banda Bazar and Chanmari Bazar," he further said.

It is a busy road as Khulna Shipyard, Dada Match Factory, Cement Factory, Modern Rice Mill and many shrimp processing factories, as well as multiple schools and colleges are located on both of its sides. Besides, many small factories have been set up around the bridge.

Iqbal Hossan Biplob, president of Nirapad Sarak Andolon of Khulna city unit, told The Daily Star, "Commuters have been suffering for years. At least five educational institutions are situated beside the road where hundreds of students face trouble to attend classes."

"Many vehicles avoid the main entrance road, which creates traffic jams at Gallamary and Zero Point," he added.

Acknowledging the issues, KDA executive engineer and project director Md Arman Hossain said, "We had to spend a lot of time to acquire land."

He said around 49 percent work has been done and the rest would be completed soon.

MOSQUITO MENACE

DNCC to follow US model: mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation has started a programme to kill mosquitoes using a method that is used in the US, said DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam.

"We saw in Miami how they kill mosquitoes there. We spread chemicals all through the year. However, in Miami, they identify the type of mosquitoes first and then decide which medicine to use against it," he said at a press briefing in the capital's Gulshan yesterday to share the experience of his recent US visit.

Last month, a 20-member team of DNCC led by Atiqul visited Florida as part of US's CLDP Consultation Trip.

"Establishing a lab is time consuming. So, we are working on starting our lab with Jahangirnagar University," he added.

"Like Miami, we will have a public relations team which will conduct the mosquito-killing awareness programme. Specially, it will stress on raising awareness among school students and various societies....," the mayor said, emphasising the need to incorporate chapters on mosquito-killing awareness in school textbooks.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, who was present as the chief guest, and US Ambassador to Dhaka Peter Haas, the special guest, also spoke at the event.

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