

**T**HE National Institute of Doll-Making at Lahore is run by the gifted and very talented Mr. Ahmad Yar Khan. He is a master at the art of doll making and knows hundred distinct techniques of making dolls. He is also adept at teaching this art to his students.

His students are from all walks of life said he, and though he enjoys teaching every student, and though his creative needs are being fulfilled, his aim is not. His aim, he said,

# The Art Of Doll Making

By MRS. HABEEB

was to popularise doll making in the country, and to teach the art to poor needy women so that they could supplement their income.

He said that he was not in a position to teach them without charging fees. His fee is fifty rupees for a seven-hour course where he also provides the materials for making dolls. At the end of this course his students know three distinct techniques in doll making.

Early this month Mr. Ahmad Yar Khan was in Karachi for two weeks and held a ten-day course in doll making. At the end of it he held an exhibition of the dolls made by his students. Some of the ladies had also attended his previous courses in Karachi. It was a treat for adults and children to view this exhibition of beautifully made dolls. Each seemed perfect in proportion, dress, and expression, particularly the mai-

den on the swing looked the picture of happiness at basant time.

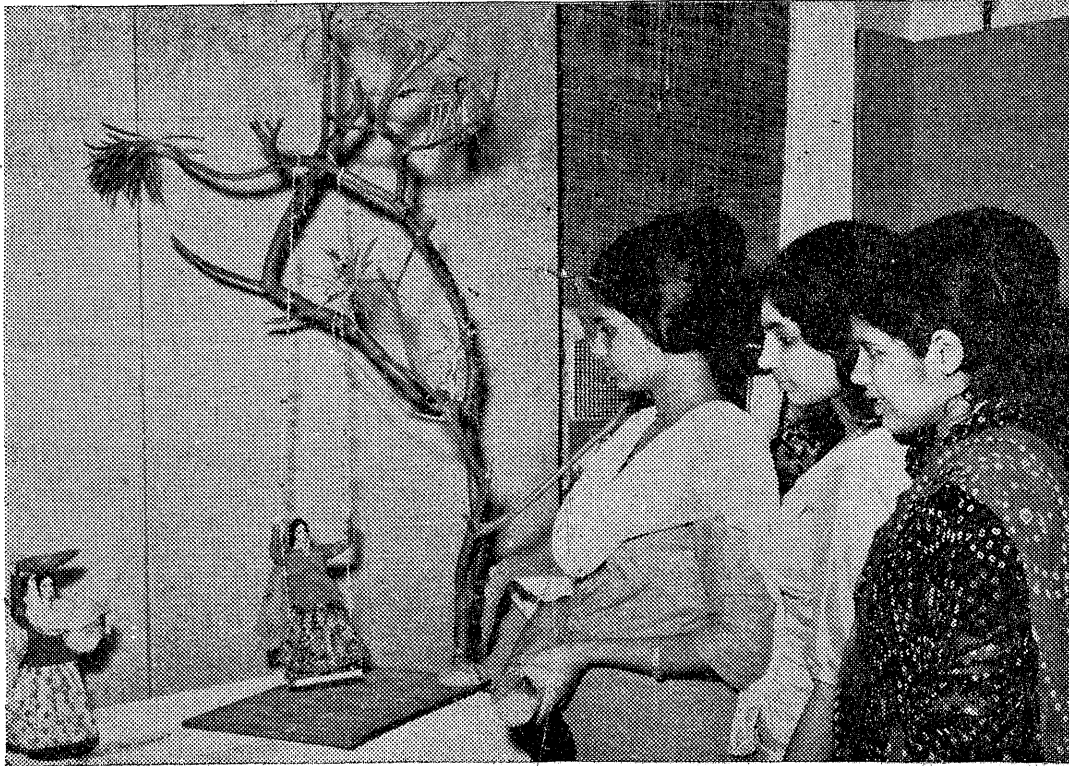
Then there was the fruit girl, the bangle vendor, and the western bride who won the first prize, the replica of the PIA air hostess who won a prize, and the dancer. The first two prizes were won by Miss Hamida Mitha and Mrs. Vahidy. I have never seen dolls with such beauty and perfection in the local market.

Mr. Ahmad Yar was initiated into this art by his Japanese Governess in the days when he knew only prosperity at Ferozpur. Since independence he has been teaching this art. He has been the representative in many of the Government sponsored programmes and on his visit to Afghanistan he felt that they appreciated his art very much and were keen on importing from Pakistan dolls dressed in Afghan costumes.

But Mr. Ahmad Yar said supplying that demand was not possible for him. I do feel that some person of means should pay for the tuition of a dozen poor men and women and once they were trained at the National Doll-Making Institute he could start exporting dolls and earn foreign exchange.

At the National Institute of Doll-Making on Empress Road, Lahore, he and his wife also teach, besides doll making, cooking, painting, etc. Mrs. Ahmad Yar Khan was not too much in favour of her husband's hobby in the beginning but now, he laughed, "she gives me whole hearted support."

Their latest venture is a Doll Hospital. It is the first of its kind and caters for dolls which have sentimental value. I inquired if it received a good response and was surprised to learn that it has received liberal support from the many people who had dolls which they wanted mended, as they couldn't bear to part with them, and now for the first time someone was able to restore their dolls to them.



A group of Pakistani women produced a number of beautiful dolls during a 10-day doll-making course organised by the Pakistan-American Cultural Centre (PACC) August 4-13 and conducted by Mr. Ahmad Yar Khan, Principal, National School of Doll Making, Lahore. Picture shows a section of the Doll Exhibit.