

Forward through friendship

Dhaka as a city probably has less to offer than London does in the latest friendship ties. But the agreement, as Livingstone said, would not be a mere symbol but something leading to more cooperation between the two cities



The monumental Jatiya Sangshad Bhaban in Dhaka.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

With the ever growing problems of urban life, Dhaka City always seems to offer less civic amenities than it should as a mega city in the modern world. However, the capital has not yet changed into a lifeless, mechanized metropolis of the twenty-first century. The warmth of relationships still dominates the social attitude of the city dwellers.

Dhaka's motto of "friendship to all" is reflected clearly in the recently signed agreement of friendship with London on September 10 at the head quarters of the Greater London Authority. Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London and Sadeque Hossain, Mayor of Dhaka signed the friendship agreement stating their joint intention to help Dhaka in its advancement towards becoming a city "fit for the 21st century".

According to the Asian News International of India and The United news of Bangladesh, the agreement will enhance present social, economic, cultural and political ties between the two cities.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain went to London to strengthen the ties of expatriate Bangladeshis in London with their motherland. Bangladeshis are now among one of the fastest growing communities in Britain. At least 154,000 Bangladeshi expatriates living in Britain reside in London, says 2001 census. Most of them took up the catering business, textile manufacturing and small businesses as their occupation.

London Mayor Livingstone commented in the signing ceremony that the agreement is a recognition of the contribution Bangladeshis' make in

the cultural life of London. It also adds to the diversity of the capital.

During the signing ceremony, Livingstone mentioned both London and Dhaka's shared dilemmas common to any densely populated cities. He talked about managing traffic congestion and providing housing for a large population as examples. He wished the agreement would ensure that the best practices would find full support in the future.

Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain underscored the necessity of ending all problems confronted by Dhaka City. He said Bangladesh authorities were searching for a model they could follow and found nothing better than the Greater London Authority.

He also mentioned the population of 12 million that is growing very fast and is such a challenge to the government's limited resources. However, he stated the determination of all to make Dhaka fit for the 21st century.

Sadeque Hossain termed the agreement as a beginning for tangible cooperation between the Dhaka City Corporation and the greater London Authority, eventually paving the way for making Dhaka a more livable environment.

Mayor Livingstone mentioned the agreement not as a mere symbol but something leading to real and substantive consultation and cooperation between both cities. He expected Dhaka would greatly benefit from it.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain invited the London Mayor Ken Livingstone to visit Dhaka. Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Shaikh Razzak Aliand Baroness Pola Uddin was also present at the occasion.



The House of Commons with the Big Ben tower in London

Illegal seats sitting pretty!

SOHEL ISLAM

The progress in removing unauthorised seats from buses of the city has not been satisfactory, as the transport owners are reluctant to follow the decision of the communications ministry.

In July this year, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda had instructed the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Dhaka Metropolitan Traffic Police and the bus owners' association to remove unauthorised seats from the buses.

The unauthorised seats are those that have been fitted in addition to the 30 approved by the BRTA. Most so called mini-buses, which dominate Dhaka's bus service, have arranged 10 extra seating spaces around the engine cover. Besides human-haulers and big buses also have added seats wherever space has been found.

"We often file lawsuits against the buses which have fitted extra seats. But our actions do not improve the situation as the bus owners usually pay a meagre fine and continue with their unlawful way," said a senior official of the traffic department.

"We can penalise the violators with fines up to Tk 1200 to Tk 2500 but that is too little an amount for the owners to care," he added.

Although the communications minister directly instructed the BRTA to enforce the decision, it is still not being carried out.

"We don't have adequate personnel to implement the minister's instruction. However, we are strictly examining the buses now before giving them registration," said an official of the BRTA preferring anonymity.

"Today 25 mini-buses came for registration. After a thorough checking, I only authorised 13 buses to be registered. The rest have been told to come after they have complied with all the rules and regulations of the BRTA," said the official.

But there are allegations that unscrupulous bus owners initially comply with the BRTA rules but once the vehicle has been registered, they go and add extra seats to it.

Bus owners in their turn, point fingers at the authorities and the law-enforcers for the lack of success in implementation of the decision.

"We are responsible for removal of the extra seats from the buses. But the BRTA and the traffic police should carry out their own checking to ensure the rule is not being violated," said Golam Mohammad Siraj, President of the bus owners association.



Passengers share makeshift seats inside a bus.

Taking the stress out of party preparations

Managing an event could be too time consuming for you. A new breed of youths have opened up new services to help you out

BISHAWJIT DAS

Worrying about arranging a wedding? Thinking of throwing birthday parties for your children? Got no time to spare for your marriage anniversary? Can't figure out what to do?

Don't panic. There are people to help you out. Event management is a new profession in the city that sorts out different indoor and outdoor chores for the people in need of help.

Some families hate getting involved in event management, although they need to arrange some events every year. But some are fortunately enthusiastic enough to curb others' worries.

The organisations opened this new service, involving mostly youths. All they needed to start the

business is a good communication with decorators, a little aesthetic sense and popularity among locals.

"We earn enough through this business," says Mushfiq, an event manager. "We started with managing marriage ceremonies for the relatives of our friends. They gladly welcomed us."

Still, individual small entrepreneurs rule the business, although a few organisations are there, offering service. You can have arrangements from small family events to large fabulous parties. The rate for service is not fixed, but is determined by your ability to pay. This may vary from Tk 3,000 to Tk 10,000.

icabana, the first event-managing firm, started the business in 1998 with decorating marriage stages. There are about 100 organisations that manage events in Dhaka city.

Healthouting, taxicab & traintiming

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
Heart
 National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59
- Burn**
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital
 Burn Unit-8626812-6
- Cancer**
 National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9
- Diabetes**
 Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50
- Mother & Child Care**
 Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62
 Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

- Eye**
 Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315
 National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807
- Dental**
 Dental College -9002035
- Orthopaedics**
 National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150
- General**
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6
 Rushmono General Hospital- 8317819
 Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9
 Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,
 Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
 Suhrawardy Hospital - 9130800,

- 9122560-69
 Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
 Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDRDB)- 8811751-60
 Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135
- Blood Bank**
 Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
 Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
 Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
 Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
- Eye Bank**
 Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
- Ambulances For Dead Body**
 Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
 Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
 Elephant Road-Friday
 Bishal Center-Friday
 Baitual Mukarram Market-Friday
 Polwell Market-Friday
 BCS Computer City-Friday
 Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
 Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
 Stadium Market-Friday
 Bangabazar Market-Friday
 National Museum-Thursday
 Ahsan Manzil--Thursday.
 New Market-Tuesday
 Gausia Market-Tuesday
 Mouchak Market-Sunday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Farmview Super Market-Sunday
 Muktiyuddha Jadughar-Sunday
 Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
 Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

- Yellow Cab**
 Navana 9558065
 Salida 9344477, 0171620881
 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
 Cab One 7113282-3
 Nihon 8624741-2
 Orion 9347277
 Anudip 8125285 and 8127611
 Capital 9352847
- Union** 8130485
 Kool 0171826731
- Black Cab**
 Cab Ex 9358401
 Cabline 8321162
 JBS Cab 019364575
 Sajan 018126036
 Anudip - 8125285 and 8127611
 Cab One 7113282-3
- Subarna Express** Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3-05 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6-30 am
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12-30 pm
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9-30 pm
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 6-00 am
Padma Express Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

TRAIN TIMING

LIBRARY & INFO-

- Palki** 0171052500
Cab I 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGK 8620011
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm**
 Reaches Chittagong at 2-55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 9-11 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 7-05 am
 Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-05 pm
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-55 pm
 Reaches Noakhali at 1-35 pm
 Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm
- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412