

## Local passports for foreigners!

SULTANA RAHMAN

A number of 'foreigners' have 'somehow' obtained Bangladeshi passports from the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) and are now living in and around the city, according to immigration sources.

They said there has been nothing unusual about the applications made. The supporting documents required no verification, as they were "technically legal". This is the latest addition to the fake passport racket, sources added.

The irregularity was highlighted when, for the first time, two Chinese with Bangladeshi passports were detained in January this year. They were subsequently deported. This revelation gave rise to an investigation of the matter. The department has already identified 19 foreigners with such 'Bangladeshi' passports.

The Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) and the Special Branch of police are blaming each other for the incidents. "We issue passports following 'police verification'

**It is strange but true that a number of foreigners are holding Bangladeshi passports. The irregularity was highlighted when, for the first time, two Chinese with Bangladeshi passports were detained in January this year. They were subsequently deported**

reports on each applicant. After receiving 'favourable' report given by the police, we issue the passport," said Nadira Begum, director of DIP.

"Some officials issue blank passports and the brokers do business delivering them to the passport seekers. In most of the cases the DIP does not have any police verification," said a senior official of police on conditioning anonymity.

The Chinese had 'technically

genuine' Bangladeshi passports but the immigration police arrested them at the Zia International Airport for their suspicious movement. According to the passports, they were permanent residents of a remote village in Narayanganj and presently living at Keraniganj near Dhaka.

"They looked like Bangladeshi tribal people but their permanent address was not of any tribal area, which made us suspicious," said an inspector of

Immigration.

Foreigners defaulting on visa procedures are rounded up by the so called brokers who entice them into obtaining these technically legal Bangladeshi passports. It is a better idea than going through the hassle of having to pay large sums in fines, official sources said. Usually such a "passport" costs about Tk 5,000.

"They (the brokers) manage to procure supporting documents such as attested birth certificates, police verification reports and therefore the issuance of Bangladeshi passports becomes technically legal," sources in the DIP said.

M Wahedul Haq, director General of DIP told the Star City that the department is aware of the incidents, but he did not mention what action they might take to stop the malpractice.

"More than 60 per cent of Bangladeshi passports issued from Foreign Missions abroad are fake as they issue passports without police verification," said an official of a secret agency, who is investigating several cases.

### FOLLOW UP



Beware! Cars with bumpers are after you.....

## I am unlucky to have such a case, IO now says

Dr Shajahan murder case drags on. No attempt to nab the culprits. Investigating Officer (IO) now says he does not know what to do with the case

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The investigating officer in the Dr Shajahan murder case has officially asked the higher authorities to 'advise' how to proceed in the case, Mohammadpur thana sources confirmed.

On July 1, Dr Shajahan, a medical officer at the Pangu Hospital, was dragged over two kilometers to his death when his leg got tangled with the extra bumper of a car that refused to stop despite pleas from hundreds of passersby. A report published in The Daily Star revealed that the vehicle was owned by the

Multimode Group at Anchor Tower, 1/1B Sonargaon Road and driver Sujon Sardar was at the time driving the Director Administration of the company Din Mohammad Khan.

Mohammadpur police, who charged the driver and the passenger with murder case, made several attempts in vain to arrest the driver. But there was no attempt to nab Noor Mohammad who had remained mysteriously elusive to police. The investigating officer ASI Noor-e-Alam said that he did not know what to do with the case.

"I could not arrest the driver nor could I do anything to arrest Din Mohammad, I have therefore

written to the higher authorities for instructions on how to proceed," said Alam.

When asked if he had made any attempt to arrest Din Mohammad, the ASI replied in the negative and asked, "Is he (Din Mohammad) still attending office?"

"I can tell you there is a lot of pressure for this particular case, I am unlucky that such a complicated case has fallen on my shoulder," Alam further added.

Police sources also said that a committee has been formed to investigate negligence of one police officer from Dhanmondi thana and on-duty 'sergeants' who failed to stop the killer vehicle and also allegedly kept quiet about the owners of the vehicle.

The government banned extra bumpers on vehicles following the tragic death of the young doctor and asked all motorists to remove them. But the High Court issued an injunction on the government decision and stopped it from making any decision about the removal of the illegal bumpers. According to the law of the land, the extra bumper is illegal.

While Dr Shajahan murder case sees no progress, Shajahan's widow and only son remain still wait for justice.



Flower shops at Shahbagh pay toll like the other shops on public land in the area.

## Power holders share the business booty

CITY CORRESPONDENT

More than 30 flower and food shops are illegally operating their businesses on public land at the Shahbagh intersection with direct help from the DCC officials and the local commissioner.

"We wanted to evict the illegal shops at Shahbagh on October 2 but had to defer the date owing to unavailability of police force. The next date of eviction is October 12," said an official of the state department of the DCC.

Every shop now pays Tk 5000 monthly to Chowdhury Alam Ratan, a ward commissioner of the DCC. The Chhatra Dal activists of Dhaka University also sometimes collect the rent.

"Chowdhury Alam Ratan takes the money from us as he manages the DCC officials. Ever since we ventured into this business there has been no respite from

paying money to the commissioners or the extortionists," said a shop owner requesting not to be named.

"Over the last two months, situation has aggravated because both the ward commissioner and the Chhatra Dal activists of Dhaka University are demanding rents from us separately," said a shop owner.

"Besides the monthly rent, we have to pay money to many persons on different political and social occasions," said the shop owner.

"We are really going through a lot of misery as the money we earn is spent on paying extortion. I have applied to the DCC for my shop's legal status. Once I get the approval I may not have to pay so much illegal toll," said the shop owner.

Apart from Malancha, no other flower shop has any legal permission of the DCC. The mushrooming of these shops have centred around a 3-storey building there

which was illegally built by former chief engineer of the DCC Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan.

Later, the DCC gave permission for its commercial use. Former chief engineer, also the chairman of Bangabandhu Social Welfare Parishad turned the second and floors of the building into their office.

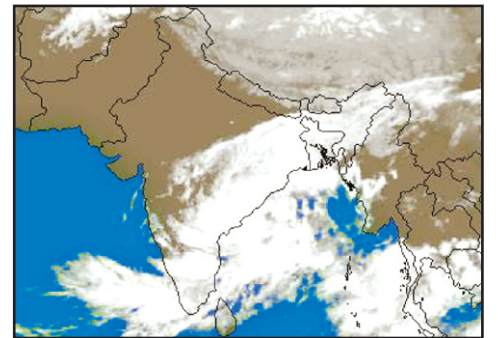
The Chhatra Dal leaders have now locked the office of the Bangabandhu Social Welfare Parishad.

Despite repeated attempts, Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan could not be reached. But ward commissioner Chowdhury Alam Ratan categorically denied the allegation and said he does not have any transaction with the shopkeepers.

"All these structures should be demolished so that the Shishu Park can be expanded," Ratan said.

## October braces for rain

According to the Met office, this is the peak period for storms and rain as has been observed over last ten years. Weathermen are expecting two more depressions in Bay in the course of this month, one of which may turn into 'a hurricane'



CITY CORRESPONDENT

Surprised a bit seeing rain in this season? Don't worry, the shower will pass over by noon the day after tomorrow. The reason behind this rain is the depression formed in the Bay, said officials of Storm Warning Centre (SWC) of Meteorological Department of Bangladesh.

Life in the city has turned turmoil as rain waters accumulate in the large pot-holes of the roads, and in an effort not to get into an unknown territory, motorists tend to drive haphazardly thus causing congestion not only along the main roads but the by lanes as well.

According to the Duty Forecasting Officer (DFO), there will be non-stop rain today all over the city. It will decrease from tomorrow and it is expected that the weather will be normal after noon tomorrow.

A depression was formed on the Western Central Bay, and it was supposed to cross between Bishakha Pattam and Kaliganga Pattam of the North Andhra coast yesterday, said Shajahan Alam, DFO of SWC.

The temperature may fall between 1 and 3 degrees Celsius due to the depression, and expected to remain at 28 or 29 degrees Celsius, said DFO.

According to the AccuWeather, the Internet based weather forecasting site, the temperature may go down to 21 degrees.

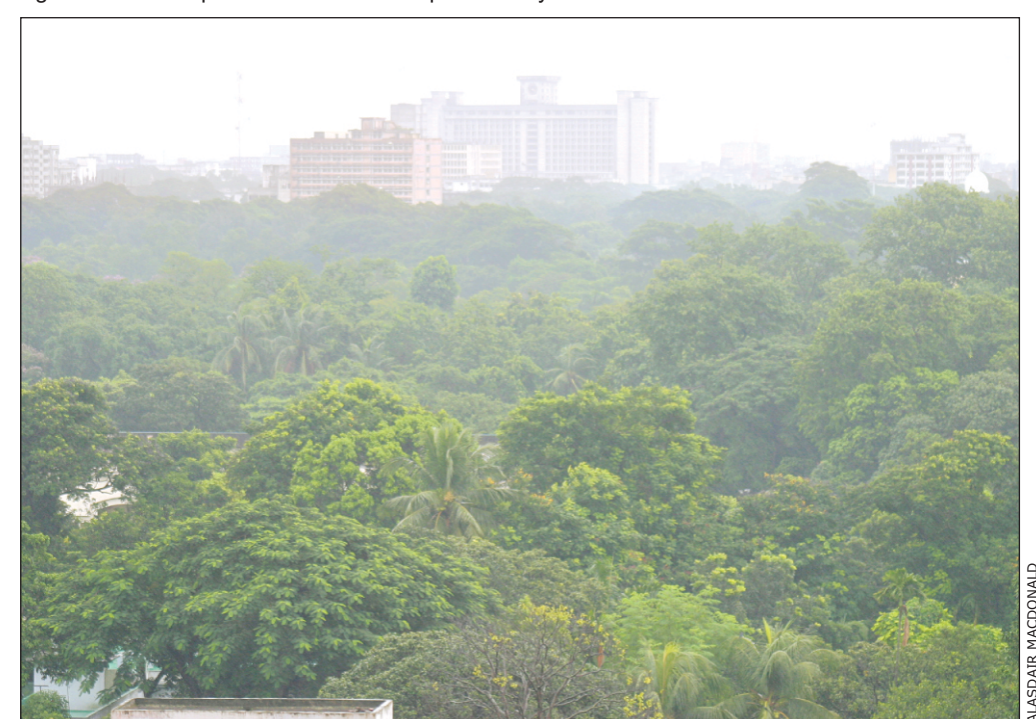
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Bay in the course of this month, one of which may turn into 'a hurricane'.

But the forecasting section of SWC still cannot predict whether this would affect the winter temperature. There are also other factors affecting the temperature in winter, as it does not depend solely on rains or

storms. Cold waves shook the country January last year and in 1998. This brought down the mercury level by six degrees.

The change in weather will most likely bring about normalcy to daily life.



City to experience rain for a few more days.